

Underage recruitment should not be a political tool.

PAGE 6

## Donor 'threats' unlikely to stop Sri Lanka

Amantha Perera  
IPS

WILL the Sri Lankan government forego recent military gains in Tamil Tiger-held areas of the island and heed the advice of donors to resume dialogue with the LTTE?

At the two-day donor review that ended on Jan 31, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse was emphatic that the country did not want donor funding with strings attached.

But then pledges of 4.5 billion US dollars over the next two years are hard to argue and the government is keen to show that its military campaign has support.

Economist and researcher Muttukrishna Sarvananthan said the government was probably betting on the donors not withholding funds.

"I doubt the donors would hold back funds," Sarvananthan told IPS.

"The Japanese normally do not attach conditions to their aid either on economic liberalisation and reform issues or on the peace front. The Americans are also unlikely to stop aid unless the government goes back on its promise to come up with a (power) devolution package," he added.

Much of the pressure on Colombo came from the European Union which sent a low level delegation to the conference. EU chair, Germany, spoke of an aid freeze.

Europe, nevertheless, accounts for only 10 percent of Sri Lanka's annual aid flow and has limited leverage.

*Continued on page 5*



**Solid backing:** representatives of 50 countries at an aid conference in Galle on Jan 30. Sri Lanka claims to have received \$4.5bn in new funding, despite resuming the war against the LTTE. Reports p4-5, editorial p6. Photo Lakruwan Wanniarachchi/AFP/Getty Images

## Rajapakse demands LTTE surrenders arms and talks

BUOYED by the Sri Lankan military's capture, over the past six months, of large tracts of territory from the Tamil Tigers, President Mahinda Rajapakse said the LTTE could come for talks with his government - if it laid down its arms first.

Destroying the LTTE - "fighting terrorism" - is the centre piece of President Rajapakse's policy on the ethnic question.

He made it clear that the mili-

tary campaign would continue in his address at Sri Lanka's 59th Independence Day anniversary celebrations and in comments a day earlier, made when he toured the Vaharai region, recently captured from the LTTE.

Calling on the LTTE to disarm and come for talks, President Rajapakse told reporters in Vaharai: "this is a big opportunity for the Tigers to return to the negotiating table."

Accompanied by army, navy and air force commanders and top defense officials, he was touring the hamlet captured from the Tigers last month after a three month siege.

"What we have done is to liberate the people from terrorists," Rajapakse said of the siege which saw tens of thousands starving amid a total blockade on the LTTE-held enclave.

"I am here to thank the troops

for their action without causing a single civilian casualty," he said.

Hundreds of Tamil civilians were killed and wounded in indiscriminate bombardments, drawing criticism from international humanitarian agencies.

The fighting ended on January 19 when the defending Tigers melted away from the area, prompting the remaining 30,000

*Continued on page 3*

<b>CARLTON LEISURE</b> Worldwide Travel & Tours		<b>WEST LONDON</b> 299 RAYNERS LANE HARROW, MIDDLESEX, HA5 5EG 020 8426 1266	<b>EAST LONDON</b> 7 STATION PARADE EAST HAM, LONDON, E6 1JD 020 8596 7675	<b>SOUTH LONDON</b> 233 MITCHAM ROAD TOOTING, LONDON, SW17 9JG 020 8672 5757	<b>CENTRAL LONDON</b> 68 GREAT PORTLAND ST. LONDON, W1W 7NG 020 7636 7636	<b>NEWBURY PARK</b> 742 EASTERN AVENUE ILFORD, ESSEX, IG2 7H 020 8554 420
web: www.carltonleisure.com email: info@carltonleisure.com						
<b>COLOMBO</b> fr£280+TAXES	<b>MADRAS</b> fr£225+TAXES	<b>AUSTRALIA</b> fr£399+TAXES	<b>TORONTO</b> fr£289+TAXES	<b>For Worldwide Tour Packages</b> Tour hotline 020 8429 2797		

## NEWS

# SLFP-UNP pact over, dark times ahead - Ranil

TamilNet

ADDRESSING the new session of Parliament, leader of the opposition United National Party (UNP), Ranil Wickremesinghe, slammed President Mahinda Rajapakse for accepting the cross over of 19 UNP lawmakers to government ranks.

Mr. Wickremesinghe said the move had led to the "dissolution" of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the UNP.

"The UNP thus finds it impossible to work with the government in finding a solution to the issues referred to in the MOU," he said.

Among the issues are a bi-partisan approach to ending Sri Lanka's civil war.

At face value, the agreement signed in September between the two main parties promised a joint effort to resolving the conflict, but was also seen as an agreement by President Rajapakse's minority government, in exchange for the UNP's support in Parliament, not to poach UNP MPs.

However last month, a mass cross over of UNP MPs, including many senior members, boosted the government's numbers and severely weakened the UNP.

The defections reduced the UNP to just 43 seats in the 225 seat Parliament, five more than Sri Lanka's third largest party, the ultra-nationalist JVP.

Last month's crossovers coincided with those by a key UNP ally, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), whose six MPs also joined the government.

The hardline monks party, the JHU, also joined the government adding nine seats. The SLFP-led government now has 122 seats, with 108 holding cabinet posts.

The Parliamentary opposition comprises the rump of the UNP, the JVP and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) - with 22 seats.

Speaking at the new session of Parliament Tuesday, Mr. Wickremesinghe said it was "with great sadness in my heart" that he informed Parliament of the circumstances which led to the dissolution of the MOU.

"The MOU was truly historic because this was perhaps the first and only occasion in our nation's past, since Independence - 59 years ago, that the two largest and oldest political parties in the country had agreed to cooperate on several critical issues of vital

importance to our people," he said.

He said the "immense importance" of the agreement between President Rajapakse and himself was accepted millions of ordinary people from "every section of our society" including religious leaders of all faiths, the business community, academia, trade unions and civil society.

"The value of the MOU, as I was forcibly reminded by the leaders of our neighbouring countries - India and Nepal - whom I recently visited, was appreciated by the entire international community with which Sri Lanka has had the most cordial links for so long," he also said.

The MOU "replaced the politics of confrontation which has been the bane of our nation, with inclusiveness," he said.

"The MOU was to be the first step in Parliament having an inclusive approach to resolving the North East conflict," he said, pointing out both main parties had alliances with other smaller parties. Moreover, the UNP had been in dialogue with the only unallied party, the TNA, on resolution of the conflict, he said.

"But all of this was not to be - and a golden opportunity to change the course of history and indeed our country's destiny has been lost," as a result of President Rajapakse's soliciting of UNP crossovers, he said.

Mr. Wickremesinghe ruefully pointed out the UNP had last November supported the government's budget "because a vote against the Budget is a vote of no confidence on the government with which we have a MOU."

Wickremesinghe said Rajapakse had gone ahead and sworn UNP MPs as ministers, even though the President had been warned "that such a step would amount to a breach of the MOU."

Sri Lanka now has a cabinet of over a hundred, out of the 225 seat Parliament.

"The Cabinet of Ministers have become an international joke; democracy is weakened; the decision making in the government has been limited to few. The role of the Parliament has been de-valued," Mr. Wickremesinghe said.

However, Wickremesinghe warned of dark times ahead, saying: "We will witness in the coming weeks an increase in the violation of human rights, deterioration of good governance, spread of corruption, undermining of democracy, and the rising cost of living."



Former senior UNP member, Milinda Moragoda, who was key personality in the then government's peace talks with the LTTE in 2002 and 20003, was amongst those who crossed over and joined President Mahinda Rajapakse's government, now waging war on the Tigers. Photo TamilNet.

## A graveyard of pacts

PK Balachandran  
Hindustan Times

THE abrogation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the opposition United National Party (UNP) on Sunday, was only the latest in a series of disregarded, scuttled or torn up pacts in Sri Lanka since the mid 1950s.

As most of the pacts have been on the Tamil question - the main problem plaguing Sri Lanka since independence - their abrogation has had a very debilitating effect on the country.

According to the World Bank's Vice President for South Asia, Praful Patel, the war has cost Sri Lanka 2 or 3 percentage points on GDP growth annually over the last two decades - growth that could have eliminated poverty.

The BC-pact signed by Prime Minister SWRD. Bandaranaike and the Tamil leader SJV Chelvanayakam in July 1957 to solve the ethnic conflict, was abrogated

within a year following street protests from the UNP.

Bandaranaike tore it up in public in April 1958.

If it was implemented, the Tamil minority would have got regional autonomy and the right to use the Tamil language.

State-sponsored colonisation of the Tamil-speaking North-East by the majority Sinhala community would have stopped.

The worsening communal situation led to the Dudley Senanayake -Chelvanayakam pact in March 1965.

The DC-pact reiterated the assurance on the use of the Tamil language; enunciated norms for communal colonisation and promised District-level Councils. But opposition from the SLFP scuttled its implementation.

Four years of armed Tamil militancy and army action culminated in the India-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987.

But it became a dead letter within months, when the LTTE took on the Indian military, and the Sri Lankan and Indian governments failed to keep their part

of the bargain.

In 2006, the Sri Lankan Supreme Court annulled one of the few implemented provisions of the accord, when it struck down the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces to form a single Tamil province.

In April 1997, persuaded by British Minister Liam Fox, President Chandrika Kumaratunga and opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe signed a pact to have a bipartisan approach to the ethnic question. But destructive partisanship continued.

The Ceasefire Agreement of February 2002 signed by Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and LTTE leader Prabhakaran was scuttled by President Chandrika Kumaratunga, her successor Mahinda Rajapaksa and Prabhakaran.

In 2005, the Kumaratunga government and the LTTE signed a pact to set up a Joint Mechanism to manage tsunami relief funds in the Tamil-speaking North East.

But the Sinhala nationalists took it to the Supreme Court which struck it down!

## Interested in writing or publishing?

And in any or all things Tamil?

## Then join our team!

### No experience necessary, just lots of enthusiasm!

We are looking for writers to work with us on articles and commentary on political and social affairs, Tamil culture and arts, including popular cinema, as well as other subjects.

We are also looking for people interested in desk-top publishing or graphic design.

Email [info@tamilguardian.com](mailto:info@tamilguardian.com) for more details



## NEWS

# Rajapakse challenges LTTE...

Continued from page 1

people to flee to the safety of neighbouring Army-held towns.

"But there are two ways of liberating (civilians in Tiger areas). We have offered a political solution. We don't want a military solution," he said.

"I will offer them (Tigers) a political solution and they should come for talks," he said.

"They must begin surrendering weapons and come for talks," Rajapakse told AFP.

When asked what the government would do if the Tigers refuse, Rajapakse said his government "will have to tame the Tigers."

The Tigers have already laughed off his demands.

During his Independence Day address, President Rajapakse expressed his pride at having taken the war to the LTTE during his first year in office.

"I stand before you as the Head of State with a great feeling of contentment. I derive this contentment through the belief that I have given you leadership for over a period of one year, to safeguard our national dignity, from a time it had reached the lowest ebb."

He called on Sri Lankans to join him, saying: "it is only by joining with us that the innocent Tamil people of the North can be liberated from terrorist intimidation."

"We are not ready to give into the blood-thirsty demands of the LTTE," he said. "The uncompromising stand of our government is a firm commitment to a policy to safeguard national dignity."

Instead, he said, his government will work out a solution



President Rajapakse with Sri Lankan troops in Vaharai on Feb 3. He vowed to continue the war and destroy the LTTE. Photo TamilNet.

with anti-LTTE Tamil politicians who are prepared with the Sinhala-dominated state.

