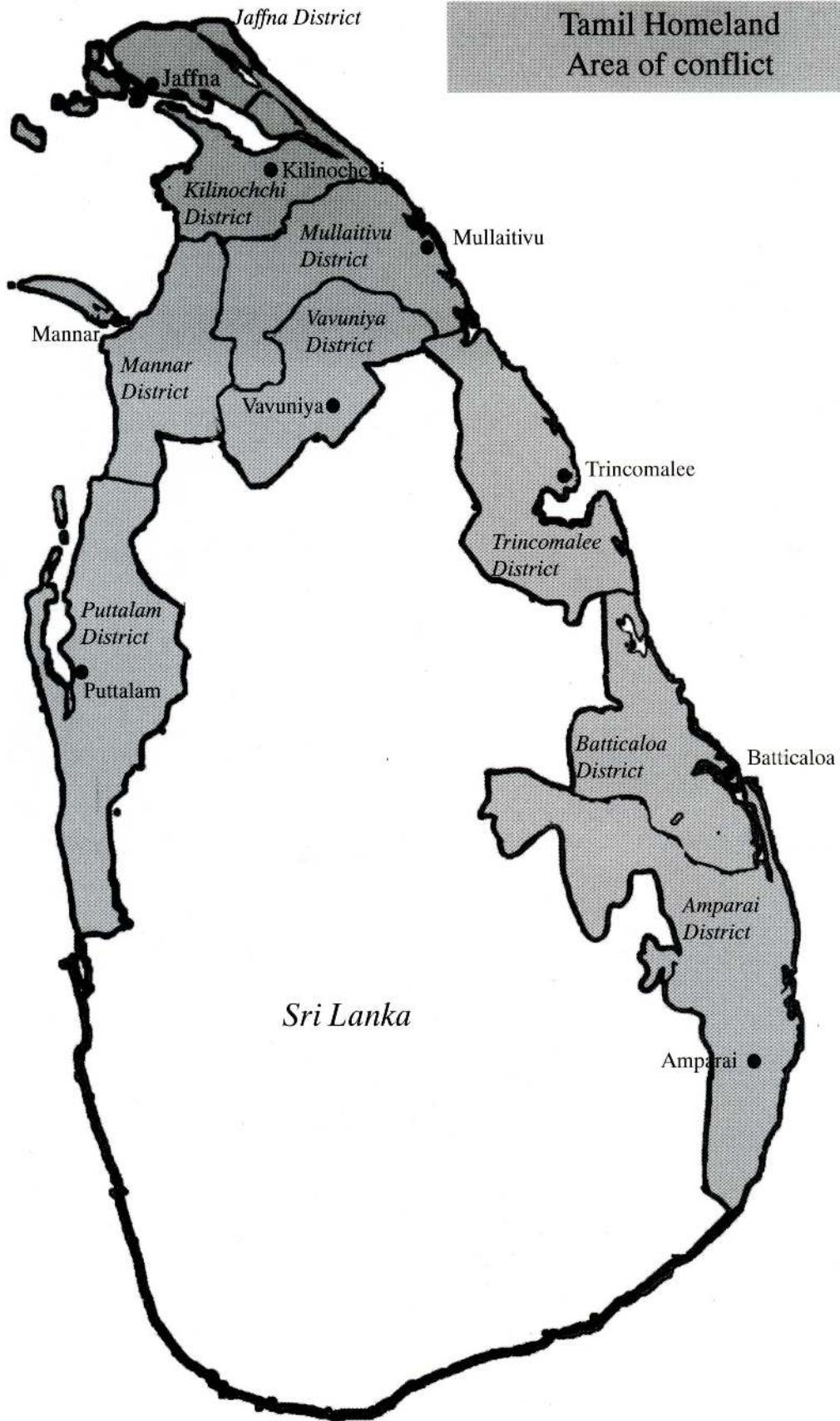


THE SLOW GENOCIDE



OF TAMILS

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The front cover photo is that of civilians killed in the Naval Church bombing by the Sri-Lankan air force in July 1995. Approximately 125 civilians were killed immediately, many more died later from their injuries due to the lack of medicines and medical personnel.

INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY

Since fighting began 14 years ago between the Sri Lankan Tamil separatists and the Sinhalese government forces, more than a million people have been displaced by the conflict and more than 50,000 have died.

Most of those affected have been Tamil civilians who have played no role in the fighting.

Since 1991, the government has placed an embargo on all areas of conflict in the North and East of the country, blocking or limiting the import of food, medicines, fuel and other essential items. The embargo has created an escalating health crisis for hundreds of thousands of displaced Tamil civilians.

