

Up-Country / Hill-Country Tamils — MP Evidence Pack

The 1948 Ceylon Citizenship Act, the 1964 Sirima-Shastri Pact, the 2003 grant of citizenship, and the still-unresolved living wage, housing and franchise gap on the tea estates. The Hill-Country Tamil file is its own civic story — not a sub-chapter of the Northern Tamil file.

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Audience

- UK MPs
- Lords
- International Development Committee
- Business and Trade Committee (tea supply chains)
- APPG for Tamils
- APPG on Modern Slavery

Best used for

- Trade & development briefings on UK tea supply chains (Sri Lanka is a top-three origin)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015 statements covering Sri Lankan tea sector
- ILO C87 / C98 / C111 / C190 PQs on estate-sector labour rights
- Letters supporting living-wage commitments by UK tea brands sourcing from Sri Lanka
- Engagement with the Ceylon Workers' Congress and the Human Rights Office (Kandy)

Tier-A evidence anchors

- Ceylon Citizenship Act 1948 — disenfranchisement of up-country Tamils
- Sirima-Shastri Pact 1964 — India-Sri Lanka agreement on repatriation
- Grant of Citizenship to Persons of Indian Origin Act 2003 (Sri Lanka)
- ILO CEACR — Sri Lanka observations on estate-sector labour
- Ceylon Workers' Congress — wage and housing record
- Human Rights Office (Kandy) — up-country documentation
- Institute of Social Development (Kandy) — plantation community studies
- Oxfam / Ethical Tea Partnership — Sri Lanka tea-sector wage studies
- Human Rights Watch — Sri Lanka estate-sector reporting

Policy asks

- UK Government (DBT): Publish UK assessment of Sri Lankan tea-sector labour conditions under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Developing Countries Trading Scheme conditionality.
- UK Government (FCDO): Engage the Ceylon Workers' Congress and the Human Rights Office (Kandy) as primary up-country civil-society interlocutors — never the Northern Tamil leadership speaking on their behalf.
- UK MPs: Cite ILO CEACR observations on Conventions 87, 98, 111 and 190 in any estate-sector statement,

and pair every Tamil-Northern reference with an up-country reference where the labour file is at issue.

Draft parliamentary questions

- [DBT] What assessment has the Government made of living-wage compliance in the Sri Lankan tea sector by UK-sourced brands, with reference to ILO CEACR observations?
- [FCDO] What recent representations has the Government made to Sri Lanka on housing, franchise and citizenship implementation for up-country Tamil communities?
- [FCDO / DBT] What engagement has the Department had with the Ceylon Workers' Congress and the Human Rights Office (Kandy) on estate-sector labour rights?
- [DBT] What assessment has the Government made of Sri Lanka's ratification status and implementation of ILO Convention 190 (violence and harassment in the world of work) in the estate sector?

Civic remembrance

The up-country file is the longest-running statelessness story in modern Asia — 1948 to 2003 to today. It is not a Northern Tamil sub-chapter. The civic asks are wage, housing, franchise and dignity — not territorial.

Pack rules

- Never frame the up-country file as a sub-chapter of the Northern Tamil file. They are distinct civic stories.
- Never let Northern Tamil leadership speak for up-country labour. The Ceylon Workers' Congress, the Human Rights Office (Kandy) and the Institute of Social Development are the primary interlocutors.
- Never name individual estate workers. Cite ILO CEACR, HRO Kandy, ISD, ETP, HRW, Oxfam at organisational level.
- Always pair Tamil-Northern accountability asks with up-country labour asks where the underlying file is labour, trade, or modern-slavery related.
- Always cite ILO Convention numbers (C87, C98, C111, C190) verbatim and link the CEACR observation.

Transparency

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