QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[15 April 1998]

1. The participating organizations in consultative status, along with the Zairian Association for the Defence of Human Rights, are gravely concerned at the continued war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and by the increasingly genocidal dimension of that war, as evidence by: (a) targeting of the civilian population by the Sri Lankan forces; (b) the epidemic proportions of disappearances, torture, extrajudicial killings, rape, arbitrary arrest and indefinite detention of Tamil civilians; (c) a sweeping embargo in the north and east of subsistence food and essential medicine in contravention of humanitarian law; (d) the existence of more than 850,000 displaced persons living in appalling conditions at risk now of starvation and death.

2. In his message to the Tamil people on National Heroes Day in November 1997, Mr Velupillai Pirabakaran, leader of the LTTE, stated that any political solution should take into account the following four points of the Thimbu Conference of 1985 on which all Tamil political parties agreed:
   (a) The Tamil people are a national entity and have a distinct language, culture and customs;
   (b) The Tamil people have historically inhabited a contiguous territory in the north-east of Sri Lanka which is their homeland;
   (c) The Tamil people have the right to decide their political destiny based on the right to self-determination of peoples;
   (d) All Tamils, including the Plantation Tamils, should enjoy full rights in the island.

3. To contribute to resolution of the situation in Sri Lanka and to provide meaningful international support to secure the aspirations of the Tamil people, we urge the Commission to adopt a resolution in which it:
   (a) Calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to withdraw all its armed forces from the Tamil homeland;
   (b) Calls on both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to secure a political solution that allows the Tamil people to realize its right to self-determination and that establishes full human rights for all the people of Sri Lanka; and
   (c) Appoints a Special Rapporteur with a mandate to investigate the situation and monitor a peace process.

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