The government maintains that it is providing humanitarian assistance to the displaced, however this assistance is grossly and purposefully inadequate.

Throughout Sri Lanka, hundreds of Tamils are arbitrarily detained, raped, tortured and killed by government security forces.

This humanitarian crisis is unfolding largely out of sight of the international community. Government authorities deny journalists and outside observers free access to conflict areas; cameras and documents are confiscated at army checkpoints. Meanwhile, many in the West are content to hear only the government's side of the story. When the Berlin Wall came down, there was hope that concerns about human rights would play an increasingly important role in guiding international foreign policy. The recent history of Sri Lanka suggests that there are still times when the world's great powers find it expedient to look the other way. This document aims to redress this situation.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1983, Sri Lanka has been ravaged by a bloody civil war between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority. Most of the fighting has occurred in the collar of coastal territory around the north and east of the island where Sri Lankan Tamils have lived for centuries. This region is the base for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a rebel separatist group. A new generation of frustrated Tamils, enraged by decades of widely perceived discrimination and having exhausted all political and peaceful methods to reverse oppression by the Sinhalese majority resorted to forming what they call The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The Tigers commenced on their path of fighting to create an independent Tamil homeland in the region. The Sinhalese authorities have said they will stop at nothing to wipe the Tigers out. Millions of Tamil civilians have been caught in the cross-fire.

Since the fighting began, over 50,000 people, mostly Tamil civilians, have died and a million people have been displaced from their homes.¹ Since October 1995 government forces have controlled the Jaffna Peninsula, the seat of the commercial and cultural capital of the disputed region, while Tamil separatists occupy large parts of the Vanni and Eastern regions. (See Map)

The outside world knows little about the conditions of the displaced civilians in the conflict areas of Northeast Sri Lanka. Of particular concern are those living in the Tamil controlled areas where the government has imposed a blockade of food, medicine and information that is now in its seventh year. The press and independent observers have no access to these regions. Cameras are prohibited and documents are confiscated at army checkpoints. However eyewitnesses, many of them relief workers and refugees have created a harrowing picture of life beyond this wall of silence, characterised by food shortages, widespread malnutrition, defective water supplies, collapsing medical and sanitary facilities and widespread human rights violations against Tamils including torture, extra-judicial killing and rape by the Sri Lankan state armed forces.

In July 1997, a Red Cross official who had toured the Vanni region (map-2) described the following scene: "I saw school buildings over-flowing with people and people without proper shelter living on the streets under trees and bushes. They subsist on one bowl of cereal a day or search for tubers in the ground. Some have been uprooted eight to ten times to avoid the fighting. They are crying out that there is no peace for them."² Other reports confirm that diarrhoeal disease is endemic due to water shortages, that hospitals are overflowing with patients while staff and supplies are in desperately short supply, and even government figures testify that infant and maternal mortality are now twice as high as in the rest of the country.³

The government is widely believed to be guilty in creating this humanitarian disaster which overwhelmingly affects innocent civilians who have played no rôle in the conflict. Because so little information is allowed out of conflict areas, the impression has been created that the Sri Lankan conflict is a war against terrorists and not against the whole Tamil population. **In a speech to the Australian House of Representatives, MP Paul Zammit said the situation was "a blight on humanity" and no less than "slow genocide, aimed at the Tamil people," defined by the UN as the intention to "destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."**⁴

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT IN SRI LANKA: Loss of rights and the birth of radicalism.

Hugh Cleghorn, the first British Colonial Secretary in Ceylon described its people in this way: "Two very different nations, from a very ancient period, have divided the island between them. The Sinhalese and the Tamils differ entirely in their religions, language and manners." (See map-1)

Although the British colonised the island in 1802, it was only in 1833 that they officially united Ceylon under colonial rule, establishing a central government at Colombo on the west coast. For the next 115 years, there were no overt conflicts between Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic groups. The British left Ceylon in 1948 soon after pulling out of India and Pakistan. A Westminster model parliamentary system was established and in the 1947 elections candidates representing the Sinhalese majority won the leadership of the country.

Ethnic tensions began to emerge almost immediately after independence. In a move seen as an attempt to dilute Tamil political power, the government encouraged, with grants and other incentives, Sinhalese settlement in traditionally Tamil areas in the Northeast. More than a million Tamils living in the hill country in central Sri Lanka were disenfranchised. These settlers had been brought from India by the British to work on large coffee and tea plantations and had lived on the island for generations. There was also wide discrimination against Tamils in education and employment, including the armed forces, throughout the country.

