

The second Annual meeting of the Mothers' Front was held at the New Town Hall in Colombo on 23 June, 1992. We reproduce below, the speech delivered by Dr Manorani Saravanamuttu on the occasion.

RIGHTEOUS ANGER

It is now over one year since we women met with you in this same hall.

I wonder whether any of you in this hall today have thought of, or even imagined, what it must be like to have a son or a husband or a brother or a daughter snatched away from you and not to know their fate. That is why I still say that I was one of the luckiest mothers - because I got my son's body back to mourn over. I could not even begin to imagine what it would have been like not to have ever known.

Many of these women here before you today do not know - and they have the "inalienable right" to know. The righteous anger and sorrow that stems from that right makes it impossible for them to forget. It is this righteous anger that binds them and weaves them into this political outcry. What I would like to say to them and to all of you here today is that this righteous outcry of anger and sorrow must in my opinion, also be translated and channelled into a social outcry. I strongly feel that the "Mothers' Front" and other similar organisations which have arisen out of the holocausts of the past few years, due to whichever agent of organisation, should and must demand not only justice for the extra-judicial arrests and/or killings of their loved ones, but most important of all must forge themselves into a cohesive movement with this end in view - a change in the social framework of this country. They must be aware not only of themselves but of the women of future generations. We women must therefore bind ourselves together in a movement that works towards and strives for social change.

To change the social framework of our land so that there will not and never will be another holocaust, as has occurred in certain parts of our country in the recent past and which still goes on in other parts of the country.

In all wars, in all man-made violent situations, the ultimate victims of the violence are the women - and through them the truly innocent victims, the children.

For this reason I say again, the "Mothers Front" together with women of other organisations should strive to make sure that the women and children of the future throughout the land do not suffer as we have done and are doing today.

But let no one forget - we demand our rights - the rights of every human being in this world - justice for the injustices that have been done to us outside the framework of the laws of this land and outside even God's laws. For these violations of our basic rights as human beings, let alone citizens of this land and of the world - we cry for justice. Then we will be free to strive and work for a better land, a better society in which to bring forth children and nurture them as is the right of all women in this world.

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