

Solidarity Statement for the Malaiyaha Ezhuchchi Payanam

The Asia Democracy Network stands in solidarity with the Malaiyaha Tamil community of Sri Lanka on their "Malaiyaha Ezhuchchi Payanam" journey, organized by the Collective for Maanbigu Malaiyaha Makkal. This symbolic trail commemorates their ancestors' struggles as British-indentured laborers, addressing contemporary challenges of marginalization.

Recognizing Malaiyaha Tamils' contributions, urgent action is needed for their equality and citizenship. The denial of citizenship, forced repatriation, and persistent marginalization have impeded the progress of the Malaiyaha Tamil community, underscoring the imperative for collective amplification of their voices and unwavering support for their plea for recognition and equitable treatment.

Democracy and human rights must prevail for all Sri Lankan communities. The Malaiyaha Tamil community deserves recognition with a distinct identity. Ensuring education, health, and social measures is vital for parity.

We strongly support a living wage, decent work, legal protection, and equal pay. Secure land tenure is vital for improved living conditions. Language and cultural rights must be safeguarded. Access to land with secure tenure for housing and livelihoods is vital to uplift their living conditions. Equal use and parity of status for the Tamil language, along with equal access to government services, are essential to safeguard their cultural and linguistic rights. We stand in solidarity with the Malaiyaha Tamil community's demand for the demarcation of plantation human settlements as new villages, protection of domestic workers, and the preservation and promotion of Malaiyaha culture.

Furthermore, we advocate for an equitable and inclusive electoral system and power-sharing that provides the Malaiyaha Tamil community with a meaningful role in governance at all tiers of government.

In commemorating 200 years since their arrival, we join their demand to become meaningful citizens, participating fully in Sri Lanka's life. We support their journey towards justice, recognition, and empowerment.