

## Can Sri Lanka wage war without US support?

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(File photo) Sri Lankan Special Task Force (STF) soldiers conduct a search at an emergency check-point during stepped-up security in Colombo. Thousands of Tamils have been ordered out of the city by the Police Chief in the interests of 'national security.' Photo Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images

# Crackdown on Colombo Tamils

AMID preparations for major battles in the warzones of the Northeast, Sri Lanka's government launched a crackdown in the capital, Colombo, expelling thousands of Tamils and pouring security forces into the city.

Colombo city has been divided into three security zones and additional troops from the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and Sri Lanka

Navy (SLN) have been deployed to check all vehicles and movement of civilians.

Anti-aircraft guns have been fitted on the top floors of about 58 storied buildings in Colombo to counter possible LTTE aerial strikes, TamilNet.

Every key junction in Colombo is being manned by SLA and SLN troops. Heavy

vehicles are subjected to severe checks in a bid to catch Tamil Tiger fighters infiltrating the city.

The military and police are directed to not allow loitering on roads and junctions, TamilNet reported.

Last week the police virtually sealed Colombo for three hours to check every vehicle and passengers entering the city of 600,000

people.

Tamils staying in the Colombo "without a valid reason" are being sent back to their villages, Sri Lanka's police chief said on Friday.

Hundreds of Tamils have been asked to leave and return to their villages, some in conflict areas, because they are a "threat to national security," Police

Inspector-General Victor Perera said.

"Those who are loitering in Colombo will be sent home. We will give them transport," Perera told reporters.

"We are doing this to protect the people and because of a threat to national security."

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## NEWS

# Sri Lanka military prepares for war, but talks less tough



Army commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka visited the eastern warzone last week. Photo SL Army

EVEN as Sri Lanka's military prepared for further offensives against the Tamil Tigers' northern stronghold, the Army's Commander appeared to sober expectations, saying Colombo has no intention of capturing LTTE-held areas in the north.

"We have no plan to take the North," Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka told foreign journalists on May 28. "Our plan in the North is to weaken the LTTE militarily so that we are able to maintain our positions there."

His comments were in contrast to his earlier public statements vowing to wipe out the Tigers, whom he insisted were on the verge of collapse.

"After eradicating the Tigers from the East, [the military's] full strength will be used to rescue the North," Gen. Fonseka declared earlier this year.

President Mahinda Rajapakse, who is also the commander-in-chief of the military has also been backtracked from his earlier pledge to annihilate the LTTE.

Instead, Rajapakse now says his forces are only fighting to contain the LTTE.

"If they stay where they are, keeping their arms, I have no problem with that," said Rajapakse during an interview with Al Jazeera on June 1.

Earlier this year, after capturing LTTE administered areas in the east, especially the stronghold at Vaharai and the Paduwankarai area, the Sri Lankan military was visibly brimming with confidence.

However in subsequent months, Colombo's military strategy has lost momentum.

Firstly, the military is struggling to clear the remaining LTTE-held areas in the east and to control captured areas where a smouldering guerrilla war is dragging on.

Secondly, a series of Sri Lankan military probes into the LTTE-held Vanni in the north have been defeated. The military has been trying to make good on Gen. Fonseka's pledge and break

into the LTTE stronghold but repeated operations in Mannar district have failed to make progress.

Thirdly, there have been successful air raids by the LTTE's newly unveiled Tamil Eelam Air Force (TAF) against the main air base and oil installations in Colombo, as well as the main military base complex in the Jaffna peninsula.

The daring airstrikes by the TAF's light aircraft have also served to create anxieties about the government's hardline war strategy and to lower the military's morale.

On March 26 TAF planes bombed the Katunayake air force

base adjacent to Sri Lanka's only international airport north of Colombo. The raid stunned the government and forcing it to step up its air defences, placing anti-aircraft guns around the city and in other parts of the country.

However the security measures proved to be inadequate when TAF planes carried out two more air raids, one targeting Palali military base complex in the Jaffna peninsula, and another targeting oil and fuel storages in and around Colombo.

