

## Sri Lanka has been given the green light for a new war

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Buddhist monks joined Sinhala nationalists protesting in Colombo Monday against proposals to share power with Tamils. Photo TamilNet.

## Vaharai's agony continues

SRI LANKA'S military continued its assault against the LTTE-held Vaharai region over the weekend, killing scores of Tamil civilians with air and artillery strikes. The United Nations and international ceasefire monitors protested the targeting of civilians.

Ever since tens of thousands of Tamils who fled earlier Sri Lankan military offensives in Trincomalee arrived in Vaharai, in northern Batticaloa, the government has cut off supplies of food and medicine to the impoverished region, creating a humanitarian crisis.

There are over 45,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Vaharai area, which has been

under siege for three months.

But only one convoy has been allowed to Vaharai since October 30 this year.

Even then, 30 of the trucks carrying food in that convoy were not allowed by the military to proceed across the border. Those that got through brought enough food for two weeks at most.

Whilst maintaining the economic embargo, despite international disquiet, the Sri Lankan government has continued daily bombardment and repeated offensives to overrun the LTTE-held region.

Over 40 civilians were killed by Sri Lankan artillery over the weekend as the Army launched another effort to capture Vaharai.

A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) offensive from south of Vaharai along the coastal line towards Panichchankerni was defeated Sunday, a day after an earlier one.

The assault failed to break through LTTE resistance. At least 28 Sri Lankan soldiers and 16 Tigers were killed based on each side's admission of losses Sunday.

The Army claimed to have killed 40 Tigers and the LTTE said 53 SLA soldiers had been killed, including 30 in Saturday's fighting.

The Army claimed it had been restrained in its use of heavy firepower for fear of killing Tamil civilians.

But civilians bore the brunt of

the Sri Lankan onslaught.

On Sunday 19 civilians were killed by Sri Lankan shelling and 50 were wounded, 27 critically.

On Saturday at least 15 civilians, including a 6-month-old baby, were killed and 41 wounded, ten critically, when the military shelled IDP camps in Vamivedduvan and Palchenai.

Many more were feared dead and wounded. Refugees told medical workers that dead bodies were being buried as they were fleeing from artillery fire.

On Sunday, the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) appealed for the SLMM and aid

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## NEWS

# Sri Lanka government distances itself from 'devolution' report

THE Sri Lankan government has formally distanced itself from a 'majority' report submitted by a divided experts committee on devolution of power set up by President Mahinda Rajapaksa to solve the island's ethnic conflict, the Hindustan Times reported.

The move came as the ultra-Sinhala nationalist JVP, Sri Lanka's third largest party and an ideological ally of President Rajapakse walked out of the all-party committee the report was commissioned for, in protest at suggestions power should be shared with the Tamils.

Denying that the government backed the recommendations made by 11 out of the 17 members of the panel, cabinet spokesman Anura Priyadarshana Yapa said on Sunday that reports describing the recommendations as embodying the government's views were mere "speculation".

More significantly, he also saw mischief in such an interpretation, saying that these reports could be an attempt to belittle the steps taken by the government to battle the "fascist designs of the LTTE."

But on Tuesday, the JVP said it was withdrawing from the All Party Representative Committee (APRC), saying the conference was taking into consideration 'undemocratic' recommendations.

Eleven of the seventeen experts had agreed on a common report though individual members had noted reservations on certain points. This is presented as the 'majority' report.

But the main 'minority' report reflecting a conservative Sinhala majoritarian view comes from four other members, all Sinhalese, including the top lawyer and doyen of Sinhala nationalists, H. L. De Silva, PC.

There will also be two dissenting reports presented by two other members, also Sinhalese.

Political observers say that the rightwing Rajapakse government's eagerness to distance itself from the 'majority report' stems from an anxiety not to alienate the majority Sinhala community, which has consistently opposed substantial devolution of power to the Tamil majority North-East, seeing it as a stepping stone to secession.

The Hindustan Times' correspondent, PK Balachandran, says it is noteworthy that the government thinks it fit to distance itself from the majority report despite the fact that 6 of the 11 who wrote it are Sinhala.

The majority report had recommended the retention of the present unit of devolution, namely, the provinces.

But the "minority report" had recommended that the "village" be the unit of devolution, thus denying to the minority Tamils, the right to an autonomous North Eastern Province.

The minority report was not against the retention of the provinces, but it said that key strategic areas like ports and airports should be with the Centre.

The Majority Report favoured the continued unification of the Northern and Eastern Provinces to give the Tamils a unified place of habitation, though the unification of 1987 had been annulled this year by the Supreme Court.

But as a concession to the Sinhala and Muslims, it wanted the unification to be subjected to a referendum in 10 years.

The minority report, on the other hand, was totally opposed to the unification.

The Sinhalese fear a Tamil reconsolidation of the Northeast which could lead to secession of the traditional Tamil homeland.

The majority report supported the creation of autonomous enclaves for Muslims and Sinhalese in the merged Northeast.

But the minority report said that ethnic enclaves would only tear the national fabric.



The sign says it all at a Sinhala protest this week. Photo TamilNet

The majority report said that any new constitution should do away with the Concurrent List in the case of the Tamil-majority Northeastern province.

But the minority report said that the concurrent list, which allows the Centre to legislate on some devolved subjects, should be retained to prevent the provinces from breaking away from the national mainstream.

The majority report wanted two Vice Presidents to be appointed, one each from the minority Tamil and Muslim communities.

But the minority report said that it would be enough if key cabinet portfolios were given to the minorities.

While the majority wanted all

state land in the provinces to be vested with the provincial government, the Minority wanted all such land to continue to be vested with the Centre.

The majority wanted Sri Lanka not to have a state religion or any religion to be given the "foremost" position. But the Minority wanted the present system wherein Buddhism enjoys "foremost position" to continue.

The Tamils and Muslims like the state to be secular and not identified with one religion because religion in Sri Lanka is mixed up with ethnicity. Most Sinhala are Buddhist, while most Tamils are Hindus. And the Muslims see themselves as a distinct ethnic group.



Elderly and young relatives of one of Sri Lanka's many 'disappeared' people joined a protest Friday against the abductions which have soared since President Mahinda Rajapakse came to power. The Committee for Investigation of the Disappeared (CID), and the National Front Against War (NFAW) staged a demonstration at Peliyagoda circle on the Colombo-Negombo road calling for a stop to disappearances. The protest was led by Dr. Wickremabahu Karunaratne, the patron of the CID and the leader of the New Leftist Front party. Photo TamilNet

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## NEWS

# Vaharai...

*Continued from page 1*

workers to be allowed in.

"Over 30 shells have landed close to the Vaharai Hospital in the past few hours and six TRO-run Camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the area have received direct hits from shells," the TRO said.

On Monday, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was allowed by the military to evacuate 30 wounded civilians, including seven children.

A cluster of seven boats moved them from Vaharai to a hospital in government-controlled Valaichenai to the south.

But even as the boats were being loaded, Sri Lanka artillery shells exploded nearby, compelling the ICRC to abandon another task - the recovery of the bodies of 4 SLA soldiers left behind on Sunday.

"Many difficulties had to be overcome to organize this evacuation", said Martin de Boer, head of the ICRC sub-delegation in Batticaloa, who led the operation.

"But thanks to the security guarantees provided by both parties to the conflict, we finally succeeded in reaching Vaharai hospital and evacuating the most serious cases. However, other more injured civilians are waiting to be evacuated".

The ICRC reminded both parties "of their obligation to comply with international humanitarian law. "[We] urgently calls upon both parties to ensure the protection of the civilian population as well as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. Finally [we] urge the parties to respect the

freedom of movement of internally displaced people," the ICRC said.

The Batticaloa district Parliamentarian, S. Jeyanandamoorthy, condemned the Sri Lankan government for waging a "coward's war" against civilians.

In comments Sunday he also condemned the international community for standing by and urged it "not to show bias in their condemnation of the attacks that targeted civilians."

He was referring to the prompt condemnation Friday of an LTTE artillery attack that hit a school and houses belonging to Sinhalese near the Kallaru SLA camp.

An estimated 3,000 Sinhalese fled the area and were receiving government and international assistance further away.

The Sri Lankan government flew journalists to the area to photograph the damaged houses and school.

"While the Government provides Sinhalese civilians of Sinhapura, Mahindapura, Somapura and Kallaru transport along the land route to the safe locations, it hesitates to even allow the critically wounded Tamil civilians in need of urgent medical treatment from Vaharai to Valaichenai or Batticaloa," Mr. Jeyanandamoorthy said.

"You don't serve peace if you fail to condemn the Sri Lankan government in strongest possible terms for engaging in aggression on civilian population," he said in an appeal to the international community.

**'Choose your side' p5  
Editorial, p6**

## UN: 'all rights being breached'

THE United Nations says it "is gravely concerned at the deteriorating prospects facing civilians in Vaharai as intense shelling continues for the fifth day in the area."

"An unconfirmed number of civilians are dead with dozens lying wounded at Vaharai hospital. Innocent civilians and school children suffered direct attacks on a school and private homes," the UN said.

"In Trincomalee district, some 2,500 civilians left their homes and took refuge in Kantale.

"Humanitarian agencies are delivering immediate assistance to the affected population and stand ready to undertake humanitarian response operations to address evolving needs.

"The United Nations is deeply concerned about indiscriminate shelling of civilian residential areas, leading to death, injuries and evacuation of communities to Kantale and surrounding areas, out of danger zones.

"The critical need of the moment is the protection of these desperate civilians," warned Amin Awad, Acting UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

"All fundamental rights are currently being breached in areas like Vaharai and villages in Trincomalee District and it is imperative that direct shelling where civilians reside stops and the civilian population must be granted full and unhindered freedom of movement, away from military operations," he said.

"The wounded need to be evacuated and assistance and protection to the civilian population must be guaranteed.

"We urgently expect the parties to adhere to their responsibilities under international humanitarian law to ensure protection of civilians and their freedom of movement, and unimpeded and secure access for international humanitarian actors to the north and east of the country," the UN said.



Wounded civilians preparing to be evacuated from Vaharai in ICRC boats on Monday. Photo TamilNet

## Aid groups blocked

WESTERN aid groups warned of a growing struggle to help Sri Lankan victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami and of the country's war, four months after the massacre of 17 aid workers, and blamed bureaucracy for blocking their work.

"The humanitarian situation is catastrophic," said Aloysius John, head of Asia for the French Secours Catholique, adding that his group can no longer work in northern Sri Lanka, particularly in Jaffna where thousands of people lack provisions after the main access road was cut off.

British NGO Oxfam said work had become "extremely difficult" to help victims of the

December 2004 tsunami that killed 31,000 people and destroyed 75 percent of coastal infrastructure.

Nordic monitors of a truce signed in February 2002 between the military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) say the ceasefire is holding only on paper.

The LTTE has been fighting for independence for the island's Tamil community in the majority Sinhalese country.

At least 3,400 people have been reported killed in the conflict this year.

Amid fighting between security forces and the Tigers, the 17 mostly Tamil aid workers from

Action Contre la Faim (ACF) were shot dead on August 6 in their offices in the northeastern town of Muttur.

Now, four months on, thousands of civilians lack necessary help, particularly in "the most vulnerable", or Tamil, communities, said Eric Fort, head of ACF in the area.

"Zones under LTTE control are inaccessible," he said. "Authorities don't want NGOs to get through."

Fort complained of administrative hurdles complicating work of the group that has nonetheless decided to renew activities suspended after the massacre.

Other NGOS said their work was paralysed by bureaucracy.

Doctors Without Borders said three of its sections -- Dutch, French and Spanish -- were stuck in the capital Colombo.

In September, "an article accused us of collaborating with the Tamil Tigers and the next day we received an expulsion letter", said Gabriel Trujillo, who supervises the region.

"The management of access to humanitarian aid is obviously part of Colombo's strategy in the conflict," Trujillo said.

