

## **Memorialisation and claims for justice in Japan's Hiroshima-Nagasaki atomic bombings and Sri Lanka's Mullivaikal Tamil victimhood**

C. Shamini

*Department of Political Science and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

This research analyzes memorialisation and justice-claiming regarding two primary civilian atrocities of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries: the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings in 1945 and the Mullivaikal massacre near the conclusion of Sri Lanka's civil war in 2009. Both catastrophes, occurring within distinct socio-historical contexts, resulted in unprecedented civilian death tolls and accompanying socio-political consequences, which show varying reactions by the respective concerned states and survivor communities. The Hiroshima-Nagasaki survivor witness has been remembered by and large as a 'world peace symbol,' with disarmament and survival most prominent, while state-sponsored histories put most emphasis on nuclear non-proliferation and reconciliation through treaty models (Hasegawa, 2019). Conversely, the Mullivaikal Tamil victim narrative features contested memory, state-led denial of Tamil experience, diaspora-led memorialisation, and ongoing legal action to seek accountability for alleged war crimes and genocide (Amnesty International, 2023; Tamil Guardian, 2024). Employing qualitative approaches, this study investigates memorialisation practices, survivor justice claims, and international law pertaining to both contexts. The findings of the study demonstrate how variations in political systems, relations of power, and international legal constraints deeply impact the construction of collective memory and justice strategies. Survivors in Hiroshima-Nagasaki prioritize peace activism over punishment of offenders, while Mullivaikal survivors continually seek legal justice in the face of state denial. The research highlights the need for contextualised theories in transitional justice and memorialisation discussions, illustrating how political realities influence victims' pursuit of healing and justice.

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