In 1956, the "Sinhala Only Act" established Sinhala as the national language, provoking much controversy. Tamil political groups had begun campaigning for a federal system that would give Tamils a degree of autonomy. The Federal Party organised peaceful demonstrations in Colombo and the Northeast following the Gandhian model of passive resistance. However mobs of extremist Sinhalese attacked the demonstrators and over 100 Tamils were killed. Five years later when groups of Tamils organised another

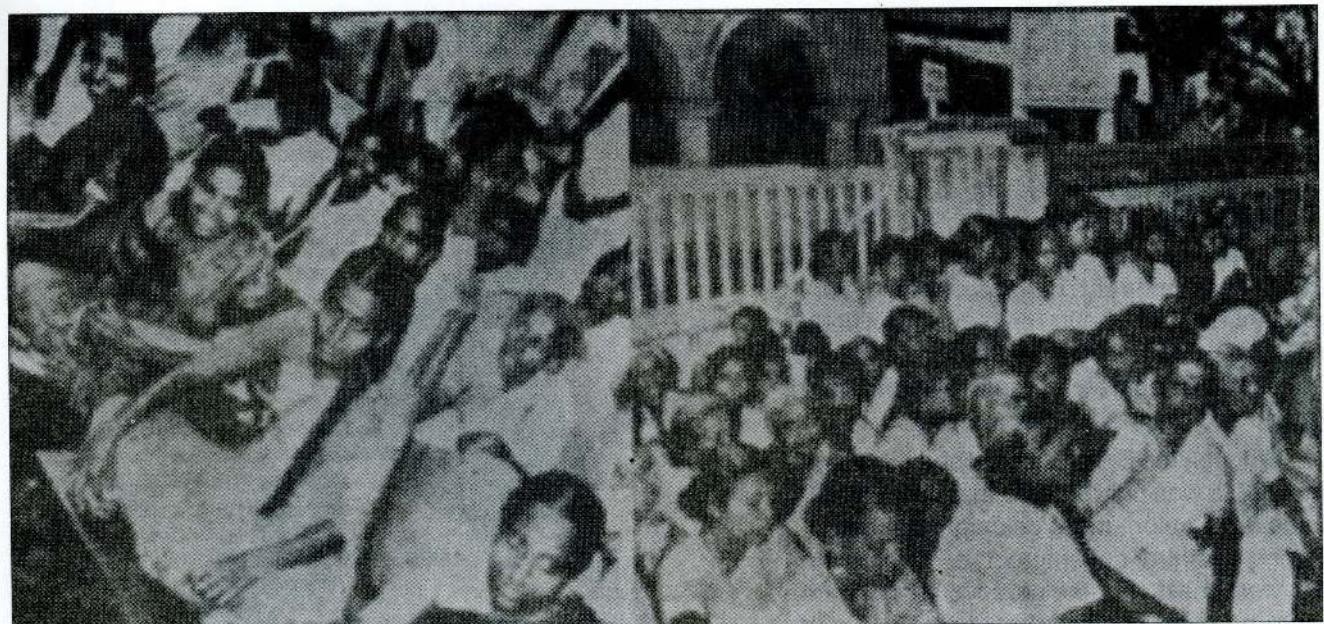


One land, two peoples

peaceful protest against discrimination, many Tamil MPs were arrested and imprisoned.

In 1972, Ceylon was renamed the Republic of Sri Lanka and Buddhism was established as the State religion. This gave more power to Buddhist clerics, who have consistently thwarted plans for a federal solution to the Tamil crisis.

At the same time, the government removed a key section of the Constitution guaranteeing minority rights. After decades of frustration, this highly controversial move eventually led to the formation of the



Gandhian style protest by Tamil women against Sinhala State oppression 1961

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), a coalition of political parties campaigning for the founding of an independent, sovereign, secular, socialist state in the North and East of the Island which would be called Tamil Eelam. **In the 1977 parliamentary elections, the TULF won eighteen out of twenty-four seats in the Northeast, largely Tamil, region of Sri Lanka, giving a clear mandate for Tamil independence.**

Organised state violence directed against Tamils engaged in peaceful protest continued during the 1960's and 1970's. Throughout the 1970's groups of young Tamil militant separatists began to organise, eventually leading to the founding of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Many of the young people who joined the Tigers were frustrated by a system of University entrance standards giving Sinhalese applicants a significant and unfair advantage.

1970s groups of Tamil youths attacked armed military or police targets and the military responded by rounding up and torturing hundreds of civilians under suspicion of terrorism. No trials were conducted. In 1981, many buildings, including the offices and printing press of the only Tamil Newspaper, bookshops and the elegant Jaffna Public Library which contained 95,000 volumes, including numerous rare manuscripts were burnt to the ground by the security forces.

