

People's Petition



Justice to ► Tsunami victims!

No Reintroduction of 'Regaining Sri Lanka' - Rejected by the People!

The tsunami washed away 40,000 lives and left over 800,000 others with nothing.

People from all over the world have shown their tremendous goodwill by donating huge sums of money to help the tsunami victims, but 3 months later many are still living in camps in dreadful conditions, with insufficient food, poor nutrition, insufficient sanitation and poor security, and no idea as to how they can begin to rebuild their lives. The Government has a different agenda.

The Government has not established proper mechanisms for providing them with relief. At the same time, the Government has appointed a taskforce of big businessmen to decide how to rebuild their lives. Their plan says, 'The objective is to put in place a new infrastructure and systems to meet the challenges of the 21st century and fulfil the dreams and aspirations of a modern society.'

This plan will be another tsunami for the victims. It pushes the fisher people off the coast and out of the seas, not for their security, but to create space for tourist hotels and large fishing industries. It will destroy their communities and livelihoods.

The Government will spend over \$2 billion in implementing the plan, using the money that has been donated for the tsunami victims and borrowing money from the international financial institutions to add to the debt burden of the people.

It is time for the tsunami victims and all others that are in solidarity with them, including the people from other countries that have so generously donated money for them, to join together to reject this agenda and demand justice for tsunami victims.

The tsunami victims are the rightful owners of the money that has been raised in their name and must decide how this money is spent.

We therefore make the following demands:

1. The Government must immediately establish efficient and effective systems to provide the affected people with relief. This must ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable groups, particularly children, by supplying adequate nutrition and restarting schooling without delay, and women, by providing appropriate housing and sanitation facilities. This must be provided equally to all areas of the country.
2. A People's Planning Commission must be established to replace the Businessmen's Taskforce to decide on how to assist the affected people to rebuild lives. This must be made up of people with expertise and experience in working in disaster areas who are able to represent the interests of affected people from all areas of the country.
3. All the donations received by the Government must be spent in the way the affected people see fit. No loans should be taken by the Government without consultation with the affected people. The affected people must have access to clear and comprehensive information on the monies received and allocated by the Government.
4. The majority of the people displaced by the tsunami were the fishing communities. These people have a historical and traditional right to the coastal lands and the seas that must be upheld. They should not be displaced to make way for tourists or the business elite. They should decide how to protect themselves from possible future disasters of this kind.
5. All people displaced by the tsunami must immediately be granted their right to return to their land if they wish. They must decide on the type of housing, sanitation facilities, health and education services with which they are to be provided by the Government.
6. All people displaced by other disasters, particularly those affected by the war who have lived in camps for as long as 15 years, should also be treated in the same way. This will require the abandonment of the High Security Zones in the North/East.
7. The State of Emergency decreed by the President is being used to forcibly suppress the people's resistance. There is no justification for using emergency law three months after the tsunami. It must be revoked immediately.

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