

Thimpu Principles — 1985

The four principles articulated by the joint Tamil delegation at the Thimpu Talks (Bhutan, July–August 1985), still cited as the baseline Tamil negotiating position.

At the India-mediated Thimpu Talks of July–August 1985, the joint Tamil delegation — TULF, LTTE, TELO, EROS, EPRLF and PLOTE — articulated four principles as the baseline for any future settlement: recognition of Tamils as a distinct nationality, recognition of an identified Tamil homeland with its territorial integrity, recognition of the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation, and recognition of fundamental rights of all Tamils on the island. The principles were rejected by the Sri Lankan delegation and the talks collapsed.

§1 What was claimed

The four principles did not, on their face, claim a current positive right to unilateral secession. They claimed recognition — the precondition for any subsequent negotiated arrangement, whether federal, autonomous or independent. The Sri Lankan delegation responded that recognition of a Tamil 'homeland' was inconsistent with the unitary character of the state.

§2 Why they still matter

The Thimpu Principles remain cited in Tamil diaspora discourse and in subsequent negotiating positions (Oslo Declaration 2002, ISGA Proposal 2003) as the baseline Tamil negotiating frame. They are read here strictly as a historical position, not as a current TLTE programme — TLTE is a stateless civic framework and does not claim to speak for the 1985 delegation.

Sources

- wilson-1988
- icg-srilanka
- stanford-mapping-militants

What this is not

- This page does not adopt the Thimpu Principles as the current TLTE programme.
- This page does not glorify any of the militant groups in the joint delegation.