Medical charity Medecins du Monde recently closed its French section in Sri Lanka, after the departures of the Argentinian, Spanish and US sections, said Eric Chevallier, director of international missions.

Chevallier said certain ruling politicians seemed to have "a strategy of preventing the presence of international actors".

Sri Lankan authorities rejected the accusations.

An advisor to the Sri Lankan embassy in France, Himalee Arunatilaka, spoke of "confusion" about documents NGOs needed to provide and said that "security reasons" were behind stringent checks in affected areas.

**Editorial, p6**

## Army blocking truce monitors

THE Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) says it "is deeply concerned over the escalating violence in the area between Batticaloa and Trincomalee."

The monitors said the Sri Lankan military was blocking their access to the conflict zones, but went on to repeat the military's claim the LTTE was preventing people from leaving.

"The violence does not only put the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) into great danger, but jeopardizes lives of thousands of innocent civilians, especially internally displaced people in the Vakarai area," the SLMM said.

"The LTTE has failed to protect civilians in Vakarai by restricting their movements."

"It is the responsibility of the LTTE to do their utmost to facilitate for these innocent civilians to reach safe ground. The SLMM has contrary to acceptable prac-

tices on one occasion experienced that civilians were being hindered from exiting the area."

"The SLMM has not been able to monitor the situation as well as it would have wanted as monitors have been continuously refused access by the SLA into the areas of concern. The SLA has cited security reasons for this."

"[But] SLMM has on countless occasions tried to patrol into Vakarai and most recently in the Kallar area for inspections. Restriction of SLMM access by GOSL forces to areas where violations may have taken place is in itself a violation of the CFA and more importantly prevents the SLMM from working according to its mandate given to them by the Parties."

The SLMM urged both sides "to do their utmost to respect the CFA and to refrain from any further violence in the area."

## NEWS



# Sri Lanka revives anti-terror measures

SRI LANKA'S cabinet last week announced sweeping anti-terror measures which had been suspended by the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement amid months of violence that has left it in shreds.

The decision came in the wake of a suicide bombing that narrowly missed Sri Lanka Defence Secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse and for which the government has blamed the LTTE.

"The prevention of terrorism act [comes] because, with the escalation of violence and terrorism activities, we need to have some control," Sri Lanka's defence

spokesman and government minister Keheliya Rambukwella told Reuters.

"With the signing of the ceasefire agreement, that (PTA) was set aside. It [was] dormant."

Ministers stopped short of banning the LTTE but tightened existing emergency laws which have been dormant since a 2002 Ceasefire agreement (CFA) that is now in shreds.

Sri Lankan security forces again have wide-ranging powers to search, arrest and question.

The government said the far-reaching measures, which do not mention the Tamil Tigers by name, were effective immediately.

Wearing a uniform "relating to terrorism" or assisting or harbouring anyone "engaged in terrorism" will be prohibited under the new regulations, a statement said.

Taking part in "any activity relating to terrorism" is also banned, as is any financial or other support to a person or group deemed to be engaged in "terrorist-related activities".

"Contravention of these regulations carries penalties imposed by a high court, varying from imprisonment from 10 to 20 years, or five to 10 years, depending on the nature of the offence," the statement said.

Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera said Sri Lanka's ban on the LTTE had not been reimposed because a similar move in 1998 had failed to end violence.

Observers say Wednesday's announcement is aimed at appearing tough while not closing the door on negotiations with the LTTE.

TamilNet reported the cabinet decision was "a major breach" of the CFA (Clause 2.12) and gave

"excessive powers of arrest and detention to the Sri Lankan armed forces"

It recalled that "thousands of Tamil men, women and children were indiscriminately arrested, tortured and detained for indefinite periods" until previous anti-terror laws were suspended as part of peace moves.

Sri Lanka's government lifted its ban on the Tamil Tigers ahead of the ceasefire deal and peace talks brokered by Norway.

The old Prevention of Terrorism Act was effectively suspended following the truce.

The main opposition said it supports the new regulations, if they were to outlaw terrorist activities.

Tissa Attanayake, Secretary General of the UNP which has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rajapakse government did not rule out that there is also a danger in these laws if applied to submerge political activities in the south.

He said everybody witnessed what happened in the period between 1988 and 1989.

"It was a period of terror", the UNP official said.

Attanayake said although government bring in these laws to counter terrorism in no way could stop the efforts to find a political solution to the national question.

The leader of the TNA, Sri Lanka's largest Tamil party, R. Sambanthan said though these laws were there in the past it did not help to bring a solution.

Those who have taken arms to their hands to fight a war were not affected by anti-terror laws but it was mostly the innocent Tamil people who were affected, Sambanthan said.

Sri Lankan forces have got back draconian powers of arrest.

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## US disquiet

ASKED last week about the salience of a Patriot Act-style law for Sri Lanka, US Ambassador to Colombo, Robert O' Blake, responded: "civil liberties, frankly, are already under strain here (in Sri Lanka). So, I wouldn't want to suggest other things that might further imperil them."

He told the state-owned Daily News last week that the US Patriot Act was operating in tandem with strong respect for civil liberties there.

Mr. Blake's comments were published in Tuesday's edition the day before the Sri Lankan government announce the revival of the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in breach of the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement.

Ambassador Blake told the state-owned Daily News that the Patriot Act had helped the US authorities "to identify people who might be working against the

US in some sort of terrorist faction."

"But, at the same time, there has been a very strong realisation that there has to be a strong respect for civil liberties in America," he said.

"I think there has been a good, healthy debate about that in the US, and the net result is that the US is safely placed and there have been no major terrorist attacks."

Asked if he would recommend a Patriotic Act for Sri Lanka, Ambassador Blake replied:

"Well, every country is different. I do not want to start to prescribe how to do things. I think the [Sri Lankan] Government has a good sense of where the LTTE is. Civil liberties, frankly, are already under strain here. So, I wouldn't want to suggest other things that might further imperil them."

Economy, p8-9

## NEWS

# Mahinda: you're with us or against us

ANNOUNCING tough new powers for the Sri Lankan security forces, President Mahinda Rajapakse last issued a blunt warning for citizens - 'choose your side in the war.'

He called on the Sinhala polity to actively support his efforts to defeat 'separatist terrorism' and warned Tamils "there is no room anymore to assist terrorism directly or indirectly."

"I ask this of all political parties, all media, and all people's organizations," he said last Wednesday in a countrywide television broadcast in which he announced the new terrorism measures.

"You decide whether you should be with a handful of terrorists or with the common man who is in the majority. You must clearly choose between these two sides. No one can represent both these sides at any one time."

Declaring that the people who elected him in November 2005 gave him a mandate "to defend the motherland," he said he relished the task and would dedicate his second year in office to it.

"I am aware that more than one year ago, it is with the greatest confidence that you entrusted me with the responsibility of protecting our beloved motherland, and not being subdued by whatever forces that sought to divide it."

"What satisfies me most about the past year is the ability of our government to gradually extricate our country from the great betrayal it was facing," he said.

He was referring to the Norwegian-brokered peace process began by the opposition UNP party when it came to power in 2001.

"We cannot move an inch forward other than by defeating this cruel terrorism that is intertwined with the common destiny of my country and the Sri Lankan nation. I am happy to be able to be committed to this task. I am happier still by the support extended to us for this purpose by the entire nation."

"The new century waits for



President Mahinda Rajapakse has vowed to step up the war against 'separatist terrorism' in the coming year. Photo The Island

the day when [Sri Lankans] all join as one nation to fight together to defeat the challenges of the future. I intend to dedicate my second year in office to realizing this objective," he said.

Saying that his government was confronting a dangerous enemy, he called on the Sinhala polity to actively rally behind his efforts to defeat it.

"What our government is facing is separatist terrorism which is the common enemy of us all," President Rajapakse said.

"It is the responsibility of us all to face it jointly and defeat it."

"[But] this is not a thing that can be achieved by making allegations and counter allegations against each other. I have already demonstrated that I am a leader who is not ready to kneel before terrorism, but a leader committed to safeguarding the democratic

rights of the Tamil people.

"Therefore, in the name of the nation, I appeal for the practical support of all of you to defeat these challenges," he said.

"By practical support I mean the support that is not confined to words. It is support that is extended to me and to my government."

"If instead, the decision taken by us at this moment is not properly implemented, its full benefit will go to terrorism. Therefore, I call upon all political leaders to assist us to overcome this challenge, by building a genuine and practical unity for the sake of our motherland."

He was continuing a long struggle by former Sri Lankan leaders, he said.

"Beginning with Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, all leaders from President J. R. Jayewardene to President Cha-

ndrika Kumaratunga sought to face up to this grave threat to the nation and bring peace to our motherland."

"All steps that we take to build a new Sri Lanka can be made a success only by defeating this beastly terrorism."

He told the island's Tamils, however, that they need not fear the draconian counter-terrorism laws he was reinstating.

"I appeal to all members of the Tamil community and all organizations that value democracy not to have any fears about these regulations that are effective from today. These regulations will not affect any rights in the workplace, field and university. I will not allow the violation of human rights in any manner through these regulations."

"These regulations will only defeat the fascist thinking of the

LTTE. What these regulations will do is bring democratic politics to the Tamil political arena."

However, he said, "We should make a firm commitment not to allow anyone to take these new regulations lightly."

"Whatever one's status may be, supporting terrorism is act of enmity towards both the country and the nation. We are not ready to allow that."

"Similarly, there is no room anymore to assist terrorism directly or indirectly, and talk about democracy."

This, he said, "is because they use this democratic space to design the destruction of the entire society. The democracy that creates an opportunity for terrorism is a joke. It is no simple joke but a deadly joke. We already reddened our eyes through that joke."

## A licence to arrest and torture

SRI LANKA'S Prevention of Terrorist Act (PTA), enacted in 1979, has through the years been strongly criticised by international human rights and constitutional freedom groups, including Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), as handing over excessive powers of arrest and detention to the security forces.

Sri Lankan law requires confessions to be admissible only if made to a magistrate - but the PTA permits confessions to police officer to be used in evidence.

"Admissibility of [such] confessions encourages the use of torture," the ICJ says. "The defendants in PTA cases even have to pro-

ve that the confessions were made under coercion," ICJ protests.

Amnesty International has consistently called for the PTA to be repealed or brought into line with international human rights standards.

"The PTA provides an incentive for interrogating [police] officers to obtain 'confessions' from detainees by any means, including torture," Amnesty says.

Human Rights Watch noted in 2002: "The PTA has contributed to a climate of impunity in Sri Lanka where custodial abuse and thousands of 'disappearances' have gone uninvestigated and unpunished."

In the interests of peace, HRW

said, "Critically important is the need to eliminate or reform the Prevention of Terrorism Act and to release the hundreds of detainees held without trial under its draconian provisions."

"Most of these detainees are Tamils arrested on suspicion of links to the LTTE. Many were arrested months or even years ago pending investigation, with no evidence to support police suspicions beyond their own confessions - often extracted under torture," HRW said.

Human rights lawyers say the PTA was used arbitrarily to arrest and hold individuals with the slightest contact with the LTTE, resulting in tens of thousands of

people being detained.

In 2000 alone, up to 18,000 people were held under the PTA and Emergency Regulations, rights groups say.

When the UNF government began peace talks with the LTTE in 2002, the comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) signed in February that year shelved the PTA.

Clause 2.12 of the CFA states: "The Parties agree that search operations and arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act shall not take place. Arrests shall be conducted under due process of law in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code."

The PTA was thus effectively

suspended and all those arrested under it, except for those directly implicated in attacks blamed on the LTTE, were released.

The number of PTA detentions thus dropped to a few dozen.

A reinstatement of the PTA will thus become a standing breach of the CFA.

Criticising the PTA and ER in 2002, one of Sri Lanka's former Supreme Court judges, Mr. C. V. Vigneswaran, pointed out "such laws it must be noted are not conducive to the creation of an environment for peace."