The present conflict can be traced to events occurring in the summer of 1983. In protest against the presence of government troops in the

North east provinces, a group of Tamil youths ambushed an army patrol in the Jaffna district. This triggered a campaign of reprisals against Tamils throughout the country. Thousands of Tamils were killed and more than 18,000 homes were destroyed.⁵



In the late Burnt down Jaffna library

Virtually none of the victims of these reprisals, many of whom were identified through voting registers, had been involved in the original ambush. The violence continued and by the end of the week, 125,000 Tamils had been displaced.

Even what was believed to be a peace keeping intervention on the part of India, instead led to new confrontation between the Indian troops and the Tamil Tigers. Indiscriminate bombing of the region has caused massive destruction of buildings and many thousands of deaths.⁶

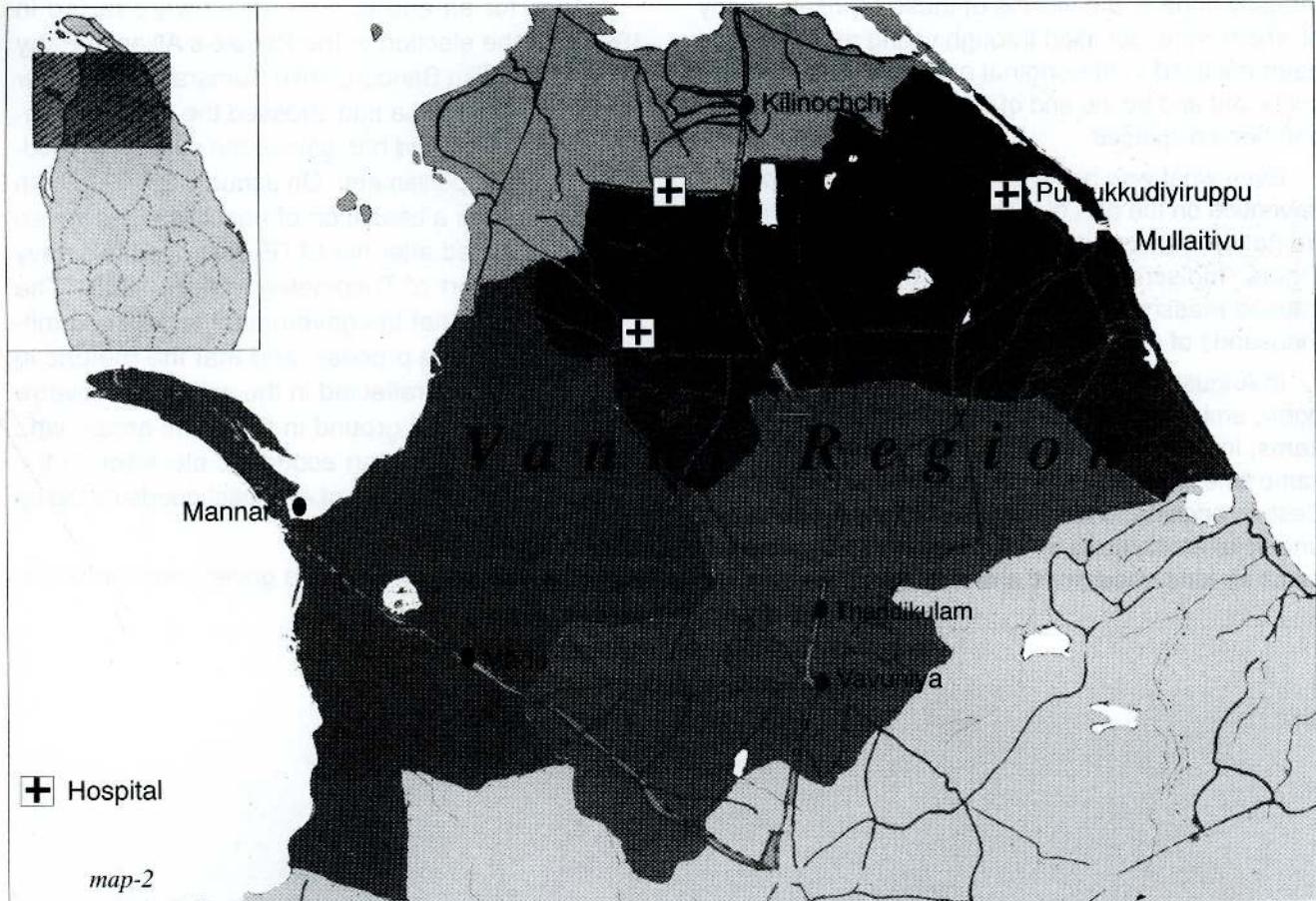
In August 1991, the government imposed an economic embargo in the North, banning the import of 42 items, including batteries, cameras and fuel. At the same time, the army imposed a similar embargo in the East. In addition, checkpoint guards impose arbitrary, unofficial embargoes of their own on such essential items as food, medicines and fertilisers.