He singled out Mr. Anandasangaree, who split from the TULF,

**'They (Tigers) must begin surrendering weapons and come for talks'**

and Douglas Devananda, leader of the paramilitary EPDP.

Mr. Anandasangaree, who left the TULF and contests use of the party's name, recently defended the Rajapakse's government's human rights record, saying there was no genocide of Tamils in Sri

Lanka.

Mr. Devananda's EPDP is a long standing paramilitary ally of the Sri Lankan Army in its operations against the Tigers. It has long been blamed for a murderous campaign against Tamils with pro-LTTE or nationalist sentiments in Army controlled areas.

"We decided to adopt a policy of development that will safeguard the future of our children, while responding to terrorist power in the only language that they best understand," President Rajapakse further said.

"On the one hand, at a time when we are engaged in an unconditional struggle against venomous terrorism, and on the other, when we are implementing the biggest schemes in history to take the country towards successful development; and when we are taking unwavering decisions

to protect our cultural values, we have to understand that the familiar opportunist political tendencies will be seeking to raise their head."

**'I emphatically state my total commitment to decisively defeating separatism.'**

"Therefore, I call on you with the greatest responsibility not to resort to any cause of action likely to challenge the stability of the country."

"Therefore, I believe this the most suitable platform to make a particular appeal to the working

people of this country not to supply oxygen, consciously or not, to terrorism that is gasping for life."

"I also call on the media to also act with responsibility in this regard."

"I emphatically state before you of my total commitment to ensure the honour and prosperity of this blessed land, by decisively defeating separatism," he said.

He thanked the international community for backing his efforts. A week earlier donors pledged US\$ 4.5 billion in aid to the Sri Lankan government.

"I am happy to express my gratitude to our foreign friends and governments for the fraternal assistance extended to us against separatism, and for peace and development of the motherland. We pay them the highest honour and appreciate their kindness and friendship."

## But can Sri Lanka destroy the Tigers?

Simon Gardner  
Reuters

WHAT started off as military push to clear LTTE artillery guns from a strategic harbour in north-east Sri Lanka has culminated in a mission to defeat the Tigers completely - with no clear winner in sight.

Emboldened by the capture of a key LTTE stronghold, Sri Lanka has vowed to go on the offensive to seek to destroy the Tigers' entire military machine in the apparent belief it can finally win a two-decade civil war.

But observers say President Mahinda Rajapakse's government and military are underestimating the Tigers, and could simply

plunge themselves deeper into a war that has killed 4,000 in the past year alone.

"They [government] are on a roll. They think they can win," said one foreign diplomat on condition of anonymity. "I think they are going to try something."

"I think the fighting's going to continue because neither side has a motivation to stop."

"On the side of the government, the hawks are in the driving seat and they're going to go forward because they think they're winning ... and they think they can go all the way," the diplomat added.

"(The Tigers) need to do something to achieve parity," President Rajapakse said.

As troops consolidate their grip on an eastern coastal swathe of what used to be LTTE-held ter-

ritory, the security forces have the upper hand for now.

But the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) withdrew from the area to fight another day, and analysts say their military apparatus is still intact.

**'This is not to say that the Tigers' military capability has in any way been dented'**

Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse, the President's brother, says the military will seek and destroy all LTTE military assets - including in the northern de facto state they control under the

terms of a tattered 2002 ceasefire.

The Tigers, who resumed their fight for an independent state in the north and east after the majority-Sinhalese government ruled out their demands for a separate homeland for minority Tamils, warn they retain their military capability and can resort to guerrilla jungle warfare.

"This is a very clear enunciation that the government will wage all-out war against the Tamil Tigers until they are defeated," said Iqbal Athas, an analyst with Jane's Defence Weekly in Colombo.

"It will mean there is going to be bloody war in the weeks and months to come," he added.

"This very clearly shows that there won't be a peace process until such time as the LTTE

agrees (to talks) or the LTTE is militarily defeated."

Athas said the fact the Tigers' powerful naval arm was still intact, and their fighters still retained their capability because they withdrew rather than facing a full frontal assault, meant the LTTE is still a formidable opponent.

"With the capture of Vakarai in the east, the government has certainly has got the upper hand, but that is not to say that the Tigers' military capability has in any way been dented," he said.

"Completely eliminating the Tigers from the east is going to be a gigantic task for the army," he added.

"We can't rule out the fact they (the Tigers) may try to open up new fronts."

## NEWS

# Donors pledge \$4.5 billion, despite war

AFP

FOLLOWING a donors meeting Jan 29-30, Sri Lanka announced securing 4.5 billion dollars worth of overseas aid pledges, though foreign donors insisted that the country risked losing the cash unless there was peace.

Investment Promotions Minister Sarath Amunugama said that foreign donors pledged help to build roads, ports, coal power plants and highways during the final day of the two-day aid review meeting in the southern town of Galle.

"International donors expressed satisfaction at our economic track record and we have got commitments up to 4.5 billion dollars this year," he told reporters.

He did not specify a timeline and did not give details on the precise amounts promised by individual donors and lending institutions.

The comments came after donors and international lenders warned Colombo that it could face a cut in assistance unless it made peace with the Tamil Tigers and ended the conflict.

"Building on the successful response we received today, the government is now working up to raise 9.0 billion dollars in pledges for long-term development work in the next three years," Amunugama said.

Sri Lanka had originally planned to convert 1.5 billion dollars in aid pledges received for this year's development work into firm commitments amid rising

concern that the island was heading for more violence.

The European Union, a key backer of Norwegian-led peace efforts, showed its displeasure by sending low-level diplomats for the Sri Lanka Development Forum opened by President Mahinda Rajapakse, diplomats said.

The EU has also been critical of the government's human rights record in the face of escalating fighting with the Tigers. Late last year Germany announced a halt in new aid to Sri Lanka and asked others to follow suit.

But the government appeared determined to resist pressure from international donors and lenders to link aid to progress in the island's faltering peace efforts with Tigers.

"We are now increasingly looking at securing bilateral aid from friendly countries like China and India, who are keen to help us in our development work," Amunugama added.

The United States, breaking ranks with its European partners, sent ambassador Robert Blake, but he issued a warning to Sri Lanka against pursuing a military solution to the separatist conflict.

"We remain unwavering in our conviction that there can be no military solution to this terrible conflict," Blake said, raising government eyebrows at the first ever aid meeting attended by the island's military top brass.

Blake urged Sri Lanka to "seize the opportunity to forge a power-sharing deal that can form

*Continued on page 15*



President Mahinda Rajapaksa and (l-r) Army Commander Sarath Fonseka, Navy Commander Wasantha Karannagoda, Air Force Commander Roshan Gunatilleke and Police chief Victor Perera stand to attention during the Independence Day parade 4 Feb 2007. Photo Rukmal Gamage/Daily News

## US backs Sri Lanka against 'terror', urges talks

REITERATING its strong support for Sri Lanka's efforts "to combat terror," the United States Monday called on President Mahinda Rajapakse's government to also forge a power-sharing proposal as the basis for negotiations with the LTTE.

Pointing out development can only take place amid peace, U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka Robert Blake told a meeting of Sri Lanka's donor community that 'transparency, good governance, and respect for human rights and the rule of law are essential preconditions for economic development and indispensable prerequisites for ... a lasting peace.'

He criticised Sri Lanka's blocking of access to humanitarian agencies in the Northeast.

"At the outset, Mr. President, let me congratulate you on the formation of your new cabinet," Mr. Blake told the donor meeting

in the southern heartland of Galle attended by President Rajapakse.

"Let me tell you that United States look forward to working with you and all of your colleagues to advance our ambitious joint agenda"

"Mr. President, we applaud your efforts to forge a strong legislative majority that will support a credible power-sharing proposal that can form the basis for sustained, substantive negotiations between the Government and the LTTE," he said.

"The United States and Sri Lanka have long been friends and strong allies," the American Ambassador said.

"The U.S. remains deeply committed to continue our assistance to Sri Lanka to enhance economic development, help Sri Lanka recover from the tsunami, and work with Sri Lanka on a durable solution to the ethnic con-

flict that has held back the progress of your nation for more than two decades."

"The United States, like Sri Lanka, is engaged in a sustained struggle against terrorism."

"We are a strong supporter in assisting Sri Lanka combat terror by helping to stop the financing and flow of arms to the LTTE, by providing law enforcement assistance, and by providing training and equipment to help the Sri Lankan military to defend itself."

"The development partnership between the U.S. and Sri Lanka goes back more than a half a century. Since 1956, the United States has provided nearly \$2 billion in development assistance to Sri Lanka, including \$134 million to help your country recover from the 2004 tsunami."

"Over the last five decades,

*Continued on page 15*

## \$100 million credit line from India

INDIA is to finalise a US\$100 million credit line to help Sri Lanka develop a southern railway link, PTI reported.

Colombo is in the process of negotiating the terms of the credit line, which forms part of India's development assistance to Sri Lanka, Additional Secretary, External Affairs Ministry, Dinesh Kumar Jain said.

"Over the past four years, we have given around USD281 million worth of credit which have been used to import wheat, petroleum products and buses," Jain told a meeting of Sri Lanka's international aid donors. "We are ready to help Sri Lanka develop ICT (Information Communication Technology), power and

explore off-shore oil," he said.

Sri Lanka recently gave India's state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp permission to explore for oil off Sri Lanka's north western Mannar basin. "Eight exploration blocks have been identified, of which one was given to the Indian government on nomination basis and the other to China," Lanka's Petroleum Minister A H M Fowzie said on the sidelines of the aid parleys.

The block in the Gulf of Mannar lies between the southern tip of India and Sri Lanka's west coast. It is also the closest block to India.

Bilateral trade picked up after both sides entered a free trade pact in 1998.

## NEWS



Solid support: President Rajapakse chairs a key aid donors meeting in Galle, southern Sri Lanka on Jan 29. Photo TamilNet.

# Donor 'threats' unlikely to stop Sri Lanka drive for war

Continued from page 1

The government can pursue its plans as long as the conflict is confined to the Tamil-dominated north and east of the island.

"I think the government can move ahead on economic development in other parts of the country, if it could prevent attacks on economic targets outside the north and east," Sarvananthan said.

Yet, the donor review was a far cry from the last two meetings in 2003 and 2005, when the 'peace dividend' was constantly harped upon.

Each of those meets raised more than three billion dollars. The 2003 meeting also resulted in the European Union, Japan, the U.S. and peace facilitators Norway forming the co-chairs of the 'Tokyo Donor' conference.

At this year's meeting it was made clear that without any tangible progress in peace negotiations, development would be unsustainable and the World Bank took the lead in saying so.

"We want to ensure that the money provided by the donors does not fuel the war. There will be less cash if there is no progress on the peace front," a diplomat from a Western embassy said, asking not to be named.

But the fact remains that the government has hiked defence spending for 2007 by about 30 percent to touch 1.28 billion dollars.

A five-year-old ceasefire remains on paper as the country has slipped into all out confrontations between government forces

and the LTTE.

Since December 2005, some 4,000 people have died in the violence - including more than a thousand civilians.

As government forces steadily regain land under LTTE control, the latter have retaliated with a series of strikes in the south. The country's main port in the capital of Colombo came under attack on Jan. 27 when three militant boats made an attempt to infiltrate.

A similar attack in November was mounted on the southern port of Galle, a major tourist destination and the location for the donor meeting. The day before the Galle attack, 100 sailors died in a suicide attack in the north central city of Habarana, another tourist favourite. During the first week of January twin bus bombs killed more than 20 in the south.

Nervousness was palpable ahead of Sunday's celebrations for the 50th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence from Britain with massive troop deployments in the capital and rigorous searches of vehicles and raids.

