

Civic infrastructure as transitional-justice practice

A diaspora-built, citation-only archive on Tamil-Eelam post-conflict accountability — and the limits of stateless civic governance.

Concept note · M. Santhuru · MPhil/PhD application, SOAS Politics & International Studies · September 2026 entry

The question

What is the legitimate role of **diaspora-built civic infrastructure** in post-conflict accountability — and where are its hard limits? The Sri Lankan state has not delivered the accountability requested by UN HRC Resolution 30/1 (2015) and successors. Tamil-Eelam civil society in the diaspora has, in parallel, begun to build technical and documentary infrastructure that is neither a state, an NGO, nor a political party. This thesis takes one such infrastructure — TLTE C.I.C. / docs.tlte.cloud — as a working case study.

Why this case

TLTE is unusual: it is a UK-registered Community Interest Company with a statutory asset lock; it operates a structured public archive of over 88 tiered citations; it runs a public AI assistant (Velicham) with a published eval suite; it has institutional refusal rules (no survivor intake, no perpetrator naming, no count aggregation) coded into its workflow. It can be studied without endangering survivors, because the archive does not hold survivor data.

Theoretical anchors

- Transitional justice theory beyond the state (Teitel, McEvoy, Gready).
- Diaspora politics and the post-LTTE Tamil order (Nadarajah, Arulthas, Wayland).
- Critical-peace and the limits of liberal peace-building (Mac Ginty, Richmond).
- Digital-rights and Berkeley Protocol open-source investigation standards.

Method

Practice-based and autoethnographic on the TLTE case; comparative-institutional alongside PEARL, ITJP and Adayaalam; document analysis of the citation registry and the Velicham eval corpus; semi-structured interviews with diaspora policy actors (no survivors, no perpetrators).

Why SOAS, why this department

SOAS Politics & International Studies is the only UK department where the supervisor pool (Nadarajah, Kanapathipillai), the taught environment (MSc Politics of Conflict, Rights and Justice) and the institutional posture combine to make this thesis legible as **research** rather than advocacy.

What I bring

Two years of full-stack civic-infrastructure work on the case itself, a public corpus, a tested AI grounding system with refusal evals, an institutional vehicle (TLTE C.I.C.), and a candidate framework with operational guardrails already audited against UK Terrorism Act 2000 §12 and UK GDPR.