



## Act Now and Save Lives in Syria - Urges USTPAC

**The US Tamil Political Action Council (USTPAC) urges the US government to take urgent and immediate action to invoke R2P – Responsibility to Protect, to save the lives of Syrians facing continued massacres from Syrian security forces that are following the ‘Sri Lanka Model’ for the suppression of rebels.**

Washington, DC (PRWEB) August 12, 2012-- Media reports continue to flow in highlighting the ongoing massacres of civilians and the destruction of civilian livelihood and infrastructure in Syria. Media reports indicate that Syrian troops have recently launched an assault on Aleppo [1], the largest city in the country with a population of 2 million people.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on August 3, 2012, “Aleppo, one of the most ancient and storied cities in the world, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the epicenter of a vicious battle between the Syrian government and those who wish to replace it... All of us have a responsibility to the people of Syria.” [2]

USTPAC strongly believes any delay in a firm and committed international response will only embolden the regime to continue its murderous campaign. “Tamils know all too well about facing an onslaught from a government’s military forces and how inaction by the world community resulted in the death of tens of thousands of innocent Tamil lives in 2009. Syrians deserve immediate and urgent help from the world community, and the UN with help from the US should invoke *Responsibility to Protect (R2P)*” said the USTPAC President, Dr. Elias Jeyarajah.

After the May 2009 mass killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka, international observers were worried that world inaction at that time would provide a “Sri Lanka Model” for other oppressive regimes to follow. Commenting on the UN resolution passed on Sri Lanka this March, Dr. S. I. Keethaponcalan, Chair of the Department of Conflict Analysis and Dispute Resolution at Salisbury University in Maryland, said in a recent article:

“The US and other western co-sponsors of the resolution certainly wanted to preempt the possibility of Sri Lanka becoming a model for conflict resolution in terms of internal violent conflicts.” [3]

“It is now evident that the Syrian regime has been following the Sri Lankan model by cutting off the UN presence and preventing access by journalists to hide its abuses. The US government - along with other governments - has a moral obligation to ensure regimes like

those of Rajapaksa and Assad do not have impunity to commit mass atrocities and crimes against humanity,” noted Dr. Jeyarajah.

The USTPAC president also pointed to the recent petition launched by the [\*Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace & Justice\*](#). This petition calls on the US not to participate in the August 8-12, 2012 Defense Seminar in Colombo, Sri Lanka [4] with the Sri Lankan military, which has been accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.[5]

“We are sad that US has chosen to send delegates to this seminar while making a case for the Syrian military to stop their crimes against humanity. This behavior will not go unnoticed by oppressive regimes like Syria and it further undermines the unified and principled stand the global community needs to take against governments that kill with impunity,” said Dr. Jeyarajah, adding that “As a persecuted community, Tamils all over the world stand in solidarity with the Syrian people in their hour of need and call for concerted action.”

- 1) [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/08/syria-aleppo-battle-ground-assault\\_n\\_1755553.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/08/syria-aleppo-battle-ground-assault_n_1755553.html)
- 2) <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=6224>
- 3) [http://www.saglobalaffairs.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1186:a-turning-point&catid=35&Itemid=54](http://www.saglobalaffairs.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1186:a-turning-point&catid=35&Itemid=54)
- 4) [http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Defence Seminar 2012 Towards Lasting Peace and Stability begins today 20120808\\_01](http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Defence_Seminar_2012_Towards_Lasting_Peace_and_Stability_begins_today_20120808_01)
- 5) <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/131025.pdf>

Contact information: [info@ustpac.org](mailto:info@ustpac.org), 202.595.3123