Roads leading to the Galle sea-front, where rehearsals are being held, have been closed to traffic.

Attacks in the Sinhala-dominated south have put pressure on the economy and caused tourist arrivals to slide.

While the government's tough approach may disgruntle donors, many believe that Rajapakse may succeed if he sustains development in the south and puts forward a political solution to the ethnic conflict acceptable to

donors - even if it is rejected by the LTTE.

Rajapakse has urged donors to make a disconnect between the war and economic development.

"Our aim in defeating terrorism is to liberate the peoples who have become victims of terrorism. We consider development in liberated regions and in rest of the north and east as critical in promoting sustainable peace and finding meaningful solutions to many potential conflicts within multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies," he said.

"I have no doubt that our development partners will therefore separate terrorism from a conflict in a complex multicultural society with many income and regional disparities."

However, donors were quick to point out that without peace any economic progress would be short lived.

"The renewed and deepening conflict in Sri Lanka over the past six months or so looms over everything else that we might say here. There is no way to politely skirt this issue. As a major development partner to Sri Lanka, the World Bank would be failing if we did not place the conflict front and centre in our deliberations," Praful Patel, World Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region, told the donor meeting.

While Rajapakse spoke of economic progress, Patel reminded the gathering that the last 14 months have been bloody and violent, especially for civilians.

"The past year has not been good at all for the families of the more than 3,500 Sri Lankans

killed as a result of the increased hostilities. Nor has it been a good year for the additional over 200,000 persons displaced by the conflict. It has not been a good year for the whole population of the north and east who have gone through serious difficulties and distress."

Although the recent months have witnessed spectacular military successes for Colombo, the government has come under severe criticism by the U.N. and other watchdogs for human rights violations and letting the humanitarian situation deteriorate.

Aid agencies have complained of being forced to close projects in the north and east under government pressure.

The short-term bleak economic outlook with galloping inflation and an exchange rate under pressure did not seem to dampen a government that came out beaming at the end of the donors' meet.

"The Sri Lanka Development Forum has announced new development assistance for 2007-2009 in the region of 4.5 billion dollars," the government announced triumphantly.

Yet, it was clear that the government had recognised that if it could put forward power sharing proposals, it just might wiggle out of a tight corner.

"The government and the development partners agreed that terrorism should be separated from finding a solution to the conflict and that a lasting solution should be found through a negotiated settlement," an official statement said.

## India urges 'credible' devolution

IANAS

SRI LANKA needs to unveil a credible devolution package to end the ethnic conflict and now is the time to do it, India told Colombo's new Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama on his first foreign visit since taking office last month. And Sri Lanka should remember that there could never be a military solution to the gory conflict that has turned messier since 2005-end after some years of relative calm, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told his counterpart during free and frank discussions.

India's concerns follow the resurgence of violence and counter-violence involving the military and the Liberation Tigers in which the key victims have been Tamil civilians. There is also worry over rabid opposition in Sri Lanka to proposals to make the country embrace a federal system.

On his part, Bogollagama assured the Indian leadership - he also met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh - of his government's determination to go for a devolution package that will be based on a broad political consensus in Sri Lanka.

But in his press conference just before leaving India for Germany, Bogollagama avoided direct answers to questions on human rights violations in Sri Lanka and repeatedly spoke of 'crushing terrorism'.

He also denied that the large-scale defection of MPs from the main opposition United National Party to the ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party marked an end to the joint UNP-SLFP approach to the peace process announced in 2006.

"We are encouraging a negotiated settlement. Our government is committed to peace," he said, while calling on the Tigers to change their stripes and return to negotiations. "We want the LTTE to become more responsible."

At the same time, he warned that if the LTTE was 'a terrorist movement', then 'you cannot encourage it. It has to be eliminated... Our government is committed to eradicating terrorism... We have to have terrorism out of our way.'

The LTTE, he said, needed to 'come to a negotiated settlement with the government. We want to make it a stakeholder (in the peace process). We have looked at LTTE as a stakeholder. But if it adopts terrorism, we cannot tolerate,' he said.

Speaking about the setbacks the LTTE has suffered in the island's east, he mocked the Tigers.

"If they are strong, let us see how strong they are. How strong were they in the east? That situation has changed today."



## EDITORIAL

## TAMIL GUARDIAN

P.O.BOX. 450, Harrow, London, HA2 2AS, UK

editor@tamilguardian.com www.tamilguardian.com

Tel / Fax: 020 8677 4456

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 07, 2007 No. 342

## Reform or Decline?

**The LTTE's efforts to halt underage recruitment should be recognised.**

The United Nations Security Council is shortly to discuss the issue of underage recruitment in several countries, including Sri Lanka. The issue of 'child soldiers' has long been part of island's ethnic conflict, not least because the debate has, for far too long, been framed by the Sri Lankan state as a key part of its demonisation of its opponent, the LTTE. Exaggeration and falsehoods have fed into myth and fallacy, turning one problematic aspect of Sri Lanka's brutal war into a dominant feature. Let us be clear from the outset; the LTTE has recruited children into its ranks. But the movement has itself admitted to the practice, pledged its commitment to stopping it and worked at this, periodically released groups of underage recruits and effecting institutional changes. However, the understandable controversy surrounding this single issue has eclipsed the ongoing suffering of hundreds of thousands of children who are not soldiers. More importantly, how the international community has addressed the issue has not only contributed to this marginalisation of so many grave issues, but also unhelpfully altered the dynamics of the peace process and conflict between the LTTE and the state.

Children's rights must, of course, be protected. But, firstly, the issue of underage recruitment has unjustly been given a primacy above those of other violations of child rights, especially by the state. This particular point was raised recently by the UN Special Envoy, Alan Rock, who visited Sri Lanka late last year. According to press reports, his report suggests: "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." During the conflict hundreds of thousands of children suffered malnutrition, even starvation due to protracted government embargoes. Similar numbers were driven from their homes by military offensives and bombardment and remain displaced whilst Sri Lankan troops occupy their home villages and towns. And whilst the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) was meant to address these issues, Colombo's blunt refusal to honour these terms has been tacitly

accepted by the international community.

In the meantime, this plethora of issues associated with children and armed conflict has been reduced to one: child soldiers. Since the 2002 peace process began, this aspect has been one of the primary areas of friction between the LTTE and the international community - with the enthusiastic encouragement of the state. The LTTE has been responding to international pressure on underage recruitment (albeit not vigorously or quickly enough to satisfy its critics). The LTTE has committed to not recruiting under the age of 17 and not deploying soldiers under 18 in combat. (Incidentally, nothing more graphically demonstrates that politics, not morality, is at play here than states being permitted to recruit from the age of 16). There have been breaches of this commitment. But the LTTE's critics - and especially the Sri Lankan state - have seized upon these to vehemently argue that such acts stem from the organisation's essential and unchanging character. Unlike those of states (last week Britain was accused of deploying a dozen under-18s in Iraq for example), the LTTE's breaches are not taken as errant behaviour that can be improved upon. This is even though the LTTE's adoption of new practices in keeping with international expectations - including cooperation with international agencies - has been steadily increasing since 2002. Last year the LTTE passed a law outlawing recruitment of under-17s for military service and the deployment of under-18s in combat. It has been working with UNICEF on releasing those reported as underage. UNICEF has sometimes faulted the LTTE on its cooperation. But there can be little doubt that matters have substantively improved over the past five years. Nor can there be any doubt the LTTE, keen to improve its international standing, is actively trying to establish better track record on this matter.

However, the same cannot be said of the Sri Lankan state. For far too long, Army-backed paramilitaries have been able to conscript youngsters knowing the complaints would be filed against the LTTE. Underage recruitment by paramilitary groups has escalated ever since the renegade LTTE commander, Karuna, defected to the Sri Lankan military following his abortive rebellion. Since he joined Colombo's cause against the LTTE, the Karuna Group has been receiving substantive support from the military, including forcible recruitment of youth.

It was Mr. Rock's visit to Sri Lanka that

finally led to this being accepted. Not unexpectedly, he has been vilified by the Sri Lankan government and Sinhala nationalists. All was fine when the LTTE was being lambasted by international watchdogs. But not when the Sri Lankan security forces are accused of complicity in underage recruitment. (Even Mr. Rock's report reflects the essential politicisation of underage recruitment. Whilst the LTTE, as an entity, is condemned for the practice, only "elements" of the security forces are blamed. Presumably some chains of command are considered more responsible than others.) Last month, Human Rights Watch (HRW) joined the chorus. In a hard hitting report, the group finally accepted Colombo was complicit in underage recruitment for the Karuna Group.

Shamefully, the issue of underage recruitment has also been implicitly used by the international community to pressure the LTTE to make political concessions in negotiations with the state. Just as the threat of international proscriptions was used in this regard, penalties for underage recruitment have also cynically been used as sticks. This is, once again, not to say that there isn't a genuine issue that the LTTE needs to address. Rather, it is to say that when such issues are mobilised as part of a coercive framework to political ends, they become disconnected from concrete developments on the ground. As the international community engages with Sri Lanka, as Mr. Rock suggested, it should look at the complex interplay of factors that make up the dynamics of this conflict. The failure to think through the predictable impact on the conflict of the EU and Canadian bans on the LTTE last year meant the proscriptions contributed directly to the collapse of the CFA.

After several years of engagement with the international community, the issue of underage recruitment is being actively dealt with by the LTTE, both in terms of contemporary practice and institutional changes. There may be room for further improvement and this will undoubtedly be pursued. However, the manner and context in which this is taking place is important. Sri Lanka has returned to all out and bloody war. Colombo is pursuing the military option with single-minded zeal. Single-issue based punitive actions will feed into this; both by encouraging the state's militarism and convincing the LTTE that its destruction, not reform is being pursued by the international community.

## EDITORIAL &amp; OPINION



## Tigers are the only credible defence for Tamils

**S. P. Tamilselvan**  
Tamil Guardian

THE International Community, while making statements that a military solution is not possible, is either unable to, or unwilling to, exert its formidable muscle to force Colombo out of its current military path.

We would never, under any circumstance, engage militarily and simultaneously enter talks.

The process towards a negotiated settlement can only take place in an environment conducive to talks. The LTTE has been explicitly stated the conditions necessary to create such environment.

The most basic of these conditions were agreed upon and laid down in the Cease Fire Agreement of February 2002."

Over the last few years the LTTE leadership has been patient and tolerant in sustaining possibilities for Colombo to commit to, and to implement the basic clauses of the CFA.

Our tolerance was aimed at providing space for Colombo to re-engage in the process in a meaningful way. We had repeatedly respected the call by the International Community to be flexible.

But within the 8-months between the Geneva-I talks and Geneva-II, Colombo had transformed the proxy war into a full-scale war.

It is after the Geneva - I talks, when Colombo promised to the International Community to disarm the paramilitaries, as stipulated in the CFA clause 1.8, paramilitary opened the so-called 'political offices,' in Batticaloa, Colombo, Amparai and Trincomalee.

This was clearly a counter-tactic to resist the mounting pressure from International community, which had confronted the Government with credible evidence of paramilitary collusion with the Sri Lankan military."

The paramilitaries even claimed responsibility of carrying out attacks on LTTE posts from their offices.

Assassinations, killings of civilians and forced disappearances by the Sri Lankan military and paramilitary became widespread. Humanitarian agencies were systematically harassed, blocked and threatened with killings and intimidation.

An economic blockade was

## Was Ranil an alternative?

Had Ranil been President, a more subtle program of dismantling the LTTE would have ensued. With Rajapakse, a cruder set of tactics is being used.