"Such laws are devious methods by which conformation to the International Covenants on Human Rights are avoided," he said.

## EDITORIAL &amp; OPINION

## TAMIL GUARDIAN

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 13, 2006 No. 338

## International Mandate

## Sri Lanka has been given the green light for a new war

Sri Lanka's undeclared but open war continues. Last week the Army launched its most determined push yet to capture Vaharai in the Batticaloa district. The offensive failed with at least 40 combatants killed. However it was the 40,000 Tamil civilians crowded into that narrow strip of land that bore the brunt of the Sri Lankan onslaught: at least 40 people were torn apart by artillery and naval fire. Scores more were wounded. The offensive came as Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer departed the island.

But it is not only the fighting in that remote backwater that we should take note of. It is the deafening silence from around the world as Colombo unleashes an indiscriminate military campaign. The protests this week by the UN and the international monitors are, of no consequence. The United States did protest last week - but that was only after LTTE shells killed three Sinhalese civilians and caused 3000 others to flee. They were singled out, but not the 40,000 people in Vaharai. We know why. In the meantime over half a million Tamils are undergoing great hardship in Jaffna. But there is no pressure on Sri Lanka to open the A9.

In fact, there is no international pressure on Sri Lanka in any respect. The government of President Mahinda Rajapakse is essentially being given a green light to prosecute its long-prepared war against the LTTE. The Tamils therefore need to come to terms with the international community's new strategy: to allow the government to attack and weaken the Tigers until whatever political solution Colombo sees fit can be imposed. The Co-Chairs statement of November 22 said as much. Apart from a mild reproach to both parties (accompanied by a vehement US attack on the LTTE) it leaves it to the Sinhala south to come up with solution. Having failed to persuade Colombo to make a genuine offer of power-sharing to the Tamils, the international community has opted for the easiest alternative: allowing the Sinhalese to proceed with a military solution. The Tamils should be under no illusions; just as during the previous 'war for peace' the international community will not be mere bystanders, but will be actively seeking ways to strengthen and support the state against the LTTE.

It is thus not clear why Mr. Hanson-Bauer was in Sri Lanka last week. The lone envoy did not have a chorus of diplomatic support when he arrived. And most

damagingly for the Norwegian initiative, Oslo's neutrality (at least perceived neutrality) was badly compromised when he acquiesced to Colombo's pointed curtailing of his facilitatory space. With Sri Lanka's passing of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) - and semantic hair-splitting aside, it is the draconian PTA that's been invoked anew - it appears the Norwegians will need Colombo's explicit approval to speak to the LTTE. So much for peace facilitation.

Mr. Rajapakse's address last week announcing the new terrorism legislation was also a declaration of war. The President, it should not be forgotten, was voted in wholly by the majority Sinhalese. It was this constituency he began by thanking for giving him a mandate to 'defend the motherland.' The rest of his speech was a call to arms, to a new war. And it was not only the LTTE, but the wider Tamil campaign for self-determination that is the target (the original PTA, it should be recalled, was implemented in the wake of the TULF's landslide victory in the 1977 'Eelam' election; the LTTE was less than 30 strong then.) Saying that he relished the task set by his voters, President Rajapakse told Sri Lankans to choose: to stand with his Sinhala-nationalist cause or against it. The Tamils were told in no uncertain terms what was expected of them: as long as they know their place in this, the Sinhala motherland, they were of no concern to him.

None of this is new. Sinhala leaders have told the Tamils such things since 1956. And, as our shattered homeland attests, this is not the first onslaught (wrapped in the rhetoric of counter-terrorism) that we have faced from the Sinhala leadership. But this time we know what Tamil hardliners have been warning all along. That international commitment to peace is wafer thin. That when the Sinhalese balk at sharing power, the international community will again let a clash of arms settle matters. That the international community's strident advocacy of 'just solutions', 'human rights' and 'lasting peace' is mere rhetoric. Just as in 2001, international support for a peaceful negotiation can only be secured when the viability of Sri Lanka's military option is again discredited. Until then, the Tamils can expect all manner of horrors. But it is not our fault. For years we have tried our best to plead our case. But no one gave a damn.

## Driving Norway out

If President Rajapakse can't ask the Norwegians to go, he can certainly make it impossible for them to stay.

Priya Raj  
Tamil Guardian

IN THE WAKE of the Heroes Day speech by Tamil Tiger leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan, Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer flew to Sri Lanka.

Amid the deepening violence in the Sri Lanka, it was merely to be another round of shuttle-diplomacy, to 'sound out' President Mahinda Rajapakse's administration and the LTTE. But something very different to routine happened this time.

When he met government officials, he was given a blunt directive: he was not to go to Kilinochchi to meet the LTTE until the government granted him permission. The hapless envoy cooled his heels in Colombo and waited.

He eventually went to Kilinochchi - empty handed. He returned empty handed too.

But something crucial had happened. By agreeing to the government's terms for Norway's involvement in peace efforts, Mr. Hanssen-Bauer had compromised Oslo's 'third party' neutrality.

More importantly, Oslo's prestige as a respected actor on the international stage had been dulled.

In short, his curt order to stay put was a humiliation for an international diplomat fronting not only Norway but the collective international community involved in Sri Lanka's peace process - i.e. the Co-Chairs.

The neutrality of the third party is sine quo non for peace making. At the outset, despite the international intrigue in Sri Lanka, Norway treated both parties equally in the peace process and, equally importantly, was treated with dignity and respect by the parties to the peace process.

Interestingly, throughout the peace process there has never been friction - at least publicly - between the LTTE, the armed non-state actor, and Norway, frontman for the international (state) system.

There have been periodic bouts of friction between the Sri Lankan state and Norway. Apart from the embarrassing and now infamous 'salmon-eating busybodies' incident, there were (unsuccessful) demands that then Special Envoy Erik Solheim be

replaced.

These frictions were mainly with President Chandrika Kumaratunga's office and later administration. The market friendly - and Sinhala conservative - UNP got on famously with the Norwegians.

But even the moments of friction did not involve official attacks on Norway's integrity or those of its personnel by the Sri Lankan government.

But that was before President Mahinda Rajapakse came to power on a surge of Sinhala-nationalist support. As he made clear last week, their mandate, as he sees it, is to 'defend the motherland.'

And not only from the 'separatist terrorism' of the LTTE, but also from "whatever forces that sought to divide it."

If that wasn't clear enough, President Rajapakse declared: "What satisfies me most about the past year is the ability of our government to gradually extricate our country from the great betrayal it was facing."

By that he means removing Sri Lanka from the obligations incurred during the Norwegian peace process, especially the federal solution.

From the outset, President Rajapakse made it clear he did not value the Norwegian help. He claimed he would solve the problem if he could talk directly with Mr. Pirapaharan.

Dismissed by everyone as a political stunt or mere rhetoric, the underlying corollary was ignored: just as he had promised in the election manifesto that proudly bears his personal stamp of ownership - 'Mahinda Cinthanaya' - he intended to end Norway's involvement.

Why would the President, inheriting a country riven by renewed violence drive out a key international ally in peace building?

Because President Rajapakse wants 'peace with dignity' - by which he means the restoration of Sinhala hegemony and an end to upstart Tamil aspirations.

In short, he wants to destroy the LTTE militarily.

The first step to doing that is to isolate them from the international community which, in his view, has given too much emphasis to the Tigers' opinions and demands.

## EDITORIAL &amp; OPINION



And the first step to isolating the Tigers is, in his view, to get rid of Norway or at least replace her with a more appropriate interlocutor - i.e. one that is hostile to the LTTE.

Indeed, President Rajapakse didn't even mention Norway in his inaugural address as President in November 2005 - though he went through a range of international 'alternatives' to Norway.

President Rajapakse began his unstated, but discernible plan at once. In December he turned publicly and pointedly to India for help with solving the ethnic question.

The move failed. Not only was India unfavourable to replacing the Norwegians, an alarmed Delhi could see what many other internationals did not: Rajapakse was not intent on a negotiated solution but

was instead preparing the military option.

With Delhi's involvement not forthcoming, President Rajapakse had to find an alternative way of removing the Norwegians.

He did not wish to simply tell them to get out: they could take much international goodwill and not a little international aid with them.

However, if he couldn't ask them to go, he could certainly make it impossible for them to stay.

One thing President Rajapakse was sure of is that his efforts to eject the Norwegians would draw considerable support from the Sinhalese. (It is no accident that not once has the UNP, despite its closeness to Oslo, ever publicly defended the Norwegians' efforts).

Notwithstanding claims of a

'peace constituency' in the south, the insidious campaign run by the ultra-Sinhala nationalists such as the JVP, JHU and PNM - assisted by the regular criticism by President Chandrika - had laid the groundwork for President Rajapakse.

Numerous protests outside the Norwegian embassy - often accompanied by the torching of the Norwegian flag - had already muddled Oslo's standing such that even very public sponsorings of Buddhist temples in the south could not fix. (Even Norway's offers to discuss their role with the JVP only lent weight to the latter's disdain for Oslo.)

Indeed, shortly after President Rajapakse came to power, the JVP et al again began agitating against the Norwegians, stoking ever present suspicions amongst the people.

It was by his acts of omission

that President Rajapakse helped this campaign: he never spoke publicly in praise of Norway's efforts and never gave Norwegian diplomats public accolades.

When the February 2006 peace talks were agreed to, amid fast rising violence, the LTTE suggested the talks could be held in Oslo. President Rajapakse refused.

His opting for Geneva (disregarding an earlier demand any more talks must be within Sri Lanka itself) was not so much about contradicting the LTTE (as was commonly understood) as snubbing Norway.

The peace process stalled: the Geneva I agreement on paramilitaries became a laughing stock, violence escalated.

But it was the proscription of the LTTE by Canada and the European Union that fast tracked President Rajapakse's plans.

If the original plan was to eject Norway to isolate the LTTE, particularly from the EU, then the wider objectives had unexpectedly come about anyway.

The urgency to eject Norway thus eased temporarily. Now it was a question of stepping up military operations (particularly in the east) and destroying the peace process by escalating the conflict.

The objective of marginalizing Norway remained. In July President Rajapakse sent a personal message to the LTTE to talk directly. It was conveyed by N. Vithyatharan, the editor of the Jaffna daily, Uthayan.

"If the LTTE and the government can agree to put an end to all violence for two weeks, [we] could make a fresh start and develop the rapport from there on. We don't have to do it through Norway or be dependent on them, we can deal directly," the paper quoted Mr. Rajapakse as asking Mr. Vithyatharan to tell the Tigers.

But the LTTE rejected the notion, insisting Norway remains as facilitator.

In July the Sri Lankan government even agreed to hold talks in Oslo. But the July 'meeting' - in which Norway unilaterally invited the government and the LTTE - turned into a fiasco.

The government sent a non-delegation comprising relatively junior officials. The LTTE said it came to meet with Norway, not Sri Lanka.

Piqued by the LTTE, Norway held very public meetings with top Sri Lankan officials - even the King of Norway met Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister.

But whilst this did not make Colombo any more amenable to Norwegian's continued role, it boosted Sinhala nationalist haughtiness about the 'white Tigers.'

Meanwhile, another Norwegian-wielded thorn in President Rajapakse's side was the international ceasefire monitors' presence on the ground.

Cutting them off from the LTTE was an imperative, but harder to achieve than

fending of the Norwegian diplomats. And amid an expanding military campaign, it was imperative they also be constrained.

Twice now the Rajapakse administration has tried to compel the SLMM to pull out of its own accord - by firing artillery barrages at SLMM chiefs when they meet with the LTTE.

The first was in July at Maavil Aru and the second time was in Pooneryn in November.

With neither the Norwegian diplomats nor the ceasefire monitors they appointed showing any signs of leaving, the campaign against them has escalated.

When he met Indian Premier Manmohan Singh in November, President Rajapakse didn't disguise his wish to see the Norwegians depart. His very public grumble makes it clear: 'the unwelcome Norwegians are in our house; if only they would go.'

