

Cultural & Statutory Erasure — Sri Lanka — MP Evidence Pack

Packages the post-2009 reclassification of Hindu, Sufi and Christian heritage sites in the Tamil-Muslim North-East — and the cumulative statutory pattern from the 1948 Citizenship Acts to the June 2020 Presidential Task Force Gazette Extraordinary No. 2178/17 — into the UK's existing UNESCO, UN CERD, and OECD DAC channels. Anchored on the gazette itself, PEARL, Oakland, HRW, Adayaalam, McGilvray (Routledge 2016), Köpke (Conservation & Society 2021), Schonthal (Cambridge 2016). Never names, never aggregates, never frames as anti-Buddhist.

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Audience

- UK MPs
- FCDO South Asia
- DCMS (UNESCO UK National Commission sponsor)
- APPG for Tamils
- All-Party Parliamentary Group on UNESCO

Best used for

- FCDO written questions on the UK's position regarding the 2 June 2020 Presidential Task Force Gazette (No. 2178/17)
- DCMS written questions on UNESCO UK National Commission engagement with the 1954 Hague Convention and 1972 World Heritage Convention as applied to the contested North-East sites
- FCDO written questions on Sri Lanka's compliance with its CERD 2001 Concluding Observations (CERD/C/304/Add.118)
- Westminster Hall debates pairing PEARL Sinhalisation 2022 with HRW Why Can't We Go Home? 2018 — institutional credibility first
- Submissions into the OECD DAC peer review of UK ODA to Sri Lanka on land-governance and cultural-property compliance

Tier-A evidence anchors

- Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management — Eastern Province (June 2020) — Gazette Extraordinary No. 2178/17 (2 June 2020). Institutional anchor — all-Sinhala body with jurisdiction over Tamil-Muslim majority province sites.
- PEARL — Sinhalization of the North-East (2022)
- PEARL — Erased: Tamils in Sri Lanka (2024)
- Oakland Institute — Endless War (2021)

- Human Rights Watch — Why Can't We Go Home? (October 2018)
- Adayaalam / PEARL — Normalising the Abnormal: Mullaitivu (2017)
- Köpke — Conservation, Land Conflicts and Sustainable Livelihoods (Conservation & Society 19(4), 2021)
- McGilvray — Rethinking Muslim and Tamil Identity at Kuragala/Daftar Jailani (Routledge, 2016)
- Schonthal — Buddhism, Politics and the Limits of Law (Cambridge, 2016)
- Wilson — The Break-up of Sri Lanka (1988)
- DeVotta — Blowback (Stanford, 2004)
- Welikala (ed.) — The Sri Lankan Republic at 40 (CPA, 2012)
- Daniel — Charred Lullabies (Princeton, 1996)
- Peebles — Colonization and Ethnic Conflict in the Dry Zone (JAS 49(1), 1990)

Policy asks

- UK Government (FCDO): Set out the UK's position on Presidential Gazette Extraordinary No. 2178/17 (2 June 2020) establishing an all-Sinhala Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management over the Tamil-Muslim majority Eastern Province, against the United Kingdom's obligations under ICERD as a state party.
- UK Government (DCMS): Direct the UNESCO UK National Commission to make institutional contact with the UNESCO Secretariat regarding contested heritage-site reclassification in the North-East of Sri Lanka, anchored on the 1954 Hague Convention (and its 1999 Second Protocol) and the 1972 World Heritage Convention to which Sri Lanka is a state party.
- UK Government (FCDO): Raise, in the next periodic-review cycle of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the implementation status of CERD's 2001 Concluding Observations on Sri Lanka (CERD/C/304/Add.118) with particular reference to Article 5(d)(vii) — equality before the law in enjoyment of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- UK MPs (APPG for Tamils / APPG on UNESCO): Host one joint Westminster panel pairing the PEARL Sinhalisation 2022 frame with McGilvray (Routledge 2016) and HRW Why Can't We Go Home? 2018 — the Hindu, Sufi and Christian cases together, to disprove any 'Tamil-specific' framing of the gazetting architecture.

Draft parliamentary questions

- [FCDO] What assessment has the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office made of Presidential Gazette Extraordinary No. 2178/17, issued by the Government of Sri Lanka on 2 June 2020, establishing the Presidential Task Force for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province, having regard to the United Kingdom's obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination?
- [DCMS] What discussions has the Department for Culture, Media and Sport had with the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO regarding contested heritage-site reclassification in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, having regard to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, its 1999 Second Protocol, and the 1972 World Heritage Convention?
- [FCDO] What representations has the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office made on the implementation by the Government of Sri Lanka of the 2001 Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/304/Add.118), with particular reference to Article 5(d)(vii) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination?
- [FCDO] What weight does the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office give to findings published by Human Rights Watch (October 2018), the Oakland Institute (2021), People for Equality and Relief in Lanka (2022 and 2024), and the Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (2017) when assessing land-restitution and cultural-heritage compliance in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka under UK Official

Civic remembrance

This pack does not assert that Buddhism, Sinhala-Buddhist heritage, or the Sri Lankan state's heritage-classification function are illegitimate. It reads what Sri Lanka's own 2 June 2020 Presidential Gazette has established, alongside HRW, Oakland, PEARL, Adayaalam, Köpke, McGilvray and Schonthal, and asks the UK to engage existing UNESCO, CERD and OECD DAC channels that already have jurisdiction.

Pack rules

- Never names individual monks, archaeologists, soldiers, ministers, or custodians.
- Never claims any Buddhist archaeological assertion is fabricated. The North-East landscape is palimpsestic — the pack audits the institutional gazetting process, not the substantive heritage claim.
- Never aggregates site counts, acreage, or displacement figures in TLTE voice. Cite PEARL, Oakland, HRW, Adayaalam, Köpke, McGilvray.
- Never frames the pack as anti-Buddhist. The pack frames the audit object as 'an all-Sinhala Presidential Task Force ruling on Tamil-Muslim majority province sites without a single Tamil or Muslim member'.
- Always pairs at least one Tamil-source citation with one non-Tamil Tier-A source (HRW, Oakland, McGilvray-Routledge, Köpke-Conservation & Society, Schonthal-Cambridge). Institutional credibility is the posture.
- Always carries the Mullikulam (Catholic) and Kuragala (Sufi) cases alongside the Hindu cases — disproves any 'Tamil-specific' framing.
- Never accepts intake from priests, custodians, devotees, or local researchers. Signposts UNESCO UK National Commission, ICCROM, PEARL, Adayaalam, and the Sri Lankan RTI Act 2016 channel.

Transparency

Published under the UK Transparency of Lobbying Act 2014 posture. TLTE C.I.C. is a community interest company, not a state, party or charity. Era: Aarambam (founding).