Hopes for an end to the conflict were raised in 1994 with the election of the People's Alliance Party under Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge. In her campaign, Chandrika had stressed the theme of ethnic reconciliation and had gained the support of moderate Tamils in parliament. On January 25, 1995 both sides agreed to a cessation of hostilities. However, fighting resumed after the LTTE destroyed two navy ships in the port of Tricomelee in April 1995. The rebels claimed that the government lacked commitment to the peace process, and that the rhetoric in Colombo was not reflected in the actions of government troops on the ground in the Tamil areas, who continued to enforce an economic blockade in the region restricting the flow of essential goods including food and medicines.

In the summer of 1995, the government launched



Refugees leaving Jaffna in August 1995



Vanni region- Home for one million displaced Tamils

a major offensive against the LTTE controlled Jaffna peninsula. By December, nearly 300,000 people, about a third of the Tamil population had been displaced. An anonymous academic witnessed the invasion and made the following observations:

"The army that invaded Jaffna, flattening everything in its path, caused terror and panic among unarmed Tamil civilians. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, the elderly and disabled joined an endless exodus into areas where there was hardly any shelter or drinking water. Paying little heed to the monsoon downpour, the people moved silently and slowly down the road to Thenmaradchi, like a herd of cattle being driven to slaughter. They were standing, sitting, falling, crawling on the road, without even knowing their destination. One incident will haunt the people of the little village of Potpathy, three young brothers all under ten years old, who were blown to pieces by a rocket fired from a warplane. Their mother could not be consoled.

"More than a hundred children died as a result of bombing and shelling between July and October, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the British charity Save the Children Fund. And yet the free world has maintained a silence about the slaughter, under the banner of neutrality. Neutrality in such situations helps the killers, not the victims. Neutrality becomes another word for abject indifference."

THE DISPLACED

Many Tamils who fled Jaffna in 1995 moved to the LTTE controlled areas further south. According to the UN, more than 350,000 people fled to the jungle area of the Vanni region where shelter for refugees is becoming a life and death struggle. However a government circular released in May 1997 indicates that dry rations will only be provided for 185,000 people.⁸ Continued severe food shortages and malnutrition are the likely outcomes of such a policy unless the UN or some other international body intervenes.

Another 150,000 people have fled to Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi Northeast of Jaffna, and an estimated 200,000 more are on the mainland opposite Mannar island. Most of these refugees were eventually pushed into the Vanni region south of Jaffna, now home to more than a million displaced. There are also pockets of displaced people in the Eastern province about 60% of which is under LTTE control.

Meanwhile in Vavuniya, which is occupied by the security forces, arriving refugees are sent to squalid transit and welfare camps. Men and women are separated in large storage centres where there is no privacy. There is, on average, one toilet for every 100 people. Husbands and wives receive no information about each other.⁹

In Jaffna, where 80% of buildings have been damaged by war, many of the houses abandoned by refugees are now occupied by government soldiers.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in Batticaloa district, 92,000 homes have been damaged.¹¹

DOING WITHOUT

The government of Sri Lanka has imposed an embargo in the LTTE controlled areas on essential items including surgical equipment, oxygen, dressings and bandages, essential drugs, fertilisers and fuel. Some regions have been affected by the blockade for more than five years. Even in the government controlled Jaffna district, there remains an unofficial embargo enforced by army officials.

The electricity supplying the Jaffna district was cut off in 1990. Since then the Jaffna Teaching Hospital has been dependent on small generators that fall far short of need. After the capture of Jaffna and occupation by the army, the electricity supply has improved. Nevertheless, many parts of the Northeast remain without electricity. In addition, petrol and diesel are restricted, forcing the population to rely on kerosene, also in limited supply, for the storage of vaccines and other medicines, and even the lighting of classrooms.



*Food shortages have had a severe effect
on child health in the Northeast*



Hospital in Vanni region with air-raid damage

Government aid to the Northeast was cut off after a new poverty alleviation programme was inaugurated in February 1997. The British Refugee Council reports that the new programme is being implemented in the South, but not the North and East.