Then there were the recent lurid allegations against Norwegian Development Minister Erik Solheim, Oslo's former Special Envoy.

It was the state-owned Daily News which published allegations of financial dealings between him and the LTTE. The shocking claims compelled the Norwegian government to issue an angry denial - and this week even the main opposition in Norway felt it had to come out and back Mr. Solheim.

Sri Lanka's vice-like control of state media is well known, and particularly the mass-circulating English language Daily News would not have printed the story without either receiving official sanction or being sure it would get it.

Indeed, President Rajapakse's administration is yet to apologize for making the allegations - and the Daily News is yet to distance itself from them.

It is in this humiliating context that Mr. Hanssen-Bauer arrived in Sri Lanka last week, to be treated, not as a key international figure, but an interfering busybody.

In the past a visit by Norwegian Envoys, even when 'routine', drew considerable interest within Sri Lanka and abroad - a quick stock take and return would sometimes invoke lurid media headlines of diplomatic 'failure.'

But Mr. Hanssen-Bauer's visit was seen more as an oddity, a curious development at this time of deepening antagonisms.

Ironically, it is Norwegian persistence with the peace process in Sri Lanka is likely to draw more and more public slaps in the face from the Rajapakse administration.

And it is not simply a question of Norwegian prestige in the Sri Lankan context, but globally.

In the meantime, Sri Lanka's undeclared war continues at all the intensity of the late ninties.

But, as President Rajapakse intended, it is Oslo which may finally pull the plug on the Norwegian peace process.

# It's the global economy, stupid

For the custodians of the global economy US, EU and Japan, ensuring Sri Lanka's stability, not a just peace, is the pressing priority.

J. T. Janani  
Tamil Guardian

THE Co-Chairs' statement of 21 November 2006 was an eyeopener for the Sri Lankan Tamil community.

The international community's position, attacking the LTTE and defending the Sri Lankan state, was bluntly set out by US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicolas Burns, with representatives of the other Co-Chairs - EU, Japan and Norway - standing shoulder to shoulder with the US.

Inevitably, as has been noted by Indian analysts amongst others, the Co-Chairs' strong support for the Sri Lankan government has led to desperation and total disillusionment with the international community amongst the Tamils.

But if the Tamils are bitter, it is about time. Mr Burns was nothing if not forthright last week. And if they want to understand the international community's perspective, the Tamils only need pay close attention to his words.

To begin with, for the international community, Sri Lanka is a unique collaborative project. Differences amongst international actors on other issues are set aside in pursuit of a common goal here.

Because that goal is one from which all international actors can benefit: to boost the global economy by turning Sri Lanka into a stable and secure commercial and economic hub.

Thus, from a geopolitical and geoeconomic perspective, the international community's key objective in Sri Lanka is stability.

Mr Burns was explicit: "the Sri Lankan government has a right to protect the stability and security in the country."

In short, Sri Lanka is an important site for the global economy. That doesn't mean Sri Lanka's own economy is impor-

tant. Rather, it is what Sri Lanka can contribute to the global economy.

At a crucial location in the Indian Ocean (in the middle of important sea routes), Sri Lanka holds enormous promise for enhancing and enlarging commercial flows between Asia, the Middle East and the West.

If only it were stable.

Without guaranteed stability, Sri Lanka cannot benefit international trade in the long term (the point, again, is not whether Sri Lanka benefits from international trade, though that might be a bonus, expanding, as it does, the global market slightly).

In the short term, without stability and security the investment atmosphere in Sri Lanka cannot be conducive to the kinds of development needed to turn the island into a commercial hub for global trade.

Thus for the custodians of the global economy - US, EU and Japan, ensuring Sri Lanka's stability is a pressing priority. The urgency is fuelled by accelerating global trade.

But the Tamil armed struggle violently disrupts this stability.

Indeed, the very existence of the LTTE, an armed non-state actor running a de-facto state in a large piece of the island and fielding a large naval force, is deeply antithetical to the international vision for Sri Lanka.

The resurgence this year of the simmering violence (mistakenly thought to have been banished by the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement), has also disrupted the international community's hasty efforts also launched that year to resume Sri Lanka's delayed transformation into a commercial hub.

This is no conspiracy theory. The international community has been always been clear that this is



A cargo vessel in Colombo's commercial port. Sri Lanka plans to become Asia's hub port in the coming years. Photo Sena Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images

**Stability and security for Sri Lanka means defeating and dismantling the LTTE - and this is also what these mean for the international community.**

their goal (though of course it is the potential benefit to Sri Lanka that is pointed out, not that to the global economy or the national economies of the major powers).

The frustration for the Co-Chairs is that the Tamils seem oblivious to all this.

In fact, the ignorant Tamils are vociferously demanding things that are antithetical to this goal: asking for recognition of their right to self-determination, for independence, for acceptance of their violence and for the LTTE.

In reality, Tamil protests of oppression by Sinhala-dominated state are largely irrelevant to the international community's calculations for Sri Lanka.

Asked about suggestions that some US officials sympathised with the Tamil demand for self-rule in their homeland, Mr. Burns replied: "we support the govern-

ment. The government has a right to protect the [country's] territorial integrity and sovereignty. [It] has a right to protect the stability and security in the country."

Stability and security for Sri Lanka essentially means defeating and dismantling the LTTE. A political solution is a secondary issue.

This is also what stability and security mean for the international community: it is the LTTE's armed struggle which is the prime impediment to Project Sri Lanka.

The oppressive policies of the Sri Lankan state may be distasteful to the international community, but are not necessarily a problem. These are not likely to disrupt the island's investment atmosphere or disrupt Sri Lanka's transformation.

When Mr. Burns says "we hold the Tamil Tigers responsible for much of what has gone wrong in the country," he is thinking of Sri Lanka, the unrealised global commercial hub, not Sri Lanka, the Sinhala-chauvinist state.

In short, the two visions of Sri Lanka - the global trade hub and the Sinhala-Only land - are perfectly compatible.

This is why the Tamils have such a hard time getting their case heard. Indeed, the Tamils and their protests about discrimination are merely a nuisance to the international community.

Whilst we see the racial violence, the deaths of 90,000 civilians by state violence (including by

**But the growth of the LTTE and its armed struggle has made Tamil outrage at Sinhala oppression an unavoidable obstacle for the international community's efforts.**

blockade of food and medicine), and the systematic marginalisation of our people as central life-or-death issues, the international community sees these as unfortunate matters to be dealt with (non-violently) on the edges of the main business of facilitating global trade.

A quick overview of international engagement with Sri Lanka in the past three decades demonstrates the point.

In the late seventies it was clear that given its geographical location and strong, social indicators, that Sri Lanka had the potential to contribute to the global economy to an extent that Singapore has, possibly even more.

Sri Lanka's staunchly pro-West first President, J. R. Jayawardene, visualised Sri Lanka as a free trade hub to rival Singap-

community, led by the Co-Chairs, were focussed on.

Security for us meant protection from the Sinhala armed forces. Security for them meant no more LTTE attacks in the south.

Stability for us meant the return of normal life for our war-savaged community. Stability for them meant no return to violence by the LTTE.

Peace for us meant a lasting just solution. Peace for them meant the permanent disarming of the LTTE.

In short, it is Sri Lanka's economic potential that matters most to them, not its domestic treatment of the Tamils.

Even despite its civil war Sri Lanka's economy has expanded given its peerless position right in the middle of the expanding global trade flows.

In 2004, the Colombo port was the world's fourteenth largest port by volume for transshipment. There's also Galle and, of course, Trincomalee.

Last month Sri Lanka began expansion of a small airport in the south into a massive site capable of handling the world's largest commercial jets.

The Malacca straits adjacent to Singapore are the shortest sea route for oil tankers travelling between the Middle East and Asian markets. This route allows shipment of nearly 80% of the oil to China, Japan, and South Korea.

Sri Lanka is halfway between the Middle Eastern oil producers of Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Malacca straits.

Even in security terms, Sri Lanka provides an excellent staging post for US or European military powers interested in Asia or Australasia (in the late nineties, fifty British warplanes once transited through Katunayake airbase enroute to exercises in South East Asia).

The United States' military has for several years been seeking bases across the world from which to project its awesome power, vital to protect global commercial lanes. Places like Sri Lanka are excellent sites.

But even without its potential as an ideal location for US/Western force projection abroad, a stable and secure Sri Lanka invaluable to the global economy and thus to its custodians.

Which explains the manifest lack of international interest in addressing the Sinhala-dominated nature of the Sri Lankan state. It explains the international eagerness to stabilise the state, irrespective of its acts against the Tamils.

In 1983, President Jayawardene infamously said before the July pogrom: "I am not worried about the opinion of the Tamil people. We cannot think of them. Not about their lives or of their opinion about us."

In the rush to realise Sri Lanka's commercial potential, this is also how the international community feels about the Tamils.

And it is the LTTE's violence, not international goodwill, that, by holding up Project Sri Lanka, keeps the Tamil issue on the international agenda.

# US: LTTE no threat to region, world

‘The Tigers are representing the Tamils in negotiations with Sri Lanka’



Ambassador Blake visited Jaffna last week. Photo SL Army

WHILST the United States considered the Tamil Tigers a terrorist group, they are not a threat to the region or part of global terrorism, Washington's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Robert O' Blake, said last week.

Moreover, Sri Lanka should negotiate a solution to the conflict with the LTTE, who are representing the Tamil people in the negotiations, he said.

And whilst the US was supporting Sri Lanka to dissuade the LTTE from pursuing the military option to the Tamil question, that did not mean Washington wanted Colombo to prosecute its own war, he said.

Ambassador Blake's comments came in a lengthy interview with the state-owned Daily News, published December 5.

He began by reiterating Washington's support for Sri Lanka saying: "the US is not neutral in this particular conflict. We have always been a strong supporter of the Government and we consider the LTTE as a terrorist organisation."

"So we are doing what we can to help the Government through enforcement channels, through military channels to defend itself in the war on terrorism."

However, Ambassador Blake said, that does not mean the US endorses a military solution.

"All this is to help Sri Lanka defend itself. We have been very clear that our strong interest is in not seeing the military prosecute this war, but to send a signal of strength that will hopefully see the LTTE coming to the negotiating table."

"After more than 25 years of conflict here, the time has come for peace in Sri Lanka. The real solution for this conflict is a sustained negotiating process that hopefully leads to an agreement of some sort."

"We strongly believe that there cannot be a military solution to this particular conflict. [Sri Lanka] tried that for a long time and it has not worked. So we strongly believe that the time has come for a peaceful negotiated settlement to your conflict."

Asked if Sri Lanka should negotiate with terrorists, he replied: "We do think you can negotiate with the terrorists [and] there have been many different exchanges in the past, in fact six rounds of negotiations in 2002/3."

Asked if the Sri Lankan gov-

ernment should present its proposals "to the LTTE or the Tamil people?", Ambassador Blake replied:

"Well, at this point, to my knowledge, the LTTE is the one that is representing the Tamil people in the negotiations. That has been the history of the negotiations to this date, beginning in 2002 and carried to 2003."

"The answer to this [ethnic] question is not purely a counter-terrorism or a military solution. There also has to be a parallel political strategy where the

ping links in the Indian Ocean."

Asked if the LTTE was a threat to the region, not only to Sri Lanka, Mr. Blake replied:

"I do not think so. I think the LTTE has been very careful about confining their operations to Sri Lanka because they are aware of the fact that if they should do so if they not want to antagonise particularly neighbours like India."

"So they have been very careful and I think they have realised that one of the greatest strategic mistakes they made in their history was targeting Rajiv Gandhi."

Asked, again, if the LTTE was a threat globally "because they exchange views, knowledge etc. [with other terrorist groups]," Ambassador Blake replied:

"I do not know to what extent they operate globally. I am sure they try to derive lessons as best as they can from the experiences of other terrorist organisations around the world. But, I am not aware of them taking terrorist action in another country, other than the attack on Rajiv Gandhi."

