

Time to forget, forgive in Lanka reconciliation: PM Wickremesinghe

16/02/2019 21:26 by admin

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Colombo: Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Friday said it was the time for the Sri Lankan communities to forget the past history and move ahead. Addressing a gathering in the former LTTE administrative capital of Kilinochchi, he said the island cannot live in the past.

"It is time that Sri Lankan communities forget and forgive the past difficult history and move forward," Wickremesinghe said.

"We all must admit that mistakes were made, apologise to each other and moved forward to achieve reconciliation," he said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ran its parallel government from Kilinochchi until the Sri Lankan government wrested control of the entire north and east from the liberation group's grasp in 2009.

He also underlined the need for a process of truth and reconciliation.

Last week, the prime minister proposed to the Cabinet to set up a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" to deal with issues of the post-conflict reconciliation.

Wickremesinghe said legal action against those responsible may achieve nothing but a lot more could be achieved by forgiving and forgetting the past.

The National Unity government, in the run-up to the 2015 presidential election, promised a true reconciliation mechanism by way of a new constitution to address the grievances of the Tamil minority community.

A process which started in 2017 to formulate a new constitution ran into difficulties with pro-Sinhala majority nationalists whipping up passions claiming the move was intended to grant Tamils a federal structure for the north and east which would eventually disintegrate the island's unitary character.

The main opposition leader Mahinda Rajapaksa, whose decisive military action brought an end to the LTTE's three decades old separatist campaign, has dubbed the constitutional making process as one which would pave way for the Tamil extremists to achieve a separate state which they could not do by waging war against the Sri Lankan state.

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