International aid has been further stalled because the LTTE, convinced that aid money passing through government hands will be mismanaged, has argued that reconstruction projects should be postponed until there is a permanent peace.¹²

WATER SCARCITY AND POOR SANITATION

There is no water flushed sewerage system anywhere in the Northeast of the island. The influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees has created a serious threat of water borne disease. Chlorine for water purification is in short supply.¹³

In the summer of 1997, a Red Cross engineer reported that his team had abandoned efforts to

install new hand pumps for drinking water in Mullaitivu after being denied permission from the authorities to take heavy equipment in the area for six months. Wells in the region are currently drying up because of drought, and there are fears that the water shortage will cause further spread of serious diarrhoeal diseases including typhoid, dysentery and cholera, already endemic in the region.¹⁴ Without clean water and proper latrines, "an epidemic could hit in a matter of days, and the world probably won't see it happen," according to another ICRC official.¹⁵

RESTRICTION ON FOOD AND MALNUTRITION

A flood of refugees arrived in the Vanni region when local food production had been devastated by the failure of the monsoon rains. Production has been further affected by drought and the government embargo on fertilisers and fuel. In addition army tanks avoiding blockades and landmines on the road have been driving over the paddy fields,



Children sleep under trees

churning up the soil and destroying the crops. Meanwhile, the supply of food from outside is heavily restricted. A government agent in Mullaitivu reported that during 1996, less than half of the required essential goods were allowed past army checkpoints. While the government claims that sufficient food is being sent to the Vanni region, only 640 lorry loads of food arrived in May and June 1997, far short of the estimated 1,525 lorry loads that are needed. In addition 7,900 barrels of kerosene are required in the region, but only 2,700 were received.¹⁶

Before the conflict began, the Jaffna district supplied 30% of the island's fish, but in 1990, the government imposed a ban on fishing, depriving the people of a major source of protein. Hundreds of fishermen were killed and labelled as LTTE rebels when they tried to fish. By 1993, the catch was down to 1000 tonnes, down from 33,000 before the war.¹⁷

Malnutrition among children in the Jaffna district increased sharply after the start of the conflict. A survey conducted in 1976 indicated that only 3.7% of children in Jaffna were acutely malnourished, the lowest rate anywhere on the island. By 1993, three years after the government imposed its blockade, nearly 20% of children were malnourished.¹⁸ The nutritional status of the thousands of children in the Vanni region displaced by the government capture of Jaffna two years ago, is unknown, but reports from the charity Medecins Sans Frontières (MSF) confirm high levels of malnutrition there. MSF, in its 15th August 97 report says, since June it has screened and confirmed cases of acute malnutrition among displaced Tamil children in Madu refugee camp. Saim Malika (MSF co-ordinator) says that 50% of the children were affected. Food and medicines are urgently needed in the camp. For the last 5 months, no food relief has been supplied to the refugee camp located in Madu.

In early July 1997, local and foreign NGOs acknowledged in an emergency meeting in Mullaitivu that the government of Sri Lanka is purposefully disrupting the flow of urgently needed food to thousands of displaced Tamils. NGO representatives stated that despite repeatedly presenting the government with facts and figures related to the desperate food shortage among the displaced, they had met with deliberate government obstruction in carrying out relief work.

THE HEALTH CRISIS

The health care system in the Northeast was once a model, not only for Sri Lanka, but for the world. Few low income countries had such low rates of maternal and infant mortality. In Jaffna, in particular, half as many children died in their first year compared to the national average in 1982. Today, however, infant mortality in Jaffna is twice the national average. In 1982, maternal mortality was no higher in Jaffna than in the rest of the country. Now it, too, is twice as high.¹⁹

Malaria, which had been eradicated in the 1960s is now endemic. Recently, twenty-two out of fifty-six deaths at Mallavi hospital in LTTE territory were due to malaria. Diarrhoeal disease, hepatitis, anaemia, iodine deficiency and numerous other nutritional problems are widespread.

Food shortages leading to poor nutrition, water and power shortages and lack of sanitation are partly to blame for this deteriorating health situation. However, the health system itself, hospitals, drug supplies and staff, have also been casualties of the war in Sri Lanka.

The Jaffna Teaching Hospital has been repeatedly shelled since 1983. Only 17 out of 30 wards now function at all. Staff are under constant threat. Even in October 1987, when the hospital was occupied by an Indian peacekeeping force, government soldiers entered the wards and began shooting randomly. Eighty-one people, including medical staff, nurses, administrators, patients and their relatives were killed.