Asked why US was urging Sri Lanka to talk to the LTTE whilst attacking others it considered terrorists, Ambassador Blake replied:

"I think it is dangerous to make comparisons between one country and the next. Every single country is different. The terrorists that we are pursuing are mostly stateless organisations like Al-Qaeda that are not based in any single country. They are just out to kill as many Americans as possible, and there is really no point in trying to negotiate with them because they do not have any political objective to speak of."

"I think the LTTE, by contrast, though pursuing terrorist objectives, has the ultimate political objective to establish some sort of framework where the rights of Tamils can be respected."

"So we believe that there cannot be a military solution to this, and that there has to be a negotiated settlement where the aspirations of all Sri Lankans can be respected."

## NEWS



Defence Secretary Rajapakse's bullet-proof BMW was damaged, but he was unhurt. Photo TamilNet

## Colombo bombing exposes security failings

Defence Secretary has a narrow escape as his Presidential-style screen is penetrated. Luck, not security, say analysts

TamilNet

A DARING suicide bombing against Sri Lanka's top defence official on December 2 has exposed gaping security gaps, stoking fears that the Tamil Tigers could resort to more spectacular strikes, officials and analysts say.

The driver of an auto-rickshaw breached the tightest security and detonated explosives packed into his three-wheel contraption as defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse drove past in a heavily armed convoy in Colombo.

Police blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The attack was along a street where plain-clothed intelligence agents had been deployed to check for "suspicious activity." It is also regularly patrolled by troops, a security official told AFP.

Two motorcycle outriders and the bomber were blown to pieces while 14 others were wounded in what the security official described as a well-planned operation.

"A big question is, if there was inside information, there will have to be a re-think of what has been done so far," the official told AFP, declining to be named.

The attack was the latest in a string of suicide bombings over the past few months.

In April, a woman pretending to be a soldier's pregnant wife infiltrated the army headquarters here in a suicide attack in which army chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka was seriously wounded.

Two months later, the army's number three officer was killed by a suicide bomber riding a motorcycle.

At least 116 people, mostly sailors, were killed while board-

ing buses when a suicide bomber exploded a truck full of explosives in October.

The government is worried that there may have been inside help to carry out some of the previous attacks.

An army officer is currently being held for allegedly providing information to the Tigers in connection with at least two attacks since April, officials said.

The latest target, the defence secretary - who is also President Mahinda Rajapakse's younger brother - is accorded protection reserved for a head of state. Hitting his convoy is a serious blow to the security authorities.

He travels in a convoy of several identical cars which have their windows tinted. He is also provided protection by army commandos riding open jeeps and motorcycles. Yet the bomber managed to hit the right car.

The bullet-proof BMW limousine saved Rajapakse, who suffered only a minor gash above his right eyebrow, but it rocked the entire government.

"The government considers this suicide bomb attack by the LTTE as a serious challenge posed to the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Sri Lankan state," the cabinet of ministers said in a statement.

The Tigers are known for trademark suicide bombings. On Nov 27, they honoured 299 suicide bombers, or Black Tigers, who have died while carrying out audacious strikes since 1987 along with over 18,000 other fighters killed in three decades of civil war.

Assuming the Tigers carried out attack on the Def. Secretary,

their failure to hit their mark was unusual, AP reported, quoting analysts.

"The LTTE is known for its efficiency, (but) these days targets are very closely guarded," Retired Air Marshall Harry Goonetilleke told AP. "You can't get at these people very easily."

In April, escort personnel saved the Army Chief from the full force of the blast.

Similarly, Rajapakse's guards had been vigilant and shielded him from harm, military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said.

But the Tigers boast of an efficient intelligence wing that they say can infiltrate the government at anytime to obtain the itineraries of would-be targets, AP reported.

The bombing came despite thorough car-by-car checks carried out by police and security forces, causing motorists to languish in traffic for up to six hours.

"What the attack showed is that all the checking and posting guards at frequent intervals along main roads has not helped," said freelance defence writer Namal Perera. "What is needed is better intelligence."

"One could argue that the Tigers failed to get their target and it means they will try again, go for another target or adopt different tactics."

Retired brigadier-general Vipul Boteju said the defence chief was lucky to have escaped, and believed the Tigers would try to carry out more strikes.

"If the explosion took place a little closer to the BMW, it would have been a different story," Boteju told AFP.

"This (is) not at all a dilution of their (Tigers) capabilities. They are being unlucky," Iqbal Athas, a top defense journalist and analyst in Sri Lanka told AP.

"They are being hampered by the security preparations. Despite the failures they are not going to give up the modus operandi."

# Violence in the NorthEast, week ending December 10

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since December 4

## December 10

● An attempt by a group of 25 members of paramilitary cadres and SLA to penetrate into LTTE controlled Pendukulchenai to launch attacks was foiled when the LTTE counter attacked, killing two and injuring ten paramilitaries. Two LTTE cadres were also killed in the counter attack. SLA troopers and paramilitaries moved out of Kinnaiyadi SLA camp, crossed Kinnaiyadi Lagoon, and had penetrated through villages of Murukkantivu, Pirambaditivu and Saravelli towards Pendugalchenai to attack LTTE positions when they were confronted. The penetration group was nearly 5 km inside LTTE-controlled areas when they were attacked and forced to retreat taking the wounded and the dead. LTTE fighters Kalaiarasan and Sauntha were killed in the counter attack.

● Two SLA soldiers were injured when gunmen triggered a claymore mine in Yaakeru, Vadamarachy, Jaffna. The soldiers were on a road patrol from Aayam Santhi SLA camp towards Mandaan when the claymore was triggered and gunmen allegedly also fired at the soldiers following the blast.

● An employee at the computer section of the Jaffna Tamil daily, Namathu Eelanadu, has not been seen since Tuesday, officials from the Jaffna SLHRC. Indrakumar Mathan, 25, from Kokuvil West, set off from his home to do errands and has not been seen since, relatives said. Mathan previously worked at the Tamil daily Uthayan, before he moved to work at the Jaffna Naval Road offices of Namathu Eelanadu.

● Five gunmen abducted a youth from his house at Pansala road in Akkaraipattu and his body was recovered the next morning, with gunshot wounds, close to Akkaraipattu SLA camp. The dead youth was identified as Vellupillai Selvakumar, 26, a daily labourer.

## December 9

● Gunmen shot and injured two cadres of the paramilitary Karuna Group on Kallaru main road near Sinnappillayar temple in Kallaru, Batticaloa. Ranjan, 28, and Kumar, 26, were admitted to hospital.

● Selliah Thiagarasa, 57, a father of six, from Kikirai Kulam in Araly, Jaffna, was walking towards Sangarathai Market to buy fish when gunmen who fol-

lowed him shot him dead at close range and escaped.

## December 8

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore mine at Asikulam, Vavuniya, seriously injuring three SLA troopers who were on their way to fetch water from a well close to the Asikulam SLA camp. The police said that there were two claymores fixed together but only one had exploded.

## December 7

● SLN cadres shot dead a Tamil youth and seriously injured another on Crow Island beach in Modara, Colombo. The SLN allege that when its cadres approached the youths to inquire about their suspicious movement, the youths attempted to pull guns, resulting in the shooting in self defence by the SLN marines.

Both men, seriously injured, were rushed to the SLN Hospital where one of them succumbed to his wounds. The dead youth was identified as Vinoth, 27 from Pasarai in the upcountry and the injured as Sutharsan, 28, both flower garland sellers at Modara Vishnu temple.

The two men had gone to Crow Island beach for morning ablutions and were shot from afar by the SLN cadres, locals said. They allege that the SLN was attempting to cover up the killing by claiming the men had been attempting to pull guns.

● Eleven students and two teachers were wounded when artillery shells hit Somadevi Sinhala School in Kallar. Soon after the incident, a group of hand picked journalists were flown to the area by the Sri Lanka military. The Sri Lankan military said the Tigers were targeting the Mahindapura SLA camp with artillery fire, but the shells had missed the target. Three soldiers were wounded an hour later when the shells hit the SLA camp, the SLA said. LTTE military spokesman Mr. Irasiah Ilanthirayan, denied artillery fire from LTTE positions towards the Sinhala school.

● Armed men opened fire on the police sentry post in Maharambaikulam area in Vavuniya seriously injuring a policeman.

● Armed men shot killed a youth at Samalamkulam, Vavuniya. The

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## NEWS

## Violence/ Dec 10

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dead youth, aged around 20 to 25 years, was yet to be identified. Residents of Samalmkulam said they heard gun shots from Samalmkulam tank, the area where the body was found. Four persons riding a three wheeler were killed two months previously and before that two were shot killed, both near Samalmkulam tank.

● Gunmen went to the home of GCE (Advanced Level) student, Monoharan Paranthaman, 17, in Madduvil East Chavakachcheri, Jaffna, called him out of his house and shot him at close range. The gunmen beat family members who tried to stop the shooting.

● Gunmen called a building mason out of his house and shot at him with a T56 gun at Sinnakulam, Amparai. Sellathurai Navaratnam, 23, of Veeramahakali Temple Road in Sinnakulam and a father of two, was seriously injured and rushed to hospital where he succumbed to his wounds. Mr. Navaratnam was at home with his wife and children after dinner when the gunmen called him out and shot him at close range.

● Sectarian violence between orthodox Muslims and an Islamic Sufi sect resurfaced in the Muslim town of Kattankudy, Batticaloa, following the death of a Sufi sect leader.

## December 6

● Thirteen civilians from the Jaffna were abducted after the Sri Lanka Government reinstated the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (see separate story).

● Assailants triggered a claymore device attached to a motorcycle parked near Pannai Bridge in Jaffna, targeting a SLA vehicle but killing four civilians and seriously injuring two others. The blast overturned the vehicle, injuring several soldiers. The claymore device blast targeted an SLA vehicle was returning from Sri Lanka Telecom Limited in the Pannai Bridge area. Two men died on the spot and a 45-year-old woman and 4-year-old child died in hospital. V. Vaseekaran, 21, of Velanai and a 4-year-old boy were admitted to the Intensive Care Unit in a critical condition.

● Unidentified persons triggered a claymore device on Chettikulam-Madavadchi road in Vavuniya, killing two SLA troopers on the spot. The claymore attack was on the tractor taking dinner to SLA soldiers manning sentry posts along the road.

● Unidentified armed men shot dead Thankarasa Pirabaharan at

Sasthrikoolankulam in Vavuniya.

● A gunman following a youth shot him dead at Sithandy, Batticaloa. Sithamparapillai Pathmanathan, 27, the Regional agent of a private insurance company in Batticaloa and a resident of Old Market Road in Sithandy, was killed as he was walking towards his friend's house.

## December 5

● Two gunmen on motor cycle shot dead a trader at Viyaparimoolai in Point Pedro, Jaffna. The riders shot Manickam Jeyarasa, 36, in an area where SLA troopers had been present some minutes earlier and the killers escaped in the direction the SLA troopers had taken, witnesses said.

● Two SLA troopers in Batticaloa were killed and 19 injured during a clash between the SLA and LTTE at LTTE held Katumurivu in Batticaloa district. The SLA also reported that they learnt from LTTE communications that five LTTE cadres were killed in the fight. The LTTE attacked the SLA troopers when they attempted to penetrate into the LTTE held area.

● Two SLA troopers in Batticaloa, including a woman, and a policeman were injured in a LTTE mortar attack on an LTTE sentry post at Black Bridge on the Chenkalady-Badula road leading into LTTE held region. Two mortar shells fell and exploded near the sentry post injuring M. Senaratne, 39, Ms. R. Menike, 24, and W. Chandraratne, 34, a policeman, the SLA said. Following the exchange of mortar fire Chenkalady town was deserted with all shops and other establishments shut immediately while the people fled in panic from the town.

