

# Missing persons' Families to go after perpetrators of late 1980s disappearances in Sri Lanka

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**The Families of the Disappeared organisation in Sri Lanka is calling on the Parliament to release all the names collected by Presidential Commissions of Inquiry (CoIs) into the alleged perpetration of enforced disappearances in the late 1980s, including the list that names President Gotabaya Rajapaksa for his role in the Matale District where more than 700 persons disappeared while he was in charge.**

“The report on President Rajapaksa’s alleged role in the mass atrocities in 1989 is a must read for everybody fighting to obtain justice for their loved ones who were forcibly disappeared, extra-judicially killed and buried without even a tombstone or burnt on pyres of tires, as well as for parents who want to stop their sons and daughters meeting with such a fate again,” claimed the President of the organisation, Brito Fernando in a statement made in this regard.

“These are lists collected by the Government itself. They’ve been suppressed for decades. We understand that there are hundreds of names of those involved including Police and Army officers, and politicians, some of whom are now in powerful positions. Tens of thousands of families who lost their children testified to these Commissions and they deserve the right to know who was named as a suspect, which ones were charged in court, and why those court cases were dropped. This is a country that’s suffered three periods of mass atrocity and there has been zero accountability for them, which doesn’t bode well for non-recurrence. We are at an unprecedented crisis point in our history and it’s time for the people to know who their rulers really are. An estimated 60,000 people were thought to have been killed in this period of violence in Sri Lanka but those responsible have enjoyed total impunity,” according to the families.

The call by the Families of the Disappeared follows the publication of a report by the Journalists for Democracy in Sri Lanka and the International Truth and Justice Project which focuses on leaders alleged to have been involved in the enforced disappearances and killings during 1988-1989 when the State crushed the second uprising of the Sinhala youth and then later in 2012 when a mass grave was found near a hospital in the Matale Town.

The incidents were investigated by a series of CoIs whose full findings were never made public.

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