**Jana Nayagam and Suren Manoharan**  
Tamil Guardian

AS President Rajapakse's administration escalates its military onslaught against the Liberation Tigers, deliberately punishing the Tamil population in the process, one argument sometimes put forward is that the latter have only themselves to blame for their plight.

Had the Tamils cast their vote for Ranil Wickremesinghe in the December 2005 Presidential elections, the argument goes, then he would have prevailed and the present bloodshed would have been avoided; peace, even a federal solution, might have been pursued.

Particularly amid the political turmoil in Colombo, this 'Ranil - good, Rajapakse - bad' argument deserves close scrutiny.

Let us go back to the halcyon days of 2002: Why did the Tamils put such faith in the peace process launched by Wickremesinghe's UNF (United National Front) government?

The answer is undoubtedly because, unlike earlier efforts, this attempt was being underwritten by an actively involved

international community.

Not only was Norway facilitating, but other major international actors were rushing to pledge their political and financial support for peace.

A military solution, the Tamils were (now) told, was unacceptable. Negotiations were the only way.

The emergence of the self-styled 'Co-Chairs' - United States, European Union, Japan and Norway - reinforced confidence in this assertion and in international commitment to it.

The Co-Chairs further fuelled Tamils' trust in the peace process with relatively neutral statements about the need to 'find a solution acceptable to all Sri Lankans' and resolve 'Tamil grievances', promises of 'urgently needed' humanitarian aid being forthcoming, and, after some hesitation, even recognition of a historical habitat of the Tamil-speaking people (remember the Oslo Declaration?)

The enthusiastic international support for Wickremesinghe and his UNF government - particu-

larly against President Chandrika Kumaratunga (her of 'war for peace' fame) - also reinforced the sense among Tamils that the international community would ensure their 'grievances' were addressed and a return to war precluded.

The LTTE's preparedness to negotiate with the UNF was, of course, another reason for Tamil trust in this Sinhala government.

But it was international involvement that primarily underpinned Tamil (and, arguably, LTTE) confidence in talks with the UNF.

At the outset, there was simply no reason for the Tamils to trust the UNP or Wickremesinghe.

Indeed, when Norway's role as peacemaker was first announced in Parliament it was Wickremesinghe who stood to denounce the intervention.

With its own history of military attacks and atrocities against the Tamils, there was every reason for the Tamils to doubt the right wing United National Party (UNP).

Ranil himself had questionable credentials.

Not only was he a negotiator for the Premadasa regime in its talks with the Tigers, but by many credible accounts, deeply implicated in unsavoury aspects of its murderous counter-insurgency against the JVP.

He is also the nephew of J. R. Jayawardene, architect of the 1978 constitution which entrenched Sinhala supremacy beyond the 1972 one.

(Jayawardene, it should also be recalled, presided over the July 83 pogrom).

The 2001 UNP's liberal stance on the ethnic issue lacked credibility in itself.

The Tamils had witnessed many Sinhala leaders take power pledging to address their grievances, only to turn to appeasing majoritarian sentiments once elected.

The main reason for Tamils to support Ranil's UNP-led UNF in the December 2001 election was the LTTE's endorsement (in Vellupillai Pirapaharan's Heroes Day speech that year).

The placing of prominent UNPers without a history of violence against Tamils and vocally articulating a fresh approach to ethnic reconciliation also helped eased suspicions.

The UNP peace team comprised respected top academic, Prof. G. L. Peiris, and arch neo-liberal Milinda Moragoda.

Their manifest rapport in the negotiations with the LTTE delegation led by Anton Balasingham helped the UNP build bridges with the Tamil community.

But what exactly was the UNP's subsequent record in the Norwegian peace process?

Before looking at that it is worth noting where individuals such as Prof. Peiris and Mr. Moragoda are today: both are at the forefront of the UNP rebels eager to join President Rajapakse's militarist, Sinhala-nationalist government.

*Continued on page 8*

*Continued on page 15*



## OPINION

# What alternative?...

*Continued from page 7*

The divided UNP is, meanwhile, today also echoing the language of 'counter-terrorism.'

It has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the ruling UPFA. This agreement on 'peace efforts' is deemed to stand even as the government wages the state's latest military campaign against the LTTE, targeting civilians as previous administrations have done.

But what of the UNP's peace record in government?

For a start, it simply did not implement many key aspects of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) it signed with the LTTE.

True, both sides have breached the truce in terms of violent incidents.

But as part of the truce, the UNP also agreed to withdraw its forces from occupied villages and homes to enable hundreds of thousands of Tamils driven from their homes by Sri Lankan offensives to resettle. It also agreed to permanently lift restrictions on fishing and farming.

None of this happened. The military simply refused to withdraw from any of the High Security Zones (HSZs) and maintained or arbitrarily re-imposed fishing and farming restrictions.

And the UNF simply shrugged its shoulders, putting the blame squarely on President Kumaratunga.

In contravention of the CFA's Clause 1.8, the Army-backed anti-LTTE paramilitary groups were never disarmed and were kept mobilised, soon sparking a slow-burning shadow war that would later escalate.

Before the 2001 election the UNP cut a deal with the Tigers - to set up an interim administration for the Northeast so that normalcy could be restored whilst a final solution was thrashed out in talks.

But in the first formal round of talks, in September 2002, the UNP went back on its word. Instead of an interim administration a low-powered Sub-committee (SIHRN) was created.

And even SIHRN fell apart as government bureaucrats in it simply failed to turn up of function.

Meanwhile, far-reaching changes were taking place in the foundations of the peace process.

The LTTE, eager for international engagement, agreed to explore federalism, making the first major climb-down from the (1976) TULF-led demand for Tamils' independence.

But the LTTE came under further intense focus and pressure from international actors: accusations of under-age recruitment and political assassinations were used to deny the LTTE further political space and to constrain its role.

The 'terrorism' label was used (by both the UNP and its international allies) to exclude the

LTTE from decision-making on aid (apart from one minor aid conference in Norway in November 2002, the Tigers were frozen out of the aid soliciting and allocation process).

The 'normalisation' clauses of the CFA were simply repudiated by the military (then Jaffna commander and now Army chief Sarath Fonseka refused point blank in writing to implement the CFA). Paramilitary violence against the LTTE (the flip side of the Tigers 'political assassination') continued.

But, in contrast to infractions by the LTTE, the international community did nothing in response to the state's. No pressure was brought to bear on the UNF, or for that matter, on President Kumaratunga.

In contrast, a massive effort was made to stabilise and rebuild the Sri Lanka state and its armed forces.

During the tenure of the UNF government, the war-weary armed forces were reconstituted.

In comparison to 2000 levels, by 2002, the Air Force (SLAF) had doubled its manpower and acquired twenty new aircraft. The Army (SLA) tripled its tanks and doubled its artillery firepower and increased its troop strength by 20%. The Navy (SLN) doubled in size.

During all this time, the UNF portrayed itself as too weak to challenge the headline President.

Kumaratunga took the political flak for the slow progress of the peace process and the breaches of the CFA (such as the military's refusal to vacate Tamil villages or sinking of LTTE vessels).

But with Kumaratunga in her second and final term as President, the new military machine was being assembled for the next Sri Lankan President to either threaten or crush the Tigers.

And the UNF had every expectation that it would be Ranil who would be next in charge.

The argument presented to the Tamils was that Kumaratunga was the block to progress in the peace process, that when Ranil became President, they would get an interim solution, rehabilitation aid, even a federal constitution.

But in the meantime, the UNF and its international allies froze the LTTE out, brought greater international constraints on it, closed down its space to articulate 'extreme' demands (except, of course, federalism).

Even though the UNF had not formally committed to a federal solution - it was the LTTE's bona fides that were always questioned.

In the Tokyo aid conference of June 2003, the Co-chairs and others pledged \$4.5bn of rehabilitation and reconstruction aid.

The international community made this desperately needed humanitarian aid conditional on

'progress' in the peace process.

The long-suffering Tamils in the conflict zones thus got none of this pledged international aid.

The blame, however, was put on the LTTE (for blocking 'progress' in the peace process).

Yet the state got the international aid anyway (Japanese Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi declared in 2006 that most of the pledges had been met). It just wasn't spent on the Tamil areas.

It is in this context that many Tamils argue that the Norwegian peace process was not an exercise in conflict resolution but rather the containment of the Tamil struggle.

That the international community was not providing 'good offices' for peace, but continuing its counter-insurgency objectives by means other than war.

Nothing underlines this more than how the military balance was rapidly altered in favour of the state in the early stages of the peace process.

Apart from assisting the massive rearmament program, the international community simply allowed the state (i.e. the UNF and Kumaratunga) not to implement much of the CFA.

Under the claim the balance of forces 'must be maintained' the Sri Lankan military was allowed to remain in occupation of the occupied High Security Zones (HSZs) and the navy's blatant attacks on LTTE supply ships were ignored. The Army was also allowed to retain its paramilitary forces.

In economic terms also, the international community was swift to stabilise the state and weaken the LTTE.

The UNF (and later Kumaratunga's UPFA) was provided with substantial amounts of international funding (relative to its economic capacity). Efforts were made to choke off the LTTE's own funding raising.

All this, of course, occurred amid the mantra that 'it was up to the parties' to forge peace; that the international community could only play a 'supporting' role.

The point is that the UNF and the international community worked closely to destabilise the parity of forces that had forced the Sri Lankan government to negotiate with the LTTE in the first place.

The overall objective was to constrain and de-fang the primary challenge to the Sri Lankan state's unity and territorial integrity - the LTTE.

The idea was not, however, to force a return to war (though if necessary that would have to be done). Ideally, the project was to be pursued in the confines of the peace process itself.

As such, the international community's fury and distress at Rajapakse's victory in 2005 was genuine.

Unlike Ranil, Rajapakse had no loyalty to the Co-Chairs' economic and political agenda for



**UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe (l) with President Mahinda Rajapakse. Both court Sinhala nationalist votes** *Photo Daily News*

Sri Lanka (indeed, his politics suggests loyalties to other geopolitical actors and his own politico-economic vision is quite unhelpful to the neo-liberal agenda).

Had Ranil become President in 2005, the shared international-Sri Lankan project of containing and dismantling the LTTE could have been conducted more smoothly and sophisticatedly.

The same techniques as before would have sufficed:

Ranil would have continued striking deals with the Tigers and failing to implement (this time citing the JVP and other Sinhala-nationalist opposition).

And whilst promising the Tamils the earth, even signing a temporary deal on federalism, he would have insisted on the LTTE's disarming as a precondition for implementation.

If it resisted, the LTTE, trapped in the international dynamics of 'seeking legitimacy' would have been vilified as the intransigent party and penalised - while the state would have continued to expand its war-fighting capacity and expand its economy generously supported with foreign aid and investment.

That strategy collapsed when the LTTE's boycott in 2005 denied Ranil the Tamil vote and Rajapakse swept to power on a Sinhala nationalist wagon.

But the international community got over its outrage and disappointment soon afterwards.

The overall shared project of constraining and dismantling the LTTE continues, admittedly with

some distaste as to the methods available (the preference was to use coercion rather than outright force).

Even though Rajapakse has launched now a major war, indiscriminately killing Tamil civilians whilst attacking the Tigers, the international community is standing by him nonetheless.

Despite occasional, ineffectual criticism, international military, political and financial aid continues to be forthcoming to the Rajapakse regime.

The fundamental point is this: irrespective of whether Ranil or Rajapakse is at its helm, the overall objective is to defend the Sri Lankan state by blunting the Tamil struggle for autonomy and destroying the LTTE.

Had Ranil been President, a more subtle program of undermining and dismantling the LTTE would have been pursued. With Rajapakse, a cruder set of tactics are being used.