● A youth from Avarangal, Puthur in Valikamam, Jaffna, who was injured in a shooting incident and was being treated at the Jaffna Teaching hospital, surrendered to SLHRC, telling officials his life will be in danger if he goes home. The number of youths surrendering to the Jaffna SLHRC, out of fear being abducted and killed by Sri Lankan forces, is increasing, with more than 30 youths from various parts of the peninsula surrendering in the last two months. The surrendered youths appear before the Jaffna Magistrate with the SLHRC's legal support and are sent to the protective custody of Jaffna prison.

● The relatives of Sritharan Parathithasan, 21, of Mallaham, lodg-



Children are increasingly the victims of the war as schools and settlements are hit. Photo TamilNet

## UN envoy: widen focus beyond child soldiers to humanitarian issues

IN THE wake of his visit to Sri Lanka last month, the Special Envoy of the UN Under Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflicts, Ambassador Allan Rock, has recommended that the United Nations widen its focus from only recruitment and use of child soldiers at present to include the killing of children and the denial of humanitarian access for children.

During his visit, Ambassador Rock observed the situation facing children in areas under embargo by the Sri Lankan security forces.

The Sunday Times last week published extracts from Mr. Rock's report to the UN.

It states that his mission in Sri Lanka discovered there was strong and "credible evidence" that the security forces were supporting and sometimes participating in the abductions and forced recruitment of children by the Karuna Group paramilitaries.

Mr. Rock is said to cite eyewitnesses and families of abduct-

ed children along with other sources of evidence to support his findings.

According to the Sunday Times, Ambassador Rock also states in his report that:

"I recommend that the Security Council expanding its focus and give equal care and attention to children affected by armed conflict in all situations of concern; and to give equal weight to all categories of grave violations beyond the recruitment and use of child soldiers to include the killing and maiming of children, rape and other grave sexual violence, abductions, attacks against schools or hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access for children."

As part of his visit, Ambassador Rock visited the Vaharai region where he visited an internally displaced camp which Sri Lankan forces had shelled, killing and wounding dozens of people, including children.

The region is under a strict embargo by government forces,

with starvation on the verge of setting in amid severe shortages of food and medicine.

Last week, amid intense international pressure, Sri Lankan forces permitted two weeks supply of food to enter. Another 40 trucks worth of food was stopped and sent back.

Meanwhile, both the Sunday Times and The Sunday Leader newspapers said that Mr. Rock had written to the Sri Lankan government saying that despite Colombo's denials and vilification of him, the UN official was standing by his report.

Copies of his report to the UN had been sent to the Sri Lankan government, the papers said.

"However, in forwarding the evidence, Rock has been careful not to furnish the names or addresses of the eyewitnesses having considered implications for their security, a decision taken in consultation with the international community and top UN officials," The Sunday Leader said.

ed a complaint at SLHRC that the SLA arrested him and some others on December 1 along Mallaham-Alaveddi Road. Though the SLA released all the others, no concrete information regarding his whereabouts was given when contacted by the relatives.

● Sinnarasa Sivaselvam, 26, from Puloly South, Point Pedro in Vadamarachy, Jaffna, has disappeared after being arrested by the SLA. The soldiers in the area confiscated his Identity Card and asked him to come to their camp later. Sivaselvam was not seen after he went to the SLA camp.

● Senthilnathan Kajendran, 25,

of Siruppiddy North, Puthur and Thuraiyan Thavakkumar, 23, of Karamban, Puthur North were arrested on 29 and 17 November respectively, but their whereabouts are currently unknown, relatives said in a complaint to the SLHRC.

● Kekirawa police recovered four dead bodies, partially burnt, in a paddy field at Ganewella, Habarana. The bodies, with disfigured faces, appear to be of youths aged 20 to 25 years. The four dead may have been killed elsewhere and brought to the field where they had been set fire with tyres to make them unidentifiable,

the police said. They may have been abducted in the villages of Thimbulagala, Wellikanda, Manampity, Soruvil, Sungavil on the borders of Batticaloa and Polanaruwa districts. Several cases of youths being abducted by Karuna paramilitary groups collaborating with the SLA have been reported earlier in the Batticaloa district.

● Tension prevailed in Trincomalee as a Ceylon Electricity Board employee was shot dead (see separate story).

● Hundreds of Sri Lankan troopers and police cordoned off and

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EPDP - Eelam People's Democratic Party  
FDL - Forward Defence Line  
IDP - Internally Displaced Person  
HSZ - High Security Zone  
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross  
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam  
PLOTE - People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam  
SLA - Sri Lanka Army  
SLAF - Sri Lanka Air Force  
SLHRC / HRC - Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission  
SLMM - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission  
SLN - Sri Lanka Navy  
STF - Special Task Force

## NEWS

## Violence/ Dec 10

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searched Mannar areas covering Moor Street, Uppukulam, and Sinnakadai. All houses and vehicles in the area came under intensive search. Residents said the security forces also deployed female cadres in the search. No one was arrested in the operation.

## December 4

● The LTTE repulsed a major STF offensive against LTTE held Kanchikudichanaru in Amparai from the Kanchirankuda STF camp, backed with heavy artillery fire. Four STF troopers were killed and eight seriously injured in the attack, while three LTTE cadres sustained minor injuries, the LTTE said. The STF reported that one of their troopers was killed and three seriously injured.

Heavy artillery fire and shelling from the STF camps in Kanchirankuda and Sangamaankandy directed on the LTTE held area followed the failed offensive.

● Heavy fighting continued between the LTTE and SLA at Kattumurivu, inside LTTE controlled Vaharai region in Batticaloa as the two month old SLS offensive flared up again (see Vaharai story).

● Three SLA troopers were seriously injured in a clash between the SLA and LTTE in Kadjuwath area, Batticaloa.

● The LTTE clashed with SLA troopers who attempted to move beyond the no-go zone towards Puliyanakulam at the Omanthai FDL in Vavuniya. The SLA troopers withdrew after facing resistance from the Tigers. Artillery and mortar fire was also reported from the FDL in Muhamalai.

● An ambulance with 7 patients needing advanced treatment at Vavuniya Hospital could not proceed as the Omanthai exit point remained closed following the clash. Five children, including a 6 month-old baby and a 18-month-old baby girl, were among the seven patients in the ambulance.

● Gunmen abducted S. Thevarasa, 50, from Satkoddai, a coastal village in Vadamarachchy, Jaffna, and shot him dead near a temple in Samarapahu, Karaveddi. Though abducted and killed on Monday, Thevarasa's corpse was found only on Tuesday, as local residents, who had heard gunshots Monday afternoon, kept indoors out of fear.

● Armed persons in a white van abducted four youths, including a small restaurant owner, in Alaveddi in Valikamam, Jaffna. The armed men took the restaurant owner into the van first and then took three other customers.

● Armed men abducted four youths at gun point from Santhiveli, Batticaloa, while they were sleeping. Velupillai Yogeswaran, 16, Kanagaratnam Thusanthan, 16, Kanthasamy Sivaraj, 15, and Muthusamy Pathmarasa, 18, are all residents of Santhiveli Palayadi Thona. Yogeswaran and Kanagaratnam worked as building masons while Sivaraj helped his father in fishing. Pathmarasa was working in a private establishment in Batticaloa. Residents of the area allege that the youths were abducted by Karuna paramilitary group cadres.

● An armed SLA intelligence wing soldier entered the house of Mr. K. Suntharalingam, 52, from Pannalai in Tellipallai, and forcefully took him in a white van. When the relatives inquired at the nearby Pannalai SLA camp, officials said that they were not aware of any arrests.

● Armed men shot dead two Muslim youths at Annar Nagar in Vavuniya. Muthalib Rivai, 22 and Mohamed Salim Basil, 33, were staying at a relative's house in Vavuniya when they were shot.

● Two armed men on motorcycle shot dead a youth and seriously injured his cousin in Point Pedro, Jaffna. Sebamalai David, 27, a fisherman, was killed and John Jesusudas, 37, from Kochchikadai, was injured. David was standing in front of his house with his cousin when the armed men shot at them.



IDPs were once again homeless as the war raged near where they had sought shelter. Photo TamilNet

## Violence in the NorthEast, week ending December 3

## Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since November 27

## December 3

● A SLA trooper was seriously injured in a sniper attack on the Vavunativu SLA sentry post in Batticaloa. In a similar sniper attack on Vavunativu SLA camp Friday a paramilitary cadre named M. K. Rajan was seriously injured.

● Armed men shot dead Pakkianathan Calista Nirmala, 42, in her house at Antony Road, Palaiootu, Trincomalee. The men had forcibly opened the doors of her house and shot her.

## December 2

● At least one civilian was wounded and three houses were damaged when SLAF Kfir bombers hit a civilian area providing temporary settlement for the tsunami-affected in Mullaithivu district. Another village, Vadduvahal, was attacked within the hour in another sortie, while two Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) were engaged in a reconnaissance mission over Kilinochchi. 2 Israeli built Kfir bombers dropped 8 bombs in Thevipuram.

● SLA DPU attackers exploded a claymore mine, damaging a Road Development Authority vehicle at Moonru Murippu in Liberation Tigers controlled territory in Vanni. No casualties were reported in the attack.

● The owner of a vehicle repair facility in Dutch Road, Chavakachheri, was shot dead by two gunmen riding a motorbike. Mylvaganam Thavarajah, 28, was on his way to open his garage located near the Chavakachcheri District Court when he was shot. He was earlier arrested by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and threatened following a claymore attack near the Chavakachcheri Court premises but was released.

## December 1

● Two Sri Lanka Police constables were killed when assailants triggered a claymore mine fitted to a motorcycle parked near the junction of Clock Tower road and Hospital road in the security reinforced HSZ near Jaffna town. The victims were walking towards the Police station located on the Clock Tower road when the attack happened.

● Three civilians abducted by armed men from their houses at Vinayagapuram, Thirukovil in Amparai, were found shot to death by Vinayagapuram residents at a junction near Vinayagapuram Tamil Maha Vidyalayam, around 200 meters from their houses. The victims were identified as Sabarathinam Raveenthiran, 31, a father of one, Mylvaganam Arulananthan, 28, and Kanthasamy Kantharoopan 35, father of five.

● Sritharan Kannan, 22, who was returning after a painting job, was abducted in Mallakam by SLA soldiers on motorbikes. Kannan was displaced from Valigamam North and was residing in Konappalam Lane in Mallakam. Officials at the Alaveddy SLA camp had told Kannan's parents that they had no information of any arrests.

● SLA soldiers travelling in a white van abducted Valyutham Gajendran, 27, a library employee at the Valigamam North Pradeshya Sabha. The soldiers entered Gajendran's home, near the SLA camp in Mallakam Courts Road, and took him.

● Gunmen shot and killed S. Ramachandran, 36, a farmer, at Menkamam, a Tamil village in SLA controlled Muthur region in Trincomalee.

● A Sinhalese civilian, Waduge Karunaratne, 58, was found dead near Chinabay Railway Station,

Trincomalee, with his throat slit and gun shot wounds on the body.

● Thevathasan Vimala, 56, from Oddumadam, in the suburbs of Jaffna, was called out of her residence in Araly Road, Oddumadam by a group of armed men who shot her dead on the spot.

● Due the death threats of the Sri Lanka forces and collaborating paramilitaries stationed in the peninsula, increasing number of youths fearing for their lives have been surrendering at the Jaffna office of the SLHRC seeking protection for their lives. Twenty eight youths are currently in protective custody at the Jaffna prison and more youths are surrendering each day.

● A SLA soldier was seriously injured in a sniper attack inside Vavunativu camp in Batticaloa. The injured soldier was identified as Hettiarachi Sripala, 34. The SLA launched retaliatory mortar attacks against Liberation Tigers controlled areas close to Vavunativu.

