

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) is an international opinion tribunal, independent from any State authority. It examines cases regarding violations of human rights and the rights of peoples.

Promoted by the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Rights and Liberation of

Peoples, the PPT was founded in June 1979, in Bologna, Italy, by a broad spectrum of legal experts,

writers, and other cultural and community leaders (including five Nobel Prize laureates) from 31 countries.

The PPT is rooted in the historical experiences of the Russell Tribunals on Vietnam (1966-67) and the

dictatorships in Latin America (1974-1976). The importance and strength of decisions by the PPT rest

on the moral weight of the causes and arguments to which they give credibility, as well as the integrity

and capability to judge of the Tribunal members.

Complaints heard by the Tribunal are submitted by the victims, or by groups or individuals representing

them. The PPT calls together all parties concerned and offers the defendants the possibility to make

their own arguments heard. The Jury is selected for each case by combining members who belong to a

permanent list of jurors, and individuals who are recognized for their competence and integrity.

From June 1979 to the present date the PPT has held some 40 sessions whose results and judgements

are available at www.internazionaleleliobasso.it.

For this Session on Sri Lanka, the Secretariat of the PPT was first approached by representatives of a

broad spectrum of NGOs, as early as July 2009. The government of Sri Lanka had declared the

war

over two months prior, following months of bloody massacre which had made headlines worldwide.

The urgency of the matter was recognized. Additionally, the specific competence of the PPT was

considered in response to the substantial disregard of the matter by international institutions which

accompanied the “disappearance” of the massacre of the Tamils from the attention of the international

media.

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