There is only one lesson the Tamils can draw from studying the conduct of the Kumaratunga, Ranil and Rajapakse along with the international community since 2002:

Unless and until the LTTE is proven to be too resilient to destroy without unacceptably high levels of international investment (military, political and financial), resolving Tamil 'grievances' will remain a peripheral issue in comparison to ensuring the stability and viability of the Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan state.





## NEWS

# Violence round up - w/e 04 Feb

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since January 29

## 04 February

● More than 300 people, majority of them Tamils, were arrested during a cordon and search operation in Colombo (see separate report).

● SLA troopers and Liberation Tigers exchanged artillery and mortar fire near Thenmaradchy FDL near Muhamalai. Two shells fell within the Usan SLA camp at behind the FDL position. Another shell fired by the Liberation Tigers exploded in areas close to Usan and Mirusuvil SLA camps, causing minor injuries to two civilians. Though residents close to the SLA camps had moved out of their residences when clashes erupted between the SLA and the LTTE last year, some had returned to their houses.

● Murunkan Police reported exchange of gunfire between a road patrol of Police commandos and a group of Liberation Tiger cadres at Pannavedduvan, Mannar. The police said a Tiger cadre was killed and that the Tigers had taken the body, but claimed to have located a T-56 automatic rifle after the clash. Five hours later, the SLA fired artillery shells towards LTTE controlled Arippe.

● A Sri Lanka Police constable sustained serious injuries when armed men hurled hand grenades at the police sentry point in Thonikkal, Vavuniya.

● A civilian was injured in a hand grenade explosion near Pandarikulam Muniyappar Temple in Vavuniya.

● The SLA cordoned off Vankalai area and the brigade commander of Thalladay SLA camp addressed around 4000 Tamil Catholics gathered for Sunday mass at St. Anne's Church, instructing them to inform on any strangers in the area.

● The body of a male was found in a road-side drain along Green Road in the centre of Trincomalee town, bearing injuries and covered with dried coconut leaves.

● Four civilian commuters trav-

elling on a Trincomalee bound Colombo train were taken into custody during a search of the train by Sri Lanka security forces. Police said the suspects were in possession of documents for about 90 vehicles. The ethnicity of the suspects was not revealed.

● Pushparajah Navaneerathan, 27, was shot dead by armed men on a motorbike near his house in Thuwarakandu, Chelvanayakapuram, Trincomalee.

## 03 February

● 266 Tamils were arrested in a search operation in Colombo (see separate report).

● Rajeswaran Senthoooran, 22, a native of Mallavi in Vanni and an auto-rickshaw driver, was dead by gunmen riding two motorbikes at Kulumadu junction, Vavuniya.

● An armed person shot dead Sahathevan Vijayakumar, 38, a father of two, at his mother's house in Aiyankerni, Batticaloa. Vijayakumar, a daily labourer from Nagathambiran Kovil road in Aiyankerni, used to spend nights at his mother's house and was shot by a killer who was waiting for him when he went to close the compound gate.

● Fifteen Tamil youths were arrested in Wennapuwa, coastal town in the western province during a cordon and search operation by government security forces. Most of the arrested are natives of Batticaloa district who were employed in the area. Police said that they took them into custody when they failed to prove their identity and the purpose of their stay in Wennapuwa.

## 02 February

● The Legal Advisor of the Jaffna SLHRC, Mudiypu Remedias, registered a complaint with the Jaffna SLA Commanding Officer that he was severely assaulted by soldiers near Stanley Road in Jaffna Town, despite his presenting his credentials as the Legal

# Hundreds of Tamils arrested in Colombo

OVER 600 Tamils were arrested in Colombo and its environs over the past two weeks as Sri Lanka's security forces stepped up their cordon and search operations ahead of the country's 59th Independence Day celebrations on Feb 4.

Over 550 Tamil people were arrested in the week ending on Sunday, Sri Lankan Independence Day.

More than 300 persons, majority of them Tamils, were arrested during a combined cordon and search operation in the Fort and Pettah areas of Colombo on February 4 itself.

The Colombo Magistrate Monday allowed an application by the police to send those arrested in cordon and search operations conducted in Fort and Pettah in Colombo on Saturday and Sunday to the notorious Boosa detention camp located in the southern province.

On Saturday, 266 Tamils, including 53 women, were arrested in a dawn to noon house-to-house search operation by hundreds of police and armed troops in Fort area and its surrounds.

Of them about 70 were held overnight, with the rest released after inquiry.

Most of the arrested were per-

manent residents of Jaffna district, living in Colombo now.

Police said the suspects had been arrested when they failed to prove their identities and the reasons for their presence in their location. They are being held in police stations for interrogation.

Vehicles garaged in houses and business establishment were also searched during the operation.

They were interrogated following the recovery of a claymore mine in a three-wheeler during the search operation at Maligawatte on Saturday.

Eleven civilians, mostly Tamils, were arrested in a house-to-house cordon and search operation by the Sri Lankan security forces in Nugegoda, a suburb of Colombo on January 30.

The arrested civilians allegedly failed to produce necessary documents to prove their identity, and to provide plausible explanation for their presence in the area.

On the same day, another 27 civilians including three women, majority of them Tamils, were arrested in Colombo north during a search operation on vehicles plying between Kandy and Colombo.

About 1500 vehicles were subjected to severe checks and

travellers were interrogated.

The previous weekend, 18 Tamils, including 11 women, were arrested during a cordon and search operation in houses and lodges at Soysapuram in Moratuwa. More than 700 Tamils were interrogated during the cordon and search operation.

On January 25, another eleven Tamils were taken into custody during a cordon and search operation in Dehiwela in Colombo.

Most of those arrested were aged between 25 and 40, and had been staying in Dehiwela with relatives and friends. They were also mainly natives of districts in the North-East.

On January 23, a female Tamil passenger of a train bound for Galle from Colombo was arrested on a tip off that explosives were hidden in a compartment.

The train was stopped at Ratmalana and each passenger was thoroughly searched. Nearly two thousand passengers were in the train at that time.

The operation lasted for about four hours, but no explosives were found in the train.

It was not clear why people were kept on board for all that time, given the official reason for the search that explosives were on the train.

Officer working for the SLHRC.

● S. Surenthirarajah, the Jaffna Co-ordinating Officer of the SLHRC registered a complaint with Jaffna police that he has been subjected to continuous threats to his life. Mr. Surenthirarajah said that a person alleged to be the member of a "political party" had threatened him with a weapon and made several phone calls warning him. He has also mentioned that these threats to life and intimidations are being made due to the prominent role the Jaffna SLHRC takes in investigating, and exposing the continuing arrests, disappearances and killings in the Jaffna peninsula. Already, two Coordinating Officers working for the Jaffna SLHRC vacated their posts and had sought asylum in Canada because they were assaulted by the police when they went to Jaffna police station to register complaints about threats to their lives.

● The Police recovered the body of Sinniah Palaniappan, 59, along the sea beach in Pulmoddai, Trincomalee. Injuries were found on the body.

## 01 February

● The President of the Jaffna Multi Purpose Co-Operative Society (MPCS) and an active social worker in the Jaffna Peninsula, S. T. Gananathan, 64, was shot dead near Mampalam junction SLA camp in Ariyalai, Jaffna. Mr. Gananathan went to fetch water from a well close to his house in

Punkankulam, along A-9 highway, when he was assassinated by two armed men about 200 metres from the SLA camp.

● Residents of Rasa Veethy, Kopay found the body of Jeyakumar Mayooran, 27, near the Martyrs Resting Home on that road. His family had earlier complained to the Jaffna SLHRC that he had been abducted by SLA soldiers while riding his motorcycle near Nallur temple. The body had signs of torture and gunshot injuries. Residents said they heard vehicles moving and gunshots the previous night from the area. Mayooran's hand phone and motorcycle are missing.

● Chinabay Police recovered the body of an unidentified male person with gunshot injuries at Kandalayweduwana in Upparu village, Trincomalee. The victim, aged about thirty, had been murdered elsewhere and dumped in Kandalayweduwana.

● Fifty six Tamil civilians including two women were arrested in a combined cordon and search operation by Sri Lanka forces in Uppuveli division, Trincomalee. Most of them are residents of Allesgarden.

● Two Sri Lanka Police were injured in a grenade attack on a police post at Pandarikkulam in Vavuniya. The policemen were on guard at a mini police camp when they were attacked.

● A SLA soldier was killed when a foot patrol was hit by claymore attack at Maharambaikkulam, in Vavuniya.

## 31 January

● Seven police constables, three army personnel and a civilian were killed and seven army personnel, five policemen and three civilians injured in claymore attack in Batticaloa. The claymore mine was triggered along the roadside near the Eastern University premises targeting a bus transporting army and police personnel. 55 people, including 25 undergraduates and university employees, were arrested by Eravur police after the blast. The arrested, including three female undergraduates, were detained at Eravur police station for further questioning. After the bomb blast, the SLA cordoned off the university premises, and campus staff and students were allowed to leave only after an extensive search.

● Vavuniya Police recovered two bodies with gunshot wounds in Maharambaikkulam, Vavuniya. The bodies were identified as belonging to Singaram Santhakumar, 28, and Veeraiya Logeswaran, 28. These latest killings bring the number of homicides in Vavuniya during the first month of the year to 59, of whom 9 are SLA soldiers, 8 Sri Lanka Police, 6 alleged members of the LTTE, and the remaining 36 are civilians, 4 of whom as Sinhalese.

● Vijayakumar, 55, a trader dealing in foreign exchange and money transactions, residing at Perera Lane in Wellawatte was abducted by armed men in a white van near Perera Lane as he was

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



## NEWS

# Confusion after Colombo port 'attack'

ON SATURDAY Sri Lanka's military said it had foiled a Tamil Tiger attack on the Colombo port and that three Sea Tiger boats had been destroyed. The navy said nine people had been arrested in connection with the attack.

However, the All Ceylon Fisheries Union (ACFU) Tuesday contradicted the military and said the Navy had fired on fishing boats and arrested fishermen.

On Saturday the Defence Ministry said naval craft blew up one boat Saturday after the three were spotted near a restricted zone, before chasing and sinking the other two.

"The navy successfully foiled the (LTTE) attempt," the ministry said.

Six people, including three who jumped out of one of the suspected LTTE craft, were arrested, military officials were quoted as saying.

A foreign container vessel, Pelaponesian Pride, flying under a Panamanian flag, was damaged by the explosion of the second rebel boat hit by the navy, Navy Rear Admiral B.A.G.G. Peiris told reporters, adding: "a container burst open and came off its original position as a result of the shockwaves."

However the All Ceylon Fisheries Union (ACFU) contradicted the defence ministry's version of events, saying naval craft fired on Sinhala fishing craft and arrested innocent fishermen.

President of the Gampaha branch of the ACFU, Aruna Roshantha, spoke to the BBC Sinhala service Tuesday.

Fishermen had witnessed fishing boats being attacked by the Navy, he said.

"The boats caught up fire and blew up. Nine crew members from the blown up boats were detained. Three are still in custody", he said.

Twenty one fishermen are among those arrested in connection with the alleged attack on the Colombo Port, he said.

"Our boats were fishing about 20 miles from Colombo in the deep sea when the Navy Dvora gunships surrounded them", Roshantha said.

Residents of the fishing hamlet north of Colombo say their community has been dangerously stigmatised after the Sri Lanka navy's destruction of fishing boats and arrests.

Munnakkarai is a mixed ethnicity fishing community of around 5000 people, located 1 km southwest of Negombo.