In February and March 1997 a Sri Lankan doctor now living in London returned to Colombo and Jaffna to visit a sick relative. He made the following observations.

"The government is using food and medicine as a weapon to punish the Tamils. Health professionals in the smaller hospitals in the Northeast told me several patients had been lost due to delays during transfer to Jaffna District Hospital. Even if it is possible to find transport and fuel and get through the checkpoints, ambulance drivers and nurses are often themselves too frightened to make the journey, particularly during the curfew hours from 6pm to 7am. During the curfew, the hospital must get special permission from the army officers before they can transfer a sick patient and this often causes fatal delays.



*School girl killed in the Nagerkovil Central School bombing - Sept.22nd 1995
Reported by MSF*

"There is a dire shortage of trained staff at the hospital, especially at senior levels. There is no pathologist, no consultant led paediatric or anaesthetic service and an acute shortage of surgeons. At present there are vacancies for thirty-four mid-wives.

There are no cooling facilities in the mortuary, and no continuous water supply, except in the labour room, operating theatre and intensive care unit."

"Oxygen and nitrous oxide, used during surgical operations have been restricted and only inadequate quantities reach Jaffna hospital. Other items are delayed by an elaborate bureaucratic system of procurement in which the Ministry of Health authorises shipments which are then held up by local agents of the Ministry of Defence. For example, essential drugs are requested from the central stores in Colombo, and in principle, should be shipped to conflict areas once a week. Often, however, the Ministry of Defence delays certain requests, such as painkillers, insulin, asthma medicine and oral rehydration salts for children with diarrhoea. Supplies destined for LTTE controlled areas have also been confiscated at the border. Laboratory facilities for blood and urine tests or electro-cardiograms are rarely available.

"In Vanni region, Puthukkudiruppu hospital, a small, rural, sixty bed hospital now has over 300 inpatients. Patients occupy every inch of floor space. Some even find shelter under the mango trees outside. At Mallavi hospital, four doctor treat 850 patients a day. Patients start lining up at five in the morning for a consultation that may last for only forty seconds."

Even non-hospital based services have been affected. The government escalated its Jaffna offensive in 1995 on National Polio Day, when children all over the country were to be immunised against this crippling disease. The fighting disrupted the distribution of vaccines to children in the North and East. **In October this year Sri Lankan government did not only break its pledge to UNICEF to observe a cease-fire during the anti-polio drive but bombed the Dr. Ponnambalam hospital building in the Vanni area.**

Relief agency representatives are often afraid to speak out, fearing that they will be denied access to the region if they are seen to be criticising the government. In September 1995, The International

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) issued a press release on the bombing of church in Naval, Jaffna in which many displaced civilians were killed. Immediately afterwards the Red Cross ship which was a lifeline for the Jaffna Tamils was banned from travelling to the North.

TERROR IN NORTHEAST:

ARBITRARY DETENTION, DISAPPEARANCES AND KILLINGS

Most of those who remained in Jaffna after the government took the city in 1995 are caught in the cross-fire between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE. The LTTE has been accused of a number of attacks and murders committed against those it suspects of collaboration with the government. At the same time, civilians live in constant fear of arrest, detention and rape by government soldiers. In 1996, the US Committee for Refugees reported, "we talked to many people who had made lists of those who were missing and if you add them up, it totalled about 700 people. People don't know whether their son or daughter is alive, where they are, what conditions they are held under or why they are being detained."

Security forces continue to conduct mass arrests of young Tamils both male and female, in Colombo, the East and on the Jaffna Peninsula. Exact numbers of arrests are impossible to determine, but are believed to number in the thousands, according to Tamil MP for Batticaloa district Joseph Pararajasingham.

According to a 1997 Amnesty International report, 648 people disappeared from security force custody on the Jaffna peninsula in the first year since the security forces gained control of the region. In February 1997 the security forces were responsible for the extra-judicial killings of at least fifty Tamils, including twenty-four civilians in the eastern village of Kumarapuram. Sri Lanka registers more complaints with the UN about disappearances than nearly any other nation on earth.

"During the past half year," Pararajasingham wrote in September 1997, "There have been on average seven extrajudicial killings and disappearances every month in my district." In March 1997, one police officer who is still in active service, was

identified by numerous witnesses to have been responsible for the shooting and killing of at least five Tamil civilians in their homes or businesses.²⁰

"In the Tamil areas," said the London-based Sri Lankan doctor who visited the country this year, "doctors say that they see bodies with gunshot wounds every day, but they cannot photograph the victims as no cameras are allowed.

