

# **Joint Statement by Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice (SLC) and British Tamils Forum (BTF)**

## **No Sri Lankan military deployment to Haiti without accountability, independent vetting and justice for victims**

The Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice (SLC) and the British Tamils Forum (BTF) are alarmed by reports that Sri Lanka may once again deploy troops to Haiti under the United Nations (UN) backed Gang Suppression Force. The concern is immediate. The Sri Lanka Army announced that a Haiti pre-deployment training course concluded on 10 April 2026, while Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence has confirmed ongoing discussions with the UN.

We urge the UN, its Department of Peace Operations, OHCHR, Security Council Member States and all governments involved in the Haiti mission to suspend any Sri Lankan military deployment unless and until there is independent human rights screening, credible accountability and clear safeguards for Haitian civilians.

This is not a theoretical concern. According to an Associated Press investigation based on an internal UN report, at least 134 Sri Lankan peacekeepers exploited 9 Haitian children between 2004 and 2007. Although 114 peacekeepers were repatriated, no one was imprisoned. Haiti should not be asked to accept troops from a military whose previous personnel were implicated in grave abuse of Haitian children while victims remain without justice or reparations.

The wider record of the Sri Lankan security forces remains deeply troubling. The 2015 OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka found reasonable grounds to believe that enforced disappearances, torture, rape and sexual violence were committed by Sri Lankan security forces on a widespread scale, and that some violations may amount to atrocity crimes. OHCHR's 2025 report further stated that meaningful and comprehensive security sector reform is yet to take place.

In January 2026, OHCHR reported that conflict-related sexual violence in Sri Lanka was not a series of isolated incidents, but formed part of a widespread and systemic pattern of violations. Its recommendations call for rigorous screening of individuals credibly alleged to be involved in conflict-related sexual violence before deployment to UN peacekeeping or other UN roles.

The UN has recognised these concerns before. In 2019, future Sri Lankan Army deployments were suspended after Shavendra Silva was appointed Army Commander despite credible allegations of serious violations. The UN cannot now reverse course without explaining what has changed.

The vetting position is also unclear. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka previously screened Sri Lankan personnel nominated for UN service, but its 2024 Lessons Learnt Report confirms that it has phased out that role. Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence now refers to a new National Human Rights Vetting Mechanism, but says it is still being developed. This cannot substitute for independent UN screening with OHCHR involvement. As things stand, with no transparency around this new vetting mechanism, and the UN screening policy only applying to senior appointments, it is clear that there is a high risk of soldiers who have been involved in grave human rights violations, including sexual violence, being deployed to Haiti.

We therefore call on the UN to suspend any deployment, publish full details of the proposed contingent and vetting process, exclude any person or unit credibly implicated in serious violations or past UN misconduct, consult Haitian civil society and survivor-centred organisations, and ensure justice and reparations for Haitian victims before any renewed deployment is considered.

The UN's credibility is at stake. Haiti deserves protection, not the return of forces linked to past abuse and impunity. Survivors in Haiti and Sri Lanka deserve justice, not the rehabilitation of unreformed military institutions.