

THE RACE TO THE WHITE HOUSE

What it means for Tamil Americans



3m Read: Why Kamala Harris' Candidacy Benefits the Tamil Cause

Dear <<First Name>>,

We'd like to thank you for your continued support of USTAG's work. Your involvement in our organization is important not only to us but for the sustainable future of peace and justice for Tamils in Sri Lanka. As democracy is on the decline in our homeland, the US presidential bid is nevertheless getting closer and closer. Electing the right candidates in our own government could be the key in getting Tamil Americans the leverage we need to restore democracy in our homeland and protect its Tamil citizens.

Here are the things we did this month to make sure that upcoming election includes the interests of the Tamil people.

Launch of the Biden-Harris Fundraiser on behalf of Tamil Americans

Our advocacy focus this month was to join forces with all Tamil Americans and raise money and Tamil support for the Biden-Harris Campaign. While USTAG has consistently been a bipartisan organization, this year we decided to support the Democratic candidates because of Kamala Harris' historic candidacy and the threat to the basic norms that we all cherish. There are 6 main reasons we believe the Biden-Harris Campaign will be beneficial to our cause:



1. Kamala Harris gives Tamils a spotlight: Kamala Harris' Tamil background will bring more awareness to who we are, and all levels of government will take our concerns more seriously and knowledgeably. She has a Tamil of Sri Lankan origin as Chief of Staff of her campaign.

2. More Democrats in government = Sympathy for human rights: Democrats in government are often more sympathetic to human rights' causes of equality, justice and freedom.

3. Harris may be the segue for future Tamil American politicians in the US: Hillary set a powerful example and after her campaign we saw a record-breaking number of women running for office. If they win, Harris and her Chief of Staff will exemplify that Tamils too can hold powerful government positions in the US.

4. We align ourselves with South Asian struggles: By supporting the Democratic nominee, we align ourselves with powerful and necessary movements like Indian Tamil and other South Asian democratic causes. Statistically, South Asians generally sway Democrat. We're more likely to garner Indian Tamil support for our cause if we're on their side politically.

5. Trump's Out: Pres. Trump withdrew from the UNHRC which prevented the US from championing our efforts for justice in Sri Lanka and Republicans in general do not support international justice mechanisms, which are required in our case. He should have pushed constitutional reform allowing at minimum a federal form of government in Sri Lanka (since Republicans favor states' rights), but showed no interest in this vital area.

6. Knowledge of our struggle: Since the 2009 tragedy happened under Pres. Obama's Administration, more staff will be knowledgeable & engaged on our issue, hopefully even Biden himself.

Donate now to Biden-Harris Victory Fund (on behalf of Tamil Americans)

PDF Flyer

Tamil Americans at the UNHRC

The 45th UNHRC Session took place this month and we were there to convey our support that renewed attention to Sri Lanka was needed to prevent threats to peace, reconciliation and sustainable development.



Read more about UNHRC Session 45 here



Announcements & Continued Projects

Congressional Advocacy Internship

The USTAG strongly values the involvement of young people in our cause. For this reason, we work every week with young people across the country on Zoom and help them become better advocates for justice and peace for Tamils in Sri Lanka. We are always welcoming passionate, young individuals to join

us in our mission. **If you know a young person who is passionate about justice and human rights, please consider sharing [this flyer](#) with them or email outreach@theustag.org for more details.**

Upcoming International Strategy Session

For the last 10 years, USTAG has been inviting delegates from diaspora organizations and Tamil activists for a day-long strategy session to discuss how the diaspora can advance their efforts in working for the betterment of Tamils at home. Many of the projects that were conceptualized in previous sessions have been executed successfully. This year the pandemic does not allow for an in-person meeting, but it provides the opportunity for more delegates to join from all around the world. This year's strategy session is taking place at a crucial time when Sri Lanka has announced their withdrawal as a co-sponsor to the UNHRC resolution 30/1, and is seeing an unprecedented rise in Sinhala Buddhism. Amidst of all our differences, our goal now should be to unite and discuss how to move the struggle forward. If anyone would like to participate, please send us an email at info@theustag.org.

Remembering Thileepan

1963-1987

September 26th marks the 33rd anniversary of Thileepan's death by hunger strike.



On the first day of Thileepan's hunger strike, September 15, 1987, one hundred thousand people gathered at the Nallur Kandwaswamy Temple in Jaffna to hear

him speak. His speech mobilised the Tamil nation, inspiring great solidarity and desperate cries for action. There was an immense power in seeing a 23-year old man willingly and willfully starve himself. Before losing his ability to speak, he is remembered to have last said: "I am confident that our people will, one day, achieve their freedom". His demands are still relevant to this day:

1. All Tamils detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act should be released.
2. The colonisation of Sinhalese in Tamil areas under the guise of rehabilitation should be stopped.
3. All such rehabilitation should be stopped until an interim government is formed.
4. The Sri Lankan government should stop opening new police stations and camps in the North Eastern province.
5. The Sri Lankan army and police should withdraw from schools in Tamil villages and the weapons given by the Sri Lankan government to 'homeguards' should be withdrawn under the supervision of the Indian army.

Despite the significance and legacy Thileepan holds for Tamils in Sri Lanka, the current administration has issued court-ordered injunctions to halt any commemorative events honoring Thileepan's life and his nonviolent activism. The three Tamil National parties jointly appealed to the Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapakse, regarding the ban on holding remembrances in honor of Thileepan's ultimate sacrifice. Tamils all over the world are mourning and paying their respects to Thileepan who died a tragic, young death as he desperately tried to convey the pain and suffering of Tamils.

More on Thileepan's Legacy

Show your Support for Tamils in Sri Lanka

To continue doing the valuable work we do, we need support from passionate

people like you now more than ever. YOU can deliver hope not only to our cause but also directly to Tamils in Sri Lanka by supporting our work.

Donate Now

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Visit our Website for More Information



Be sure to add outreach@theustag.org to your email contacts list for our newest updates!
Doing this protects against overzealous spam filters.

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