Sri Lankan army first launched an offensive on March 16 with the aim of capturing Palamodai, northwest of Vavuniya but retreated following

3 hours of heavy fighting.

On 23 March the army tried to advance into using 120 villagers as human shields, but in 15 hours of fierce fighting the LTTE rescued the hostages and pushed the troops back to their original positions in Thampanai and Chinna Pandivirichaan. The army lost 60 soldiers in this operation.

Since then a number of Army pushes into LTTE-held areas of Mannar district, including the Madhu region, have failed.

In the east the Army is struggling to flush the LTTE out from the thick jungles of the Thoppigala region.

*Continued on page 4*

## Lack of transport saps Jaffna troops' morale

SRI LANKAN security forces personnel in the Jaffna peninsula are facing tremendous hardships when going on leave due to a serious shortage of transport facilities, The Island newspaper reported this week.

According to military officials lack of proper logistics to go on leave and return is an important reason for desertions from the Sri Lankan military, the paper said.

About 1,600 security personnel were stranded at the strategic Palaly airbase as of May 24, the paper reported, adding some troops had been languishing at the base for several days, without flights or ship sailings.

The Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) had operated only two flights to Palaly on May 22 and there had been no flights at all on the following day, the paper said, illustrating the problem.

The SLAF is struggling to meet the transportation demands of the Army with only a single Ukrainian built AN 32 in operation, with all other aircraft suit-

able for transportation being grounded for servicing.

The SLAF inducted AN 32s into active service in 1995 following the LTTE shooting down the aging HS 748 Avros. The AN 32 is currently the workhorse of the SLAF transport fleet.

"The absence of suitable transport is one of the primary reasons for desertions," a junior officer told the Island.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, the junior officer expressed serious concern over what he termed as the deteriorating standards in transporting men to and from the peninsula.

"It's a continuing nightmare," he said, accusing the Sri Lankan government of turning a blind eye to their plight. In fact successive governments had failed to meet this requirement, he said.

The Sri Lankan forces rely on air and sea routes to transport men and material to the northern Jaffna peninsula under their control as the land route is cut off by the Vanni region which is under

LTTE control.

The A9 highway which links the government held Vavuniya and Jaffna towns runs through the vast Vanni region.

In 1997, having captured Jaffna, the Sri Lankan military launched a disastrous 18 month long operation to establish a supply route to the northern peninsula through Vanni.

Operation Jaya Sikuru (Victory Assured) cost thousands of troops and 18 months of gains were completely lost in a matter of days when the LTTE pushed the army back to its original positions November 1999.

Since then SLAF flights between Ratmalana and Palali and sea supply route maintained by the Sri Lanka navy (SLN) between the eastern port town of Trincomalee and Kankasanturai in Jaffna have been the lifeline for forces deployed in Jaffna.

A cross section of officers interviewed by the Island wanted the government to formulate a plan to meet the urgent require-

ment of troop transfers.

While a colossal amount of foreign exchange is being squandered on luxury vehicles for politicians, officials and their henchmen and foreign jaunts, the Sri Lankan security forces are forced to experience untold misery, they told the Island.

The paper further added that although married officers and men are given priority with a week's leave after a month, the unbelievably chaotic situation has ensured that the vast majority of men are denied home leave at decent intervals.

In fact, most of them are given leave once in about three months, they said, emphasizing the difficulties faced by them when returning to their bases in the peninsula.

Troops languish for days at the Ratmalana transit camp before being airlifted to Palaly.

And in some instances, troops are moved overland from Ratmalana to Trincomalee to be transported by sea.

But in Trincomalee also troops are forced to suffer a few more days before being put on board a ship which is capable of carrying about 3200 personnel, the paper said.

With the sea supply lines under strain, due to risk of LTTE attack, the SLAF has been also tasked with transporting fresh rations.

As commanding officers and officers holding senior appointments are given priority, the ordinary men faced further delays.

