

**THE FIGHT IS AGAINST TERRORISM
AND NOT AGAINST THE
TAMIL PEOPLE**

சென்னை நகராட்சி நிர்வாகம்
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APPEALS TO THE NATION

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APPEALS TO THE NATION

Almost all of you know, better than I do, what happened in July 1983 as a repercussion of the terrorist activities in the North – the tragedy this country experienced, loss of life and property, enormous suffering of the people. But few of you know the serious damage done internationally to the image of Sri Lanka because of those events. This country is known as Dharmadvipa, “Island of Righteousness”, inheritor of an ancient, great Buddhist culture ; a country where people are kind, generous, gentle and hospitable. Those unfortunate happenings of last July put a stain on that good reputation.

In foreign countries a partial and incorrect propaganda was carried on through the Press, Radio and Television against Sri Lanka. This propaganda created in people’s minds a general impression that the Sinhalese, particularly the Sinhala Buddhists, were cruel, violent, savage, uncivilized. During that period I lived in Europe. So I know how widely this scandalous disrepute spread there.

But only after I came to Sri Lanka and studied the facts that I realized that propaganda against the Sinhalese, against the Sinhala Buddhists, was unjust.

Many Sinhala people have protected and helped the Tamils in distress. Many Buddhist temples and other religious places not only gave them shelter but also fed them and guarded them.

But none of these things were reported in foreign countries. Only things that created bad impression were given publicity as sensational news. Ninety nine per cent (99%) of the Sinhala people were against those criminal deeds. They were committed undoubtedly by a few gangs of irresponsible, unruly thugs.

However that disrepute is now gradually being forgotten, that stain is being effaced. But if anything like the last July calamity occurs again, its evil effects will be several times more catastrophic. It is the duty of all patriotic people to see that such a situation never arises again.

At this juncture we can learn an excellent lesson from England. It is this : Just as the terrorists in the North are perpetrating criminal deeds against the Unitary State of Sri Lanka, the Irish terrorists in Northern Ireland are since several years carrying on a vigorous programme of violent and atrocious activities against British Government. The British army and the police are fighting the terrorists in Northern Ireland. But the terrorists kill not only the

soldiers and policemen, but also innocent English men and women who are living in Northern Ireland. Those terrorists have even bombed some buildings in London causing damage to life and property.

Some of you may perhaps still remember Lord Louis Mountbatten. During the second World War he was the Commander-in-Chief of Southeast Asia and had his Head Quarters at Peradeniya. After the victory, he served as the last Vice-Roy of India. A very close relative of the Queen, he was regarded as the father of the British royal family. He also was wantonly killed by the Irish terrorists. Even then the royal family or the English people did not do any harm to innocent Irish people. Criminals are punished, but no harm is done to innocent Irish people. That is the just and equitable policy of the British Government and the people.

There are millions of Irish men and women living in England. They are engaged in various occupations, trade and business, and hold important and not so important positions in public and private sectors. Because of the provocative criminal actions of Irish terrorists the English people would never get uncontrollably furious and would never harm innocent Irish people, physically or even verbally. During the last nine or ten years I have been living in England, spending greater part of the year there. So I know this quite well. This is a valuable lesson we can learn.

It is the duty of all right-thinking people to protest against and condemn terrorism. But it is criminal and foolish to insult, revile or harm innocent Tamils as a way of taking revenge on the terrorists. *The fight is against terrorism and not against the Tamil people. The Sinhala people should understand this clearly and distinctly.*

In this connection there is another fact that should not be forgotten. I know personally that there is a considerable number of Tamils who are against terrorism and against dividing the country. It is not right that they are keeping silent, whatever the reason may be. They should come forward boldly and sincerely, and should declare that they would do everything to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of the Tamils, but they would oppose terrorism and any kind of partition of the country. With such a declaration they should form a non-political, independent organization. That will be to their credit and to their own interest. If such an organization comes into being, there is no doubt it will help, to a great extent, to bring about confidence, understanding, unity and peace between the two communities. Very earnestly I appeal to all my dear Tamil friends to create such an organization.

What the terrorists in the North are trying to do is not only to create an Eelam in the North and in the East, but to make the whole Island of Sri Lanka an

Eelam, ultimately reducing it again to a colony of some foreign power. It is now evident that the terrorists carry on this fight not alone, but with the aid of some secret foreign organizations.

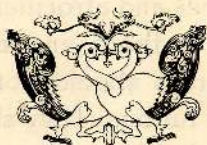
Now the terrorists are trying to create a situation similar to that of last July. It is a trap. Their plan is to enrage the Sinhala people by their violent, criminal activities and create disorder and chaos in the country. Please be careful not to get caught in this trap. Don't be deceived and don't get agitated by false rumours and propaganda. On this occasion it is a national duty of all patriots to be patient and to maintain peace, law and order.

No country in the world is against the suppression of terrorism. Not even the Tamil people in this country. All people in the world, except the terrorists, are unanimous for suppressing terrorism. What they condemn is harming the innocent.

You know that the Government is now making an effort to eradicate terrorism. In order to make it a success there is something very important that our people can do. It is this : Whatever cruel, violent, ugly, inhuman crimes and atrocities are committed by the terrorists in Northern and Eastern Provinces, people in other areas should not get agitated and should not become furious. They should remain calm, should keep law and order, without doing any harm to

innocent Tamils. Forget all political and other differences, and be united in this effort to defeat the common enemy. This is the greatest service you could and you should render at this moment for the good of the country, nation and religion.

This is my appeal.



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