The nine fishermen, one of them a Tamil, arrested by the navy were handed over to naval intelligence, Munnakkarai residents said.

SLN interrogators alleged that the fishermen had collaborated with the Sea Tigers in carrying out attacks on a number of SLN vessels in the early hours.

local Sinhala media was alleged that fishermen from Munnakkarai had received one million rupees from the Tigers to 'harbour and guide' their attack craft towards Sri Lankan naval vessels guarding the Colombo Harbour.

After the arrests, when the fishermen society approached ruling Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) local leaders who had a support base among the fishing community, six fishermen were released.

But intelligence officials subsequently arrested another six people from Munnakkarai, including another Tamil fisherman.

Meanwhile the Sunday Times said that the alleged attack came just half an hour before the Navy, with the support of elements of the Army and Police, were to carry out a rehearsal of the Colombo Harbour Action Plan.

Police stations and port authorities were among those informed that the rehearsal was scheduled to begin at 6 am, the paper said.

The LTTE has not commented on the incident.



In the aftermath of the alleged LTTE attack on January 28, 2007, Colombo port is under close watch by Sri Lankan security forces. Seen in the background is the Panama-registered container vessel which was damaged by the impact of an explosion. Photo Berty Mendis/Sunday Times

returning home. He is a cousin of Professor K. Sivathamby, a Tamil University professor and activist.

- Yogaraj Mathanraj, who had come to Colombo from Jaffna and been staying at a lodge in George R. De Silva Mawathe in Kotahena, was abducted by armed men in a white van. Kotahena police had arrested Mathanraj on suspicion and as he was returning to his lodge after being interrogated by the police, armed men in a white van abducted Mathanraj near Kotahena police station.

## 30 January

- Jaffna police recovered the body of a youth aged around 23, at Arukaaladam area in the Jaffna

Municipality limits with gunshot injuries. They suspect he was abducted elsewhere earlier, brought to Arukaaladam, and shot dead.

- Gunmen shot dead a disabled civilian at Rajakiramam, Karaveddy in Vadamarachchy, Jaffna. Pirammiah Tharmaseelan, 32, a family man, was at his home when gunmen approached his house, called him out, shot and escaped. Mr. Tharmaseelan had already lost an arm and a leg in an earlier shell attack.

- Armed men in a white van forcibly abducted Rajamanoharan Suthaharan, 34, from his house on Railway Station Road in Kondavil, Jaffna, and took him away.

- SLA troopers arrested Ramachandran Rajeevan, 24, of Thavady,

Jaffna, while he was playing in the Thavady Pathirakali Amman Temple grounds and he has been missing since.

- Chelliah Kajendran of Ainthu Vembadi area at Thavady in Kokuvil, Jaffna, was reported as being missing after he was arrested by the SLA.

- Thambirasa Thamayanthan from School road in Annaikottai, arrested on 10 January by the SLA, was reported missing by his family members.

- The body of Gunaratnam Gajendran, 30, of Suthumalai North, Manipay, was discovered in Arukaaladam with visible marks of severe torture and cut wounds. Gunaratnam, employed in Jaffna, disappeared a week earlier while

returning home.

- Unidentified persons shot dead Tharman, a fifty-year old Tamil farmer at Aathimoddai, a suburb of Sambaltivu, Trincomalee.

- SLA and SLAF soldiers and police conducted a combined cordon and search operation in Morawewa, Trincomalee following a mortar attack on the SLAF camp by LTTE cadres. Military reports from Colombo said there were no casualties on the security side and that Government forces had successfully retaliated the attack.

- 38 civilians, majority of them Tamils, were arrested in Colombo north (see separate report, p10).

- A SLA trooper was killed while on duty in a bomb blast at Kathiraveli, the Vaharai area in Batt-

caloa, which was recently captured by the SLA from the Liberation Tigers.

## 29 January

- Two policemen and a civilian were injured when unidentified men hurled a hand grenade at a police post at Soosaipillaiyarkulam in Vavuniya. Another civilian working in a near by garage was injured when police opened up with retaliatory fire. The civilian was identified as Dhanabala, a driver working at the Vavuniya secretariat.

- Armed men on a motorcycle shot and seriously injured an

Continued on page 15

## NEWS

# Violence round up - w/e 28 Jan

## Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since January 22

### 28 January

● Eighteen Tamils were arrested during a cordon and search operation at Soysapuram in Moratuwa (see separate report, p10).

● Unidentified persons activated a claymore device in front of Valvetti Peoples' Bank, in Vadammaradchi, Jaffna, targeting a SLA road patrol unit, killing one trooper and injuring two. However, there was no official confirmation from the SLA. The SLA launched a cordon and search operation surrounding the area where the attack took place.

● The body of a youth, with hands and legs bound, and with severe bodily injuries, was recovered from a derelict well in an abandoned plot of land near Murugamoorthy Temple at Chankanai in Valigamam west, Jaffna. He was later identified as Balasingham Sriskanth, 27, of Thenirkuliyaldy in Sandilipay. He had been missing for several days. Instances of dead bodies of abducted youths being dumped during nightly curfew hours have increased alarmingly in the Jaffna peninsula.

● Balasubramaniam Mathanaseelan, 17, a school boy from Samarabahu in Valvettithurai, Jaffna, was arrested by the SLA and is listed as missing.

● Sivarasa Sabesan, 23, a young family man from Kambarmalai in Valvettithurai, Jaffna, arrested by the SLA is reported missing. Mrs Sabesan said in a complaint to the SLHRC that the SLA troopers fired guns in the air to threaten the witnesses when they forcibly took her husband away.

● Jeyakumaran Mayooraan, a young farmer from Mootha Vinyagar Temple area in Karaveddy, Nelliady, was arrested by SLA troopers in military vehicles. His family members said that when they inquired at the SLA camp in Nelliady, officials denied arresting him.

● Fourteen civilians were arrested within the Jaffna municipal council area for curfew violation and detained until 9 February in Jaffna prison under protective custody. Chief Justice Sarath N Silva ordered the Jaffna region SLA commander to strictly enforce the overnight curfew, as there had been many complaints of murders, robberies, abduction and arrests during curfew hours. Mr Silva also instructed that anyone

arrested for curfew violation was to be produced before courts.

● Unidentified persons in a van abducted Arumugam Kumar, 17, of Mylambavali in Vipulanantha Kiramam, Eravur, while he was engaged in tarring a road in the area with several others.

### 27 January

● The SLN claimed three to five attack boats entered the outer harbour waters of Colombo Harbour and launched attacks on SLN vessels (see separate report, p11).

● Eight STF commandos were killed and 12 wounded at Thangavelauthapuram in Thirukkivil, Amparai, where a STF vehicle was ambushed with claymore and gunfire. The attack, believed to be carried out by an elite LTTE guerrilla unit, had targeted the STF logistics supply to personnel in areas vacated by the Tigers.

● The Jaffna SLA high command in Palaly announced that the night curfew in the peninsula will be very strictly imposed effective immediately. Along main roads in Jaffna, SLA vehicles using loudspeakers announced curfew violators will be arrested and subjected to legal action.

● The body of a youth with deep cut wounds was recovered in Valikamam, Jaffna. The victim had been abducted earlier from another area of the peninsula, brought to Chunnakam area by armed men in a white van and dumped outside Kantharodai Vidyalayam. The seriously injured youth was fighting for his life when the attackers left him but witnessing residents fearing for their own lives did not come forward to assist him. Due to the night curfew and restrictions on the movement of civilians imposed by the SLA, the youth remained on the road through the night, dying during that time.

● Muniyandi Selvanayagam, from Belmadulla in Ratnapura, 43, was shot dead by gunmen in front of Nelliady Madhya Maha Vidyalayam along Nelliady-Vathiri road in Vadammaradchi. Gunmen took the victim to the area on a motorbike and shot him dead at point blank range before escaping. Unconfirmed reports said that the victim was an intelligence operative working with the SLA.

● An LTTE cadre was killed during retaliatory gunfire by STF

soldiers on a group of LTTE cadres who attacked the STF camp in Murunkan area. The Police handed over the body of the unidentified Tamil youth, estimated to be 20, to Mannar hospital. Murunkan Police said STF personnel had recovered a T 56 pistol, four magazines with 139 bullets, and first aid medicine from the scene.

### 26 January

● Indika Gunawardene, 19, a Sinhala passenger on the Mannar Colombo bus, was killed when Sri Lankan police opened fire after a group of attackers launched a gunfire-ambush killing a Sub-Inspector of Police at a police post, southeast of Mannar town. Two other civilians seated in the bus, were wounded. The Police Sub-Inspector killed in the gunfire was identified as Senaratne, 45.

● Thirty-eight persons, most of them natives of the North-East, were arrested in a cordon and search operation in Hambantota by the three Sri Lanka armed forces and Police in the lead up to the International Development Conference in Galle.

● Police recovered the body of a building contractor reported missing from Monday in Pannakam area, with hands bound and with cut wounds. The family man from Katudai in Manipay was identified as Veerasingham Ratnasingham, 35, who had not been seen after he left to the Agriculture Department in Nallur, Jaffna.

● Sathiaraj Mohanaram, 22 from Kachcheri-Nallur road in Jaffna, his relative Kanthasamy Satheskan, 34, from Manipay road in Jaffna and Thiraviyanathan Thiraviyaventhann from Ukkulankulam in Vavuniya were arrested from a house at Kachcheri-Nallur road. Family members of said SLA troopers arrested the youths at gun point from their house and that they have seen the same SLA troopers in SLA road check posts.

### 25 January

● A sailor was injured when attackers, who were waiting in two boats, fired at the SLN in Thalvupadu in Mannar. The exchange of gunfire lasted for 10 minutes. Police charged that the attackers were Sea Tigers. A SLN sailor was wounded and rushed to Mannar hospital.

● Kopay police recovered the body of a man abducted from Inuvil east the previous day by armed men in a white van. The victim, whose entire body except the face was scorched, was identified as Nagenthiram Arumaitasan, 32, a broker dealing in motor cycles. Arumaitasan's wife was able to identify her husband as his face was still identifiable. They had been married for a year. The family man from Inuvil east in Valigamam, near Inuvil Illanthali Amman Temple, was found near Urumpirai Temple area, nearly 4 km from the place of abduction. The abductors had either shot

dead or stabbed him to death before dousing his body with petrol and setting fire to it.

● Kankesan Mayooraan, 21, a youth from Kachcheri-Nallur road in Jaffna, was reported missing on his way to the Commercial Bank in Jaffna town.

● Gunmen shot dead a postman at Pathinipuram in Trincomalee district. Subramaniam Muruganatharuban, 34, attached to the Postal Department, Trincomalee, was engaged in door-to-door delivery when gunmen shot him at point blank range and escaped.

● Mathugama police arrested 3 upcountry Tamil youths who had gone from Galle to their relatives' house in Mathugama. Nagarathan, 25, Raveenthiran, 24, Loganathan, 25, all from Elpitiya were arrested on suspicion of assisting the LTTE.

● S. Parthipan, 22 and Madasamy Navaneethan, 18, from Maskeliya were arrested at Wenapuwa bus stand on suspicion of assisting Liberation Tigers, and were detained for investigation.

### 24 January

● SLA troopers imposed a new rule, banning the entry of bicycles and motor cycles in the Central Business Area of Jaffna town, and

instructed the public to park their two-wheelers 400 meters away.

● A youth from Vadammaradchi surrendered at the Jaffna office of the SLHRC bringing the total number of civilians surrendered since August to 42. The youth had been seriously injured in a shooting incident in Rajakiramam Nelliady, Karaveddy two weeks previously and had been in hospital since.