A soldier who goes on leave takes about a month to come back, reported the Island.

According to the The Island unscrupulous gangs operate near military transit camps. Men who languish at these points for days sometimes end up pawning their wristwatches, gold chains and bracelets.

"Don't forget that the vast majority come from the provinces and they have no option but to remain until they are transported."

## NEWS

# President's paradoxes on war, peace and talks

IN an extensive interview to Al Jazeera television last week, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse set out his government's policy on the island's protracted conflict. In doing so he put forward a number of contradictory assertions and policies, which boiled down to a single overriding theme: military defeat of the Tamil Tigers.

Responding to the questions in his native Sinhala President Rajapakse slammed the LTTE as 'terrorists' and 'criminals' and vowed to wipe them out.

But at the same time he said he was prepared to negotiate with the Tigers "to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people."

He later asserted: "we have to bring [a solution] before the people and we also have to eradicate terrorism. We cannot allow these criminals to dictate to us. We cannot have them join us."

President Rajapakse was interviewed by Al Jazeera's 101 East presenter, Teymoor Nabili.

Saying that defeating terrorism and giving the Tamils a solution were different issues, President Rajapakse also stated: "while we go ahead with our programme to control these people we will bring forward a solution."

But he later also said: "a victory is essential against terrorism. ... But because we need to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people, I am prepared to go for talks, with the terrorists."

But then the President also said: "This is a terrorist group. The people are aware that as long as a terrorist organisation exists, that negotiations will not be successful."

The President said "the people" wanted him to: "defeat the LTTE and talk."

And when asked "if the Sri Lankan people would prefer a defeat of the LTTE first?" President Rajapakse exclaimed: "First!"

But when asked again "if there must first be military victory and then peace talks?" the President insisted: "No!"

He elaborated: "That is not what I hope for. Until the terrorists are weakened, they will not come for talks. As long as they think they are strong, they will try to break up the country."

But then the President later argued: "They are making use of the negotiations to strengthen themselves, to bring in arms."

However, when asked if then "your military strategy is going to

continue until the Tigers come to the table and ask for negotiations and lay down their arms," President Rajapakse said: "No. I am ready to talk even while they carry arms."

But then he also insisted: "what the LTTE wants [is] to keep their arms and divide the country into two. That I cannot allow."

The interviewer asked: "Could you then describe a situation under which both those things can be achieved - defeat of the terrorists and representation of the Tamil people?"

President Rajapakse replied: "they must give up terrorism. They must enter a democratic framework. That is what we expect to achieve through negotiations."

But then he also said: "Even while they fight, if they want to negotiate with me, and reach a solution, I am ready for that too."

When asked at what point would he accept the LTTE was weakened, President Rajapakse replied: "Even under today's circumstances. ... Even today I am ready to negotiate."

"My argument," President Rajapakse said, "is that terrorism

**'This is a terrorist group. The people are aware that as long as a terrorist organisation exists, that negotiations will not be successful'**

has to be got rid off. We cannot kneel down to that. I am not prepared to kneel down to their arms capability."

The exasperated interviewer then asked: "I apologise, I am not really following you. You say that terrorism must be defeated but you don't want, you don't think that a military victory is necessary?"

To which President Rajapakse replied: "Absolutely, a victory is essential against terrorism. That is a different story. But because we need to meet the aspirations of the Tamil people, I am prepared to go for talks, with the terrorists."

But he later said the Tamils didn't want LTTE rule, but "if they say they are opposed to the



President Mahinda Rajapakse (l) with Army commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka. Photo TamilNet

LTTE, they will be killed."

Asked later how he proposed to bring about a solution to the conflict, President Rajapakse replied: "We have to discuss it, then we have to bring it before the people and we also have to eradicate terrorism."

Asked about the prospects of dialogue between his government and the LTTE, President Rajapakse said in the same breath: "As a government we cannot have talks. We say that we are ready for talks always."

"Even while the fighting goes on, I am ready for talks," he added.

Asked if he would initiate talks with the Tigers, he replied: "Definitely."

