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title: Regarding need to persuade the international community to take action against Sri Lankan Government for alleged war crimes committed in 2009.

DR. P. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVALLUR): Madam Speaker, I want to bring the attention of the Government to the very serious issue concerning the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

In the final days of the civil war in 2009, Sri Lanka committed grave human rights violations. It wiped out the entire Tamil race of more than 1.5 lakh people in a matter of few days alone.

It took almost two years for them to assess how many were massacred. In 2011, when the international community at the United Nations Human Rights Council said that there will be an international probe into the issue, Sri Lanka said that it was an internal matter of Sri Lanka and it would look into it on its own. It sought two years to go into it.

In 2013, it came out with an interim report only and sought two more years to inquire into the entire episode. In 2015 again it followed the same ruse.

Now in 2017, following the same dirty trick, it has sought two years from UNHRC and yesterday the UN Council also has permitted two more years' extension to Sri Lanka.

How long should the Indian Government be a mute spectator to this human rights violation by Sri Lanka against Tamils? We discussed this several times in the past but no tangible action has emerged.

I would like to draw the attention of the House and the Centre to the Resolutions adopted by the Tamil Nadu Assembly three times. Late Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. J. Jayalalithaa, *Amma*, through Resolutions adopted in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, urged India to move a strong resolution at the UNHRC along with the US, seeking international probe against war crimes committed by Sri Lanka. She also sought diplomatic efforts at the international level against the human rights violations. She also termed the internal probe by Sri Lanka as 'natural injustice' for the Tamil race.

Madam, I would like to say that India has been consistently following a friendly foreign policy towards all the countries of the world. But the same policy should not be extended in the case of Sri Lanka.

Madam, here I would like to quote what External Affairs Minister, Shrimati Sushma ji said:

"India will go with consensus on Sri Lankan Resolution at the UNHRC. Our aim is to protect the interests of Tamils in Sri Lanka. You can achieve this through two means; either by doing it forcefully or through persuasion with the friendly country."

My point here is that when the entire Tamil race is razed and annihilated, Sri Lanka is no more a friendly country, and that the policy adopted towards other countries should not be adopted in case of Sri Lanka. The Indian Government need not treat Sri Lanka as a friendly country, more so, in view of the fact that on 6th March this year, Sri Lankan Navy had shot dead a Tamil fisherman who was fishing in Indian traditional waters.

I am also at a loss to understand why India is keeping a studied silence in this regard. It gives an impression that it has failed miserably in dealing with Sri Lanka.

Hence, I urge the Centre that it should go with all her might at the UNHRC and persuade the international community to support us and insist that there should be an international probe against the atrocities committed by Sri Lanka.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri Rabindra Kumar Jena is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. P. Venugopal.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Mahtab ji, you can associate with him.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Madam, a group of parliamentarians led by the then Leader of Opposition, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj had visited Sri Lanka to see how the rehabilitation of the Sri Lankan Tamils is going on because the Indian Government had provided funds. Our nation's interest lies with the peaceful atmosphere prevalent in Sri Lanka. In that respect, extending it by these two years is actually not in any way going to help restore peace. It will rather precipitate the tension inside the country.

For the cause of Sri Lankan Tamils, I would like to understand from the Government, supporting what Dr. Venugopal has said, the support that we are providing to Sri Lankan Tamils for their rehabilitation to come back to the mainstream, to come back to the original position as they were some 30 years ago, what steps have been taken in between after the visit of Shrimati Sushma Swaraj.

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR): Madam, Speaker, the hon. Member from Tamil Nadu, Dr. Venugopal, my dear colleague in the Parliament, Shi B. Mahtab and other hon. Members have raised a very important issue of the safety and security and the matter of human rights of our Tamil brethren in Sri Lanka as well as the fishermen of Tamil Nadu who have been now and then intimidated and attacked by Sri Lankan Navy.

It is a very serious issue, Madam. Our hon. External Affairs Minister, Shrimati Sushma Swaraj has made it amply clear that their safety and security is of paramount importance to the Government of India. We will leave no stone unturned to achieve that. At the same time, with neighbourly countries we need to pursue matters with persuasion. We know the matter is before the UNHRC.

I will definitely bring to the kind attention and notice of our hon. External Affairs Minister the concerns expressed by the hon. Members so that appropriate steps can be taken to safeguard our Tamil brothers.