TORTURE AND RAPE

In November 1996, a supreme court judge stated publicly that torture continued unabated in police stations in spite of a number of judicial pronouncements condemning the practice. Methods of torture included electric shock, beatings, especially on the soles of the feet, burnings, near drownings, suspension by the wrists or feet in contorted positions and placing insecticide, gasoline or chilli powder soaked bags over the head. Yet during the year, not one has been convicted under Sri Lanka's anti-torture laws.

Seven people were killed under torture at Thandikulam camp according to a Colombo lawyer. The lawyer testified before a delegation from the British Refugee Council in 1996 and produced sworn affidavits describing torture methods such as pulling a shopping bag full of petrol over a suspect's head, sticking chilli peppers into a suspect's rectum or bottles into a suspect woman's vagina and hanging suspects up-down. The lawyer said "any young fellow who is arrested will be tortured."

The visiting Sri Lankan doctor said, "in the Human Rights office in Colombo, I met a young man who had been arrested when he was sixteen. He had been arrested and beaten up and electrocuted in several parts of his body before being released. His mother knew that young men who are arrested and released are not given any clearance certificate, even if there is no evidence against them and are often arrested again. The trauma from the first arrest often causes permanent marks on the body, which are alleged by the police to have been incurred during training as rebels.

"The issue of rape is a really serious one," according to the US committee for Refugees. "In Jaffna and in the Vanni, anybody you talk to about the situation in Jaffna, the two things they mention are disappearances and rape. When you ask those who have fled to Vanni whether they would ever go back to Jaffna, the response is always, 'I can't go

back, I have a young daughter.' A married woman with three children who had been taken from her house by soldiers felt the night curfew made the situation worse, because when women were dragged out of their houses at night, their families could not run after them for fear of being accused of breaking the curfew.²¹

On May 17, 1997 Murugesapillai Koneswary was walking past the Central Camp Police Station on the border between Batticaloa and Amparai districts when she was apprehended, raped and murdered. Before she died, a hand-grenade was exploded on her abdomen in order to cover up evidence of sexual assault. Evidence strongly suggests that policemen living at the post were responsible for Koneswary's horrifying death. Even President Chandrika has ordered a special inquiry into the crime. Nevertheless, while the suspects are well known in the community, no one has yet been taken into custody. On many occasions in the past when investigations and presidential special inquiries have been set up to investigate incidents of human rights violations the perpetrators of the war crimes have never been brought to justice.

In the last two years, says Batticaloa MP Joseph Parajasingham, security forces are alleged to have raped at least 100 women in his district. The true number is probably much higher as many rapes go unreported. While many suspects have been identified by their victims, none have yet to be brought to trial.

CONCLUSION

In 1977 Sri Lankan Tamils voted in democratic elections and gave their MP's the mandate for an Independent state of Tamil Eelam. The origins of the armed struggle can be traced back to six years after this historic vote for Independence. President Chandrika came to power in 1994 with the promise that she would find a solution to the conflict. However little progress has been made. Meanwhile the slow genocide continues in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Hundreds of thousands of children are coming of age with profound physical, mental and social wounds. Families have been up-rooted and torn apart. A whole way of life has been crushed. The damage may last for generations. Independent Sri Lanka will be fifty years old in 1998. There can be no greater tribute to a hopeful future than for this nation to begin to heal the injuries of its recent past.

CALL FOR ACTION

- * The international community must involve itself more in building peace in Sri Lanka and must stop supplying arms to the parties.
- * The Sri Lankan Government must be urged to adhere to UN conventions regarding the safety of civilians in a war zone and the rights of children.
- * The Sri Lankan government must repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act and emergency regulations that enable the security forces to violate human rights with impunity.
- * Desperately needed medical staff and equipment must be supplied to the Northeast, including surgeons, autoclaves, essential drugs and radio therapy facilities for cancer patients.
- * Health workers and journalists must be allowed free access to areas of conflict and communications facilities such as telephones, faxes and radio links must be restored.
- * The Sri Lankan government must end all official and unofficial embargoes on food, medicines and other essential items to the Northeast province.
- * The Sri Lankan government must restore the electricity supply to the Northeast so that medicines and blood can be preserved and schools and industries can function.

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This document was prepared by the Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT). The Medical Institute of Tamils was founded in 1988 by Tamil doctors of Sri-Lankan origin working in the United Kingdom. The institute aims to help the Tamil community in the UK with health and related matters. It also has extensive links with health professionals and organisations in Sri-Lanka, and supports health-care projects in the Tamil homeland as much as is possible in the current situation.





*Landmine victims
in Tamil homeland*

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