But then he added: "if the LTTE is ready."

"We have offered a political solution to the people," he said at one point, without elaborating. "Along with [this] political solution, we are prepared to talk."

On one hand, defending his military's performance, President Rajapakse said: "We have cleared the east from terrorism. Today, they (Tigers) have been limited to Killinochchi and Mullaitivu areas. We have weakened them."

But asked about the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), he replied: "[LTTE] does not honour that. We still honour it. We still do not send our police, our army to that side."

"This agreement is between us," he said of the CFA, but then added: "We are prepared to renew

the agreement at any time."

When asked about concerns raised by visiting US envoy Richard Boucher about human rights abuses in Sri Lanka, Mr. Rajapakse said: "actually, today I am not prepared to accept that there are human rights violations as has been reported."

President Rajapakse said the Sri Lankan military was "a very disciplined force" to an extent "not seen in any other country."

He elaborated, by comparing the military to those of other countries: "We know that in certain instances when bombs are dropped in other countries, people are killed, children die. We do not behave like that. We did not do that. We protected every civilian."

"Not a single civilian was injured when we took Vakarai," he said, referring to a military operation in which aid workers and rights groups say scores of civilians were killed in indiscriminate bombardment.

When pressed on abductions and 'disappearances' and asked about Human Rights Watch's documentation of 700 or more cases, President Rajapakse replied:

"Many of those people who are said to have been abducted are in England, Germany, gone abroad."

"Some talk of a few people abducted from Colombo. We do not know whether they are fighting [with the LTTE] in Killinochchi," he added.

"This is all against the govern-

ment," President Rajapakse said. "We have seen this business. We have found out that under the same name, they have gone abroad."

His response prompted the interviewer to ask: "So this is a conspiracy?"

"Definitely," the President replied. "The LTTE has abducted people and killed them. The state forces do not have to abduct people because we have the law."

"We can question them, and remand them, imprison them. We can detain them under emergency laws. So there is no need [for the state] to abduct someone," he explained.

The President's mood darkened when asked about the possibility of humanitarian intervention.

"Sri Lanka is not a colony of England, America or any other country. Sri Lanka is a sovereign state," he said.

He insisted, paradoxically: "So when they get involved it is important that they do not interfere in the internal affairs of this country."

He also argued: "Another country cannot force a solution. To find a solution for this country, it is not England or Germany that can help. It is India that can find a solution."

"To offer a solution to this problem, according to the present situation, to help the Tamil people, India's support is necessary," he said without elaborating.

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## NEWS

### Colombo crackdown ...

*Continued from page 1*

"Because there is no a special label to identify an LTTE terrorist and a civilian, we took the decision to send them back to their villages," he said.

Hundreds of Tamils, many from poor rural areas, live in boarding houses in Colombo while they work or search for jobs or seek employment abroad.

Tamils are required to obtain permits to travel to the rest of the country from the police under a de facto visa system put in place

to prevent Tiger fighters infiltrating Colombo.

On May 31 the authorities ordered the owners of 68 lodges in Pettah Police Division in Colombo to immediately expel around 5000 Tamil tenants from Northeast and Upcountry to their "native places" within 24 hours.

Pettah Police commander, chief inspector Jayaratne, warned he would not entertain complaints on missing persons if lodge owners did not adhere to the instructions from the top authorities.

However Police Chief Perera

denied such orders were issued.

Meanwhile repeated cordon and search operations are being conducted by large numbers of security personnel.

Private homes where persons from the Northeast and upcountry are staying, are being subjected to careful search, police said.

Those who proved their identity and provided 'satisfactory' reasons for their stay in the location were released after preliminary inquiry, police said.

**Abductions terror, p10  
Red Cross killings, p12**

### Sri Lanka military prepares...

*Continued from page 2*

The eastern areas captured from the LTTE continue to be volatile with the Tigers carrying out regular ambushes against the military.