● Unidentified men triggered a claymore device along Udupiddu-Valvettithurai road killing a SLA trooper belonging to a unit returning to Valvettithurai SLA camp in Jaffna after constructing sentry posts near Ellankulam Heroes Resting Home. The SLA opened fire on the attackers and there was an exchange of firing for nearly 5 minutes but no one was injured.

● A young Kayts woman was injured by a stray bullet fired during SLN combat training at the Kayts SLN base. Following landing of LTTE cadres in Mandaitivu on 11 August and subsequent alleged preparations for war, SLN fears a large-scale attack by the LTTE on Jaffna Islets, and has been conducting combat rehearsals near the Kayts SLN camp the past

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## Trincomalee terror campaign stepped up

SIX Tamil civilians have been killed in government-controlled Trincomalee over the past week, as a campaign of terror against local civilians was stepped up.

One man was killed and another wounded December 8 in Orr's Hill. Armed men in a three-wheeler opened fired at the victims in front of a house along Lower Road. Desmond Antony, 46, a sea diver, was killed and Mahendran Uthasooriyan, 36, was injured.

On December 7, two more men were shot dead as they were standing a shop in Aathimoddai village, north of the port town. Armed men fired at Bernard

Kingsely, 21, a customer, and Velu Jeyakanthan, 27, a salesman.

A day earlier, armed persons had shot dead two Tamil villagers and injured another at Uppuveli when they were returning in their carts with firewood from Kanniya. A. Singarasa, 36 and K. Sivananthan, 57, both from 6th Mile Post, Kanniya, were killed and Chellaiah Sundaralingam, 50, from Varadoya Nagar, Puthukudirupu in Uppuveli, was injured.

On December 5, gunmen shot dead Mr. Konamalai Kaneshabalan of Gandhinagar, an employee of the Ceylon Electricity Board, while he was on his way to work in Uppuveli.

## NEWS

## Violence/ Dec 3

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two days, Kayts residents said. Yogan Thiruvarduchelvi 31, of Camp Road in Kayts was injured during this exercise and is recovering in Jaffna Hospital with a bullet wound in her upper body.

## November 30

● Three policemen, including a woman police constable, and two army troopers were killed and four wounded when a SLA truck packed with soldiers collided with a train as it crossed a railway crossing in Enderamulla, north-east of Colombo. There were 10 police and military personnel in the truck. One trooper escaped without injuries. The woman police constable was identified as Nishanthi Luxica. The other victims were an Inspector of Police Methagoda, Constable Ratnayake and army troopers Gunapala and Eranga. The troopers were returning after a cordon and search operation.

● Two fisher families, of eleven members, arrived in government controlled Kothaipiddy seashore, Mannar, by boats from Vidathaltivu village in LTTE held area. They left their village due to constant air strike and artillery attack by the SLA towards the LTTE held area. The families said that there was severe shortage of supply of food and other essentials.

● Ten SLA soldiers were injured when two buses carrying troopers collided near Kantalai, southwest of Trincomalee town. One bus was transporting a group of soldiers on leave and the other was taking soldiers to Trincomalee from Colombo to report for duty near Kantalai town.

● The Head of Vavuniya Institute of Education, K. Bernard, said that 115 Sinhalese students of the institution had complained that armed men had come to the institution asking for them. As the students said they feared for their lives, arrangements were made with the Vavuniya SLA to protect the students overnight and they were escorted to their homes Thursday. Mr. Bernard said that he will be investigating the threats posed to his students.

● Two gunmen on a motorbike shot and killed Grama Sevakar Gilbert Anandarajah, 45, of Gurunagar West, Jaffna. Mr. Anandarajah is the third Grama Sevakar to be slain in Jaffna during the months since hostilities resumed in Jaffna on August 11. Mr. Anandarajah, father of two, was shot and killed at his office.

● A farmer was critically injured

when a group of SLA troopers in ambush fired at him at Poonagar village in Eachchilampathu division. Muththar Kathiresan, a father of two, had gone to the area in search of his cattle.

● Armed men killed Jeyakumar Thiriyar, 24, of Madduvil South, Chavakachcheri in Thenmaradch-chy area after he was ordered to come out of his home.

● The headless body of a youth of Naranthanai who was abducted from his home on Wednesday by unidentified men was found at Nerunchimunai area in Kayts in the islets of Jaffna, which is under the control of the SLN. Daniel Quinton, 24, was identified by his relatives and later taken to the hospital for an autopsy, which found he had most likely been shot dead first, and later beheaded. His head has not yet been found.

## November 29

● The SLA bulldozed the Alankulam Heroes' Cemetery in Muthur East, on November 25, said LTTE's Trincomalee District Political Head, S. Elian. "Sri Lankan military has once again desecrated a war cemetery. No military in the civilized world, would engage in such an act," charged Mr. Elilan. Headstones were bulldozed away and the resting place was destroyed by the military two days ahead of Heroes Day, he further said.

● Sri Lanka Police officials produced two catholic priests and two youths before a judge, accusing the four of indulging in activities defaming both the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka military. Allen Vinoja and Marianayagam Godfrey Morris Gnana-geethan, were arrested Friday in Passayoor by SLA troops and were later handed over to the police. On the same day two catholic priests Fr. Francis Xavier Jeyasegaram, and Fr. Jesuratnam Bernard were arrested by police.

The priests and the two youths belong to Commission Justice of Peace (CJP), an organization directly under Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, Bishop of Jaffna, and were arrested for possessing pre-printed post cards to be distributed to the public. These cards detailed the current situation prevailing in the peninsula, including atrocities of the Sri Lanka military, the closure of A9 Highway, and disappearance of youths. The four were planning to obtain signature and opinions from 5000 members of the general public and forward them to the Secretary General of UN request-



Sri Lanka has reinstated sweeping powers of arrest and detention for security forces. In the past tens of thousands of Tamils have been held without charge, some for many years, under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Photo Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images

## 13 abducted within hours of law

THIRTEEN civilians in Jaffna district were abducted last Wednesday night soon after the Sri Lanka government reinstated the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), TamilNet reported.

Nine civilians from Kalviyankadu, Kadaipirai, Dutch road areas in Valigamam east were abducted Wednesday night by armed men alleged to be Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and police, residents in these areas said.

The same night four civilians in Valigamam north were abducted by SLA, according to complaints made by the relatives of

the abducted, at the Jaffna office of the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission (SLHRC).

SLA has refused to provide any written evidence to acknowledge that they have "arrested" the disappeared civilians, the relatives told SLHRC.

Complaints regarding the nine abducted from Valigamam east are yet to be registered with the SLHRC Jaffna, the relatives of the abducted said.

Meanwhile, Thiyanagalingam Sundaralingam, 48, a trader and a resident of Ambanai, Tellipalai was abducted by SLA troopers on December 3 around

11:50 p.m from his house located within the SLA High Security Zone (HSZ), according to complaints made by his wife Kamalambikai Sundaralingam to the Jaffna SLHRC.

Kamalambikai said that her husband was taken away by SLA troopers, but when she complained it to the SLA authorities, they had refused to provide information.

SLHRC officials are in direct contact with the Commander of the SLA Jaffna Maj. Gen. Chandrasiri regarding Sundaralingam's case but no further information about the arrest is known.

ing early action to bring back normalcy to the Northeast.

## November 28

● Sri Lankan security forces must immediately stop assisting abductions of boys and young men by the Karuna Group and help those abducted return safely to their families, Human Rights Watch said (see separate story).

● Unidentified persons shot and killed a Tamil civilian and injured two others at the sixth milepost

north of Trincomalee. The dead man was identified as Somasuntharam Inban, 25, a mason of Nilaveli. The two injured men were identified as Satheswar and Suthahar, both aged 25, and residents of Sambaltivu village. All three were returning home after work when they were shot at.

● Unidentified gunmen following Uthayakumar Rajitha, 34, on a motorcycle, shot her dead on Aathisooddy Road in Thirunelveli, Jaffna, as she was on her way out of her home.

● Key SLA commanding officers were said to have visited Palaly Military base as the SLA resumed reinforcing security arrangements in the Jaffna peninsula. Private aircraft flying between Ratmalana and Palaly, avoided using the regular air routes.

● Sounds of shell and artillery fire were heard from the Thenmaradchi Forward Defence Lines throughout Monday night, with Urumpirai residents reporting that

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EPDP - Eelam People's Democratic Party  
FDL - Forward Defence Line  
IDP - Internally Displaced Person  
HSZ - High Security Zone  
ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross  
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam  
PLOTE - People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam  
SLA - Sri Lanka Army  
SLAF - Sri Lanka Air Force  
SLHRC / HRC - Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission  
SLMM - Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission  
SLN - Sri Lanka Navy  
STF - Special Task Force

## NEWS

# Cool reception in Delhi for Rajapakse

TamilNet

PRESIDENT Mahinda Rajapakse's visit to India this week was overshadowed by Tamil Tiger leader Vellupillai Pirapaharan's Heroes' Day address declaring a resumption of the struggle for independence.

Sri Lankan and other media have made much of Delhi's call for negotiations to end Sri Lanka's protracted civil war, suggesting it was a rebuff for the LTTE's 'call for Eelam.' But experienced political journalists saw India focusing on a different set of concerns - that of the hardline Sri Lankan government's conduct vis-à-vis the Tamil minority.

Delhi's reassertion of the need for a negotiated solution is a direct rejoinder to President Rajapakse, whose government, expanding its defence budget by a staggering 45% and stepping up its vilification of the LTTE, has publicly taken up a military solution to the ethnic question.

India is particularly frustrated by Sri Lanka's persistent use of indiscriminate and excessive force resulting in the triggering of a massive humanitarian crisis in the Northeast and the deaths of large numbers of civilians in air and artillery strikes.

**After the leaders' meeting there was no photo opportunity for reporters, nor were official photographs released. There was no joint statement by them either.**

Lastly, India is also frustrated at the Sri Lankan government's uncompromising approach to reaching a political solution with the Tamils. Not only is there no sign of a credible proposal from Colombo to put on the negotiating table, but the Rajapakse administration has actively begun dismantling a cornerstone of a future solution, the merged Northeast province.

The Rajapakse administration's pointed ignoring of repeated Indian entreaties to preserve the Northeast merger, also a crucial pillar of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, has also irked Delhi.

India's mounting displeasure on all these scores was conspicuously apparent in the dropping of

customary diplomatic practices at the end of President Rajapakse's three-day visit, which included a meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

After the leaders' meeting there was no photo opportunity for reporters, nor were official photographs released. Even Sri Lanka's flagship state-owned paper, the Daily News, had to settle for carrying a picture of Rajapakse's meeting with Indian Opposition Leader L. K. Advani on its front-page on Thursday.

There was, notably, also no joint statement by the two leaders after their hour-long talk. It was left to India's External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, to make comments to the press and answer reporters' questions.

Notably, President Rajapakse's much publicized demand that the Indian Navy should commence joint patrolling with the Sri Lankan Navy was firmly rejected. India was (only) prepared to assist the Rajapakse government with 'non-lethal' military assistance, Mr. Mukherjee said.

Moreover, Delhi is impatient for a political solution.

An Indian foreign Ministry spokesman told reporters: "We conveyed our long-standing position on the need for a negotiated political settlement that is acceptable to all sections of society."

The hackneyed expression - 'a solution acceptable to all' - has specific connotations when India reiterated it to President Rajapakse: the solution must be acceptable to the Tamils.

The Sri Lankan leader has repeatedly been making much of his efforts to forge a southern consensus - a euphemism for a solution acceptable to Buddhist hardliners and Sinhala nationalists.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between President Rajapakse's ruling SLFP and the main opposition UNP has not spelled out the terms of a political solution with any clarity - whilst it echoes the hardliners' rhetoric of defeating terrorism and separatism.

And while the UNP says it is prepared to support the merger of the North and East, there is no sign the SLFP is going to table the matter in Parliament to allow the proper process for merging to be followed.

The Indian stand is that a referendum can be held in Sri Lanka's northeast to decide if it must remain one or split up into two when there is a conducive atmosphere.

But the Rajapakse government's position is that there must

*Continued on page 15*



Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse (R) arrives at Indira Gandhi airport in New Delhi on Nov 25, 2006 as Indian Minister of Panchayati Raj Mani Shanker Aiyer (L) looks on. Photo Prakash Singh/AFP/Getty Images

## Karunanidhi orders explosives probe

AFTER police in Tamil Nadu found a vehicle carrying a huge quantity of explosives meant for Sri Lanka, Chief Minister M Karunanidhi ordered officials to ascertain whether any business house was exporting explosives without the Centre's knowledge.

A Sri Lankan Government request for supplying the explosives, dated October 10, 2005, was carried by the vehicle's driver Ravi Verma, PTI said. According to the papers, the consignee for the explosives was a Sri Lanka naval base in Colombo.

Karunanidhi, who was in New Delhi, issued the probe order to the police after Union External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Defence Minister A K Antony denied that the Centre had allowed the export of explosives to Sri Lanka.

Both promised Karunanidhi that an inquiry would be ordered into any such exports, PTI reported, quoting an official press release said.

The Chief Minister took up the matter with the Ministers after reports that explosives were being sent to Sri Lanka despite Delhi's declaration of a freeze on arms supplies to the Colombo regime.

A report from Madurai had said that the police had on Thursday found a vehicle carrying 40 cartons of explosives from Nagpur to Sri Lanka and escorted it up to the port city of Tuticorin.

Police said the explosives, including detonators, were worth Indian Rs 400,000.

According to the papers, the consignee for the explosives was Rakshama-Valsara Naval Base Explosives Godown in Colombo.

## UK takes Sri Lanka off safe return list

THE British Government has relaxed the procedure for thousands of Sri Lankan asylum seekers with immediate effect because of what it sees as a deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka.

A British High Commission spokesperson says Sri Lankan asylum seekers could now remain in the country and make their appeals if their applications had been rejected.

Earlier, Sri Lanka was among 14 countries whose citizens had to leave Britain as soon as their asylum applications were rejected and make any appeal from outside Britain.

The Sunday Times reports that some 30,000 applications by Sri Lankan seeking asylum in Britain are either pending or rejected.

"The latest country information on Sri Lanka has been closely examined and given the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka, the British Home Secretary is of the view that the legal test for designation is no longer met," the spokesperson explained.

He said however as the escalation in violence in Sri Lanka had not affected all parts of the country to the same degree, the Home Office would be examining whether it was appropriate to re-introduce a partial geographic designation.

## France warns citizens

FRANCE has warned its nationals against making non-essential visits to Sri Lanka because of an increase in violence and suicide attacks, Reuters reported.

In an advisory published on its Website on Thursday the Foreign Ministry strongly advised French visitors to avoid the north and east of the island and warned against non-urgent travel in the rest of the country. The move is likely to further negatively impact tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka, where violence has been rising sharply for several months.

"Given the resumption in violence and suicide attacks ... (travellers are) advised for the moment to reconsider all non-essential travel to Sri Lanka," the French Foreign ministry said.

The impact of the escalating violence means Sri Lanka's top hotel groups are increasingly relying on their Maldivian operations and investments into India for survival, LankaBusinessOnline reported this week.

## NEWS

## Violence/ Dec 3

Continued from page 13

a shell fell within the populated area in Urumpirai, but fortunately did not explode.

## November 27

● SLA troopers from Meeravodai SLA camp lay in ambush and shot dead Rasiah Manickavasagam, 59, a fishmonger and father of five at Meeravodai, a Tamil village in Valaichenai. Manickavasagam was shot dead on his way home after visiting his relatives. The SLA then arrested C. Yogan, 27, from Meeravodai, implicating him in the killing of Manickavasagam, local residents told TamilNet, adding that the Meeravodai SLA had warned three days earlier that anyone found on the roads after 7:00 p.m. would be shot.

● The Sri Lankan police force and LTTE exchanged mortar fire for 45 minutes in Murunkan, east of Mannar. 6th Mile Post and 17th Mile Post sentry posts manned by military trained policemen were attacked by LTTE mortar fire, according to police officials, who claimed that they launched mortar fire in retaliation. Civilians who reached Mannar from LTTE controlled areas above Murunkan said around 10 mortar shells hit civilian settlements. No casualties were reported.

● Armed masked men robbed cash and other valuables worth many hundreds of thousand rupees

from 8 houses in Batticaloa town and its suburbs at gunpoint. The men forcibly entered the houses of A. Velmurugu, M. Letchumy, K. Perinpanayagi, K. Shanthakumari and V. Vijayarane in Eravur Kurichi and robbed cash, jewellery, hand phones and other valuables worth around 800,000 rupees, according to complaints made by those robbed with Eravur police. Later armed masked men stole cash, jewellery and other valuables from the houses of Subramaniam Parameswary, Gnanasekaram Kumutha and Justice of Peace Ariyanyagam Kanagasundram in Mamankam, also at gunpoint.

● Unidentified persons lobbed hand grenades at a SLA sentry post near Puthur junction, Jaffna, injuring two SLA troopers. The SLMM in Jaffna visited the site of the attack and investigated.

● Jaffna police recovered the bodies of two youths with knife wounds and cut injuries on throats and hands, dumped in a deserted plot of land at Thavadi North, Valigamam, Jaffna. Residents of Inuvil said the youths are suspected to be from Kodady and Kondavil and were the accused in criminal cases.

● The body of a youth who disappeared from Irupalai Saturday was found with gunshot wounds along the Stadium Road in Irupalai. K. Senthurchelvan, 23, disappeared after venturing out from his home in Milkfarm, Thirunelvely, to run errands.

## Cool reception ...

Continued from page 14

be referendum in the east before the merger can go ahead (in a reversal of the terms of the Indo-Lanka Accord which says the merger must stand till a referendum on demerging is held).

Seasoned observers could have predicted that a cool reception for Rajapakse was on the cards even before he left for Delhi.

Last week Prime Minister Singh made his sentiments on developments in Sri Lanka clear in a letter to Y Gopalasamy (Vaiiko), leader of the MDMK.

The symbolism of the Premier's letter to the stridently pro-LTTE Tamil Nadu party was itself striking (especially since the letter was undoubtedly intended to be made public).

So was its unmistakable tone and contents. "The latest incidents in Sri Lanka leading to the loss of many innocent lives, mainly Tamils including women and children, are a matter of the

utmost concern and sorrow to all of us," Mr. Singh said.

"We have consistently pointed out that there is no justification for violence of this kind and that the killing of innocent people, especially of women and children, is not acceptable."

"We have taken great care not to provide Sri Lanka with lethal offensive items of military hardware, specially of the kind that could be used against the Tamil population."

"We have, at every opportunity, also impressed upon the Sri Lankan Government to respect the rights and privileges of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as citizens of the country. This is again being conveyed to [them]."

"We will reiterate to the Government of Sri Lanka that they must find a political solution through negotiations that would meet the genuine and legitimate rights of the Tamils, rather than adopt tactics that lead to the death of innocent people."

## Writing to TAMIL GUARDIAN

Letters for publication should contain the writer's signature, name and full address. They should be brief and are subject to editing. Letters and unsolicited manuscripts are not acknowledged or returned.

Letters should be addressed to the Editor.

Email letters should be sent to: [editor@tamilguardian.com](mailto:editor@tamilguardian.com)

## TAMIL CINEMA

## Big budget release

'Sivaji', the mega budget Rajinikanth film, is finally getting wrapped up. This movie, which began last December, is in its final stages of completion. 'Sivaji' was shot in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Mysore, Pune, Delhi, Kolkatta and an overseas location

in Spain, before the final leg in Chennai. Post production work is soon due to begin and 'Sivaji' is expected to hit the screen for Tamil New Year's day. When it is a film from superstar, it naturally kindles a lot of excitement and expectations and 'Sivaji' also was not an exception to this. This film was in the lime sight all along with diverse speculations about it. It holds the unique distinction of being the most expensive film not only for Rajinikanth but also for an A.V.M. banner. 'Sivaji' has plans of a spectacular release simultaneously in Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Kerala and overseas. Meanwhile, Rajni allegedly plans to leave for the Himalayas immediately after the completion of the movie.



## Heroic effort required



another film soon as his last release was 'Majaa' in August 2005 - over a year without a release is a long time for an actor. 'Bheema' was initially due to release earlier this year, but the movie is even now only about 80% complete. Now, unless someone makes the effort, 'Bheema' may not make the screens at all.

## Dancing up a storm

Pooja is co-starring with Jeeva in the film 'Pori'. As Jeeva was busy with 'Aran' and 'E', 'Pori' was stalled. Now that Jeeva is free, 'Pori' is being dusted and expected to create a sensation. Recently shooting took place in Golconda fort near Hyderabad for a song sequence. Pooja danced



for the 'meaningful' song that starts with 'Vedalam murunga maram eriduchu'. Master Sivasankar (dance master for the well received 'Manmada rasa') was the dance director and Subramaniya Siva is the director. This Pooja dance is said to be 'excellent', with reviews that "Pooja has almost imitated the Andhra Pradesh storm! It is sure to make the audience's pulse jump in the theatres". Something for fans to look forward to.

## Vertically unchallenged

Kollywood was never fussy about the height of the heroines, probably because the heroes are not much taller. Gone are those days and the gen-next clan of heroes - Arya, Vishal et al - are tall and the demand for heroines to match their height is on the increase. Debutant girl of Balachander's upcoming 'Poi' seems to fit the bill perfectly thanks to



her 5' 6" height. Vimala Raman - the Australian of Indian ethnicity - makes her debut with the veteran Balachander's 'Poi'. She is currently defined as the tallest lead lady Tamil cinema has ever seen. Owing to her half-Tamil blood - her mother hails from Coimbatore - she speaks - or rather chimes - in Tamil. She was into modelling before Balachander spotted her for his 'Poi', which is being produced by Prakashraj's duet movies. She has grabbed enough attention from the media already for her height and good looks. Though the height factor could work wonders in the long run, the success of 'Poi' is pivotal for the kick off of her career. Since it was Balachander who spotted her, can Kollywood expect another promising newcomer?

## Dancing setback



Asin's films suffered a minor setback owing to a minor shoot spot injury that happened on the sets of 'Pokkiri'. Asin is full of activity these days - thanks to the shooting of her movies back to back. While shooting for 'Pokkiri', Asin - under the instruction of Prabhu Deva - danced without her shoes on for a dance sequence. While

filming the dance sequence with Vijay, an iron nail fastened in the wooden planks of the set pierced her foot making the lady scream with pain. Asin's father who was in the sets immediately moved her to the hospital where she was given first aid. It is reported that the doctors advised her not to dance for 10 days and to take rest. Sources in the 'Pokkiri' sets also stated that Asin will only arrive for dubbing and the dance sequence is been rescheduled. 'Pokkiri' will now wait for Asin's return.

## Refugee spotlight

Jeeva is gaining accolades for his hard work in his movies. After the promising Diwali release 'E' that created ripples at the box office, Jeeva has signed up his next contract - 'Rameswaram'. This time again, his role will showcase his talents as a refugee. He pairs up with Bhavana for the movie. The movie will throw light on the hardships faced by the refugees who arrive in India from Sri Lanka in search of a life and future. Since the focus of the movie is mainly on refugees, Jeeva and Bhavana travelled to the 'Mandapam Refugee Camp' in Rameswaram to experience the life of Tamil refugees - before they depict the refugees' lives on screen. The actors seemed to have moved with the plight of the refugees - who pleaded the crew to focus on the hardships they face in the movie. 'Rameswaram' is expected to add another feather to Jeeva's cap for its unexplored subject.



More than 500 Tamil Americans attended a packed auditorium for the Heroes Day event held December 2 at South Brunswick Middle School in New Jersey



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