### 23 January

● Thavarajah Poopathi, 50, from Katkuli Road, Chavakachcheri, Jaffna, was killed and sixteen other civilians wounded, seven of them seriously, when a bomb hidden in a motorbike exploded inside the Chavakachcheri town area. The wounded were identified as R. Rajakumar, 26, N. Rajaladchumy, 40, of Chavakachcheri, A. Sooriyakumar, 31, from Chavakachcheri, T. Jesintha, 32, of Ariyalai, K. Dinosan, 16, S. Yoganathan, 47, of Chavakachcheri, K. Rajendran, 30, from Chavakachcheri, M. Jeyarasa, 64, of Kaithady, A. K. Kumarasamy, 64, of Meesalai, V. Sanjithkumar, 19, K. Rajathurai, 57, of Meesalai, Mary Mohan, 60 from Atchuvelli,

*Continued on page 13*

## Paramilitaries murder another TNA politician

THE only Tamil member of the Urban Council in the predominantly Muslim region of Kinniya in Trincomalee district was shot and killed January 26 the latest of a number of Tamil politicians assassinated by Army-backed paramilitaries.

Mr. Thangarajah Ithayarajah, a member of the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the name under which the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) contested the local government elections, was killed while he was on his way to Kinniya from his village, Alankerni.

A friend of Mr. Ithayarajah was wounded in the shooting.

Mr. Ithayarajah, a father of two, was shot and killed by gunmen at Idiman, on the border between Tamil and Muslim areas, when he parked his motorbike near a shop with his friend.

The gunmen had followed them to the shop. The assassins escaped on the motorbike after shooting the politician in the Army controlled area.

The killing comes three months after the assassination of the only Tamil TNA member of the Sinhala dominated Seruvila Pradeshaia Saba in the same district.

Kopalasundaram Pathmakalan, 26, who was the only TNA member of the nine member Seruvila Pradesiya Sabha was shot dead on October 30.

Meanwhile, 10 Tamil members who had won the Trincomalee Urban Council have received death threats, Trincomalee District Tamil parliamentarian, K. Thurairatnasingham told reporters.

He blamed the Sri Lankan security forces.

Mr. Thurairatnasingham charged that the assassinations and death threats were part of a planned terror-campaign with a political agenda by the forces that seek to suppress the democratic representation of Tamils in Trincomalee district.

In the elections held at the end of March 2006, The TNA alliance party ITAK won one seat each in Kinniya UC, Seruvila PS, Morawewa PS, Kantalai PS, and two in Thamplakamam PS, three in Kuchchaveli PS and four in Muttur PS in addition to capturing power in the Trincomalee UC with 10 seats, Trincomalee Town and Gravets PS with 6 seats and Verugal PS, uncontested, with 7 seats.

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



## NEWS



An international truce monitor examines the bodies of two youth abducted in Sri Lanka Army-controlled Vavuniya. Photo TamilNet

## Vavuniya: 41 people disappear in three weeks

THE SRI LANKA Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) said its Vavuniya office had received complaints relating to the disappearances of 41 people in the past three weeks in the Sri Lanka Army-dominated town.

A total of 104 complaints have been filed, including death threats, intimidation, and arrests by the security forces.

54 complaints related to threats to life and intimidation, and 9 were on arrests. 15 of the complaints were against the Sri Lankan Army and police forces.

There had been 39 complaints in the first week of January, 37 in the second and 28 in the third week.

HRC officials said they are investigating the disappearances but often face hurdles beyond their control, in reference to difficulties in investigating abuses by the security forces.

International ceasefire monitors have accused the forces and allied paramilitaries for killings.

# Violence round up - week ending 28 Jan

Continued from page 12

T. Thushyanthan, 23, M. Mohanathas, 27, of Chavakacheri, and S. Mathanamohan, 26, from Chavakacheri. One SLA trooper was killed and another six allegedly injured in the explosion, but SLA Military Command has not confirmed injuries.

● Six Tamil youths who were in Chavakacheri town were reported missing after SLA troopers launched an extensive search and cordon operation in the town, arresting and releasing more than one hundred youths, following the bomb.

● Five civilians walking along Karainagar road in Manipay, Jaffna, were injured when a bomb hidden by the road side exploded. There was no SLA vehicle at the spot when the explosion took place. One of the injured died later in hospital. The explosion took place amidst increasing number of disappearances of youths and school students, many abducted during curfew hours.

● An unidentified youth was shot dead during a confrontation with SLA troops in Ilukanawaththa, Ellankulam area in Vadamardchey. The youth is alleged to have lobbed a grenade at the troops patrolling in the area resulting in

an exchange of fire between the troops and the youth. Two abandoned houses in the area from where the youth is said to have carried out the attack were completely demolished by the troops and materials were taken for further investigation.

● Gunmen shot and injured four employees of the Road Development Authority (RDA) in Vavuniya, and abducted three workers at Ulukkulam, while the workers were on their way to Vavuniya in a private van. The abductors, who were in a car, stopped the workers' van, and allowed the Muslim driver to go. The gunmen fired at the workers when four tried to escape, injuring them. All the workers were wearing the RDA uniform. Details of the 3-disappeared workers are not known. The injured said the abductors were all Tamil speaking.

● Eravur Police recovered the bullet-riddled bodies of two Tamil men dumped in the bushes in Savukkady, Batticaloa. They were identified as Selliah Janachandran, 23, of Vipulanantha Road, Valaichchenai and Selvarajah Sriskantharajah, 24, of Trinco Road, Mankerny. Both men had gone to Batticaloa town the previous night to obtain insurance for a vehicle and disap-

peared en route. Savukkady residents alleged that the youths were shot by paramilitary personnel working with the SLA.

## 22 January

● The body of Daniel Santharuppan, 30, a disabled man abducted by SLA soldiers in broad day light at Thettkiyalady in Chunnam, Valigamam, on January 16, was found with severe cut wounds in the same area.

● Sittampalam Puvanendran, 46, from Eachamottai in Chundukuli area within the Jaffna Municipal boundary, was taken by more than six armed Sinhala speaking men who visited his home. The abductors said they were taking Puvanendran for investigations and took him on foot. The abductors assaulted relatives and neighbours, and fired warning shots in the air, when they tried to stop the men from taking Puvanendran.

● SLA soldiers went to the house of Velayutham Emil Pramitan, 26, and took him away after interrogating his father and brothers. Pramitan owned a radio repair shop in Jaffna town. An SLA camp is about 350 meters from the home.

● Vavuniya police recovered two bodies, hands bound with cloth, with bullet wounds in Thavasik-

ulam in Vavuniya. The Police said the bodies were found in the same spot where bodies of three Tamil civilians were found Friday, and speculated revenge may have been the motive. No identity documents were found in possession of the two dead men. Police said both appear to be around 25-years, and are from Kuliypitty area in Kurunagala.

● Manager of the Vavuniya Peoples Transport Board and former member of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam, Tharmakulasingham, 46, alias 'Thambi', was killed by armed men on a motorbike who shot him at Pandarikkulam while he was returning home from work.

● SLAF Kfir jets bombed Kadavanaikulam, Trincomalee. The SLA also launched artillery shelling from Jayapura and Moraweve SLA camps.

● Sri Lanka Police and members of the STF jointly cordoned off and conducted a door-to-door search in Kirankulam village, Batticaloa. The Police detained nearly 50 persons but released them after intensive interrogation. People who travelled along the main trunk road too were subjected to severe scrutiny. The five-hour long operation created tension in the area, with most resi-

dents prevented from travelling to their place of work.

● Four Muslim family men missing since January 15 from Omaidiamadu jungle in Valaichenai, Batticaloa, where they had gone to collect firewood, returned home. The men were held at Welikanda SLA headquarters. SLA troopers who had been hiding in the jungle area prior to their offensive on Vaharai had arrested the four men and had handed them over to the Welikanda SLA camp.

● Five upcountry Tamil civilian passengers were injured when a group of Sinhalese hoodlums attacked a State owned passenger bus in Udathanna in Matala, while the funeral of a SLA soldier killed in a Vaharai military operation against the LTTE was taking place. The attackers ordered the Tamil passengers to get down from the bus, and beat them with poles, seriously injuring two of the passengers. SLA soldiers on security duty close by stood by and did not interfere. At least two female passengers were injured, reports said.

● Twelve Tamil youths arrested on suspicion and detained in four police stations in Colombo were suddenly transferred to Boosa Detention Camp in Galle (see separate report, p10).

## NEWS

# Karuna Group a destabilising factor: donors

**B. Muralidhar Reddy**  
The Hindu

THE Sri Lanka Bilateral Donor Group (BDG) has said the military action of the Karuna faction in the east has become a major destabilising factor even as the Human Rights Watch (HRW) alleged that with "complicity or wilful blindness" of the Government, the group has forcibly conscripted hundreds of children.

Piqued at the "selective briefing" of its report by the Government, the BDG on Wednesday went public with its internal document on the situation. Neither the Government nor the LTTE came out clean.

The report is a summary of the findings of missions undertaken by diplomatic heads of the BDG. The BDG said the media referred to comments made by the defence spokesperson that was not intended for public distribution.

The report is prepared on the basis of monitoring missions to Amparai, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Mannar, Vavuniya and Jaffna districts by representatives of the British High Commission, the Canadian High Commission, the Australian High Commission, the Swedish Embassy, the Swiss Embassy, USAID and the European Commission - during the last months of 2006.

The report has said, "The missions were informed of a steady increase this year of extra-judicial killings, abductions and disappearances. The abductions of mainly men and boys were attributed by local stakeholders to both the LTTE and the Karuna faction [and the PLOTE and EPDP in Jaffna]."

Especially worrying was the report of children being kidnapped from internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Batticaloa. It is believed the army and the Karuna faction were collaborating in their campaigns against the LTTE.

The BDG said a special security concern, also hampering humanitarian efforts, was the report that the parties to the conflict might be using civilians and civilian installations as shields.

"In the same way [as the LTTE], SLAF and Karuna camps tend to be located in the middle of urban or otherwise populous areas, bringing military activity dangerously close to IDP camps and civilian areas.

In general, the areas controlled by the Government were accessible, but bureaucratic constraints, political pressures and ethnic tensions impede free movement.

The areas controlled by the LTTE were accessible to the U.N.-agencies and the ICRC, but

is subject to lengthy government approval. As an exception, the MoD recently approved a select number of NGOs to resume their work in the LTTE-controlled areas.

The representatives also found that there were restrictions on certain goods into the LTTE-controlled areas.

"Not only are fuel, cement and iron bars restricted [beyond the agreed levels in the CFA], but also tents and plastic sheets, with obvious implications for humanitarian operations. There are no formal restrictions on food items, but a complex set of factors such as insufficient transport capacity, fuel shortage and low levels of local food production mean that food consumption is currently below the required levels [e.g. 60 per cent in Batticaloa]."

It said the IDP situation in Jaffna, Vaharai (Batticaloa) and Eechilampatu (Trincomalee) was reported to be the most severe, mainly for the lack of access for humanitarian supplies and services.

The report said the situation in the Jaffna peninsula was of particular concern, where also the government-controlled areas had been cut off since the suspension of commercial flights and the closure of the A9 in mid-August.

Separately the Human Rights Watch (HRW) said, "With the complicity or wilful blindness of the Sri Lankan government, the Karuna group has abducted and forcibly recruited hundreds of children in eastern Sri Lanka."

It said the group, led by V. Muralitharan alias Karuna, a former LTTE commander, split in 2004 and cooperates with the army in their common fight against the LTTE.