Some analysts feel the euphoria in the south following the LTTE's steady retreats ahead of the military's offensives was misplaced and argue that the LTTE's reverting to guerilla tactics from the jungle bases will prove harder to counter.

And in addition to checking Sri Lankan offensives, in recent days the LTTE has also started conducting its own attacks.

On May 24 LTTE marine commandos attacked the Sri Lankan naval detachment in the Delft Island, one of seven islets located west of Jaffna peninsula, killing more than 35 sailors and recovering a large haul of military equipments including anti-aircraft guns and radar.

On June 2 LTTE launched a commando raid on Army camps in the Mannar - Vavuniya border villages pushing back the Sri Lankan military and destroying a Sri Lanka Army artillery launch

pad located at Pampaimadu.

The attack, in which the LTTE recovered a significant cache of weapons including armored vehicles, left 20 soldiers dead and 40 injured further denting the military confidence.

The LTTE counter-attacks have dulled the euphoria that was prevalent in the military and amongst Sinhala nationalists a few months ago and raised questions about the viability of the government's military strategy.

But whilst reluctantly accepting that defeating the LTTE would be harder than initially envisaged, the Rajapakse regime and Sri Lankan military continues to believe in a military solution.

The mass deployment of troops and weapons in the Muhamalai - Nagarkovil forward defence lines (FDL) in Jaffna peninsula for a major assault on Vanni and the hurried purchases of vast quantities of ammunition from China are preparations for a major military campaign.

Whilst playing down the military's ambitions to manage the expectations, Fonseka has revised the military plans of capturing the east by mid April and focusing on

north to liberate areas under LTTE administration.

The strategy the Sri Lankan military is to clear the east fully, a campaign which according to Fonseka would take another five to six months, and then weaken the LTTE in the north.

He estimates the LTTE strength to be 300 fighters in the east positioned in Thoppigala region.

"It [LTTE in the east] can be flushed out of this area in a couple of weeks and then the mopping up operations would have to be carried out to completely clear the area, and that may take five to six months," he said.

He claimed that there were only 4,000 LTTE fighters in Vanni and further said: "but they are not its best cadres, if they lose 2,000 cadres, they are finished."

However responding to a question if SLA plans a repeat of Operation Jayasikuru, the disastrous 18 month long attempt in 1997-9 to capture Vanni, he responded in the negative.

Paradoxically he argued: "there is no point in entering areas under LTTE's control before it is weakened militarily."

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## NEWS

# Factional war grips Karuna Group

**Killings, abductions and hostage-taking soars as paramilitary group's internal power struggle turns bloody.**

SINCE simmering tensions within the Karuna Group, the main Army-backed paramilitary group in Sri Lanka's east, erupted into factional clashes in early May, a series of tit-for-tat killings, abductions and hostage taking is continuing.

Meanwhile several cadres and prominent members of the group have fled abroad to escape the violence, reports said.

The Karuna Group is named after its leader, Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan ('Karuna'), the renegade Tamil Tiger commander who deserted to the Sri Lanka military after his six week rebellion against the LTTE was crushed in April 2004.

Since then the Karuna Group is being supported by the military in a murderous shadow war against the LTTE and its supporters.

Two months ago it was reported that Karuna has fallen out with Pillayan, the deputy leader of the Karuna Group, officially titled the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), in a dispute over funds and control of the group.

Pillayan has accused Karuna of misappropriating funds from the group. The TMVP is reportedly earning vast sums from extortion and kidnapping for ransom of Tamil and Muslim businessmen in Colombo and Tamil expatriates visiting Sri Lanka.

The internal dispute escalated into an internecine war several weeks ago when Karuna ordered his loyalists to hunt down and kill Pillayan and his supporters, Tamil press reports said.

According to the reports, a meeting arranged by Sri Lanka's military for the two factions to patch up their differences resulted in a vicious shootout.

Iniyabarathy, a Karuna loyalist, shot two of his former comrades now in Pillayan's faction - Sindujan, the Intelligence wing leader of the Karuna Group and Seelan who had led the cadres in Amparