

Demilitarisation First

Remove the fear. Return the land. Let Tamils rebuild.

Summary for Members of Parliament

This brief asks the United Kingdom to support three lawful, non-violent civilian objectives in Sri Lanka's North-East: (1) demilitarisation of Tamil civilian areas, (2) return of military-occupied private and community land to its rightful owners, and (3) transparent, civilian-led reconstruction with verified accountability. It is not a call for statehood, a political party, an armed structure, or a fundraising appeal.

The argument is narrow on purpose. The wider constitutional debate over Sri Lanka's future need not be resolved before Tamil families can resume ordinary civilian life — own their land, run a business, hold a memorial, rebuild a temple, raise children without surveillance.

Verified — UN OHCHR A/HRC/60/21 (2025)

5,941 ACRES GAZETTED	7 HRDS HARASSED	2 NAMED NAVAL BASES
March 2025 land gazette covering Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar and Mullaitivu — to become State land if unclaimed by 28 June 2025. Subsequently suspended by the Supreme Court.	Human rights defenders and families of the disappeared in the north and east, harassed and intimidated by State security officials since August 2024 — for engaging with the UN.	Long-standing land disputes named: Parakumba (Muttur, Trincomalee) and Gotabaya (Mullaitivu).

Direct from the UN's most recent report

"Since August 2024, OHCHR has received reports of harassment and intimidation by State security officials against seven human rights defenders and families of the disappeared in north and east Sri Lanka who had engaged with the United Nations or other international actors."

— United Nations OHCHR, *Situation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka*, A/HRC/60/21 (2025).

Two pressures, one civilian impact

Civilian life in the North-East is shaped by two overlapping systems, not one: **military presence** (troop density, occupied land, checkpoints) and **police and intelligence surveillance** (CID and TID monitoring of activists, journalists, families of the disappeared, returnees, and memorial gatherings). Demilitarisation alone does not lift the second. A credible civilian recovery requires the lawful restraint of both — and demilitarisation answers the first structurally while opening the civic space in which the second can be lawfully scrutinised.

What demilitarisation unlocks

Land return · Local enterprise · Diaspora investment confidence · Civil society · Education and skills · Memorial and cultural dignity · Public accountability · Youth opportunity. Where civilian space is opened, Tamil families and Tamil enterprise rebuild quickly and lawfully. Where it is closed, recovery does not happen — not because anyone is unable, but because no community can grow under permanent surveillance.

UK petition thresholds

10,000 signatures — the UK Government must publish an official written response and the petition enters the parliamentary record. **100,000 signatures** — the Petitions Committee considers the petition for a formal debate in the House of Commons; Hansard records every word. Even where Government declines to act, the issue is permanently in the parliamentary record — material future MPs and committees can build on.

Public, neutral references

- UN OHCHR — *Situation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka*, A/HRC/60/21 (2025)
- UK Parliament Hansard — Sri Lanka: Human Rights, House of Commons debate (March 2024)
- UK Government Home Office — Country Policy and Information Note: Tamil Separatism, Sri Lanka (August 2025)
- U.S. Department of State — 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sri Lanka
- Human Rights Watch — World Report 2026: Sri Lanka, and *Why Can't We Go Home?* (2018)
- Amnesty International — Sri Lanka country reports
- International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) — recent CID/TID briefings
- PEARL — *Normalising the Abnormal: The Militarisation of Mullaitivu*
- Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (Jaffna)
- Oakland Institute — *Endless War*