In the 100-page report, "Complicit in Crime: State Collusion in Abductions and Child Recruitment by the Karuna Group," it documents a pattern of abductions and forced recruitment by the Karuna group over the past year. With purported case studies, maps and photographs, it shows how the group operates with impunity in the government-controlled areas, abducting boys and young men, training them in camps, and deploying them for combat.

Based on research in Sri Lanka, including areas where the Karuna group operates, the report features testimony from two dozen family members of abducted boys and young men.

They described how armed Karuna members forcibly took away their brothers, nephews and sons from their homes, workplaces, temples, playgrounds, public roads, and even a wedding.



Customers at a Jaffna store read a displayed copy of Uthayan newspaper. Photo TamilNet

## Isolation looms for cut off Jaffna

AS SRI LANKA'S government continues to keep the A9 highway, the sole supply route to the Jaffna peninsula closed, media there is complaining of an acute shortage of newsprint and ink.

The shortage has forced the publishers of Tamil dailies to drastically reduce the number of pages in each edition and the number of copies published.

Civil society activists say the shortage is deliberately introduced by the Sri Lanka government as part of its campaign to deny Jaffna residents free access to information from independent sources. This is a serious form of curtailing media freedom, the activists say.

The International Independent Journalist Organization and Sri Lanka Organization for Freedom of Expression in Jaffna sent letters to the ambassadors of Sri Lanka's main donor countries and international media groups protesting the issue.

The closure of the A9 highway by the SLA in August 2006 and the reluctance of the Commissioner of Essential Services to ship printing materials has together lead to the current acute shortage of news print and ink, newspaper publishers in the

peninsula said.

The Tamil dailies Uthayan, Yarl Thinakural and Valampuri are the only sources of news and information to the public in the absence of radio or television stations in Jaffna peninsula.

The Uthayan, which enjoys the highest circulation, has reduced its number of copies from 22,000 to 7,500, reducing the number of pages from 16 to 4.

Soon Uthayan will be forced to run only 2 pages and before long the paper may be forced to shut down, staff at Uthayan said.

Yarl Thinakural and Valmpuri also face a similar bleak future.

People eager to read news papers and unable to buy a copy, flock in front of tea stalls and shops where a single copy of the daily paper is kept for public view.

Meanwhile, Jaffna residents have also been cut off from other sources as telephone lines to the northern peninsula were cut last week.

Telephone lines to Tamil Tiger (LTTE)-controlled Vanni and most of Jaffna were cut on January 27.

Since then only a section of telephone numbers (around 1500 of around 8000 lines), were work-

ing in Jaffna.

Vanni, without cellular link, remained completely cut off for communication.

Financial transactions in many bank branches are paralysed and fundamental services such as hospital ambulances, civil services and media, dependent on telephone communication are being disrupted.

Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers went to Vavuniya Telecom and had instructed the technicians to accompany them towards the communication exchange at Madukanda and shut down the telephone link to Vanni and most of the lines to Jaffna.

With the only land route to the peninsula being severed since August, telephone was the only means of communication within Jaffna as well with the rest of the country and international community.

Although the SLT gave 'technical failure' as the official explanation for the lines being cut off, no reason was provided for the delay or inability to fix the problem.

The Sri Lankan military establishment has earlier cut off telephone links during military operations.



## NEWS

## US backs...

*Continued from page 4*

the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID] has assisted in the development of Sri Lanka in many different ways."

"[However] no amount of development assistance by the United States or any other donor can have any lasting impact, however, without finding a permanent solution to the conflict that has plagued Sri Lanka for more than 25 years."

Mr. Blake reproached Sri Lanka's blocking of access to humanitarian agencies.

"The deep U.S. commitment to the people and State of Sri Lanka brings about an equally deep concern for the difficulties faced by some of our implementing partners in their attempt to implement our assistance programs."

"All of America's development assistance and tsunami relief is implemented through our NGO partners. Yet these NGO

partners have faced difficulties that have hampered their ability to carry out their important work."

"USAID staff and NGO partners are sometimes denied access to deliver assistance to people mostly need."

"The [official] process of clearances and approvals for project activities are often not clearly spelled out at the provincial and local level; and can become more arduous without warning."

"Many NGOs have been the target of unsubstantiated allegations in the Sri Lankan press that have caused the staff of these NGOs to be subject to physical harassment and intimidation."

"In conclusion, let me say that United States attaches great importance to our partnership with Sri Lanka. We hope Sri Lanka will seize the opportunity to forge a power-sharing proposal that can form the basis for talks with the LTTE that could finally bring an end to conflict in Sri Lanka."

## Unconstructive...

*Continued from page 7*

clamped in the east, and the access routes were closed. Aerial bombardment and shelling targeted civilians, forcing displaced people on foot from place to place with the aim of evicting people from our administrative areas in the East.

Even the civilian and medical refugees were attacked, disregarding the International Law of Armed Conflict.

While the International Community urged the Sri Lankan political leaders to work towards a radical re-configuration of polity with 'dramatic political changes,' desist from reneging from the special arrangements supporting the merger of NorthEast, and

that a military solution was not possible, Colombo was allowed to pursue exactly the opposite.

Colombo continued to placate the International Community with the appointment of a new All Party Conference, and other committees for investigating killings, and embarked on measures to gain political advantage within the Southern polity by signing MoUs with other parties.

In the process, Colombo, by clever use of its politicized judiciary, rejected the concept of Tamil homeland by nullifying the 18-year merger of Northern and Eastern Province, the 'International treaty' crafted by India.

In this backdrop, Tamil people find little comfort in the

statements and expression of concerns released by the International Community, as Colombo continues its military agenda that has depopulated areas historically inhabited by Tamils, and has brought enormous suffering to the Tamils in the east.

Tamil people increasingly view with skepticism the approach by International Community towards the two protagonists in the Sri Lanka conflict.

They see the approach as unfairly biased against the Liberation Tigers who the Tamils see as the only credible bulwark to safeguard the rights and dignity of Tamil people who have a long history of political struggle for self-determination.

## Donors pledge...

*Continued from page 4*

the basis for talks" with the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Diplomats and lenders attending the closed-door conference feared that the government might not take their warnings seriously.

"Some of the biggest lenders to Sri Lanka came out strong for a power-sharing deal," a delegate said, adding that they had the impression that the authorities were unmoved.

"The tone suggests that they (the government) imply that donors should support the war,"

said Harsha de Silva, an economist at LIRNEasia, a regional economic think-tank.

However, Sri Lanka's chief peace negotiator Nimal Siripala de Silva dismissed donor concerns, saying the government could not resume talks unless the Tamil Tigers agreed to negotiate.

Sri Lanka believes that donors should separate aid from the conflict and allow the administration to press ahead with its own economic agenda. "We are not ready to accept any conditions linking aid with peace," Sri Lanka's Central Bank governor Nivard Cabraal told AFP.

## Violence/ Feb 04

*Continued from page 11*

employee of Jaffna University at Nayanmarkattu in Nallur. Muthu Peter, 29, father of one, a native of Navatkuli in Thenmaradchi and a resident of Nachimarkovila-dy in Jaffna, was rushed to hospital where he succumbed to his wounds. Peter was returning home on motorcycle after visiting his parents in Navatkuli when he was shot.

● Thinesh Ananthan, 24, from 3rd Mile Post in Anaikottai, arrested by the SLA is reported missing by his relatives.

● More than 600 prospective passengers, planning to travel out of Jaffna by private planes and queuing outside the airline office, turned angry when they were told that only one hundred would be given tokens to be issued air tickets. The irate civilians smashed the office windows and caused

damage to property inside the building. The civilians later attempted to attack employees but were prevented when a large contingent of SLA troops arrived at the scene. Several of the civilians were injured when the SLA soldiers attacked the passengers to bring the situation under control.

● A youth from Kokuvil west, Jaffna, surrendered at Jaffna police station fearing danger to his life by from unknown armed men. Tharmalingam Ramesh Babu, 22, complained that he has been receiving threats to his life from unknown men and said he feared he will be killed if he stayed at home.

● Unidentified men shot dead a Tamil youth at Anpuvallipuram junction on Trincomalee-Kandy highway, near Trincomalee town. The armed men on a motorbike shot Sriharan Sasinthan at point blank range.

WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS FROM

# CHETTY & CO.

## SOLICITORS

- ★ CRIME
- ★ IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY
- ★ FAMILY(DIVORCE/CHILDREN ACT)
- ★ CONVEYANCE(Residential & Business)
- ★ LANDLORD & TENANT
- ★ CIVIL LITIGATION

- ★ PERSONAL INJURY CLAIM
- ★ WILLS, PROBATE & TRUSTS
- ★ BUSINESS MATTERS
- ★ HOUSING AND WELFARE BENEFIT
- ★ EMPLOYMENT
- ★ CONSUMER AFFAIRS

894 Garratt Lane  
Tooting, London SW19 0NB  
Tel: 020 8677 4770

79, Hoe Street  
Walthamstow, London E17 4SA  
Tel: 020 8521 1313

# Easan & co

## Chartered Management Accountants

- ❖ Self Assessment
- ❖ Tax Returns
- ❖ VAT Returns
- ❖ PAYE
- ❖ Accounts & Book Keeping
- ❖ Management Accounting

## Specialists in Arranging Commercial Loan

196 Merton High Street South, Wimbledon  
London SW19 1AX

Tel: 020 8543 8484, Fax: 020 8540 0107





President Mahinda Rajapakse, with Army Chief Sarath Fonseka (to his left) during a visit Feb 3 to Vaharai, recently captured from the LTTE. Report p3, Photo TamilNet



## Our New Branch in Colombo

**It is an exceptional opportunity for  
Tamil people based in Britain!**

- ❖ Are you interested in buying or selling a house or land in Colombo, Sri Lanka, all for a reasonable price?.
- ❖ Would you like to rent out or to let property?

**We have over 10 years experience in  
property services and are committed to  
complete customer satisfaction and service.**

**Our exceptional services in Colombo includes:**

- ❖ Arranging National Identity Cards and Birth Certificates.
- ❖ Flight Booking.
- ❖ Accommodation in Colombo.
- ❖ Arranging Transport.
- ❖ Foreign Currency Exchange.

### UK London Property Services

263 Mitcham Lane,  
Tooting,  
London  
SW16 6QB

Tel: 020 8769 5511  
Fax: 020 8769 0055  
Mob: 07956 363 563

227 Preston Lane,  
Wembley,  
Middx  
HA9 8NF

Tel: 020 8904 4545  
Fax: 020 8904 9777  
Mob: 07958 507 009

### Sri Lanka Nayaki Estates

2, 1/1 Nelson Place  
Wellawatte,  
Colombo-06  
Sri Lanka

Tel: 00 94 11 236 1959  
Fax: 00 94 11 236 1960  
Mob: 00 94 773 506 306

### BRITISH TAMIL INFORMATION DIRECTORY

Murasam Publications Ltd  
P.O. Box 2803  
Mitcham CR4 2WW  
Tel: 020 8665 2751  
email: info@muram.com  
web: www.murasam.com



**முரசம்**

[www.murasam.com](http://www.murasam.com)

## RAGU TRAVELS

**A world wide travel agents**



For reliable, friendly and  
efficient service at  
competitive rates

- ☆ Air tickets
- ☆ Travel Insurance
- ☆ Transportation
- ☆ Visa arrangement  
for India

Ragu Estate agents

**Call Ragu on  
020 8586 2323  
020 8471 9100**

- ☆ Property Management
- ☆ Lettings, Sales
- ☆ Mortgages
- ☆ Construction

258, High Street North  
Manor Park, E12 6SB

**Tel: 020 8471 4454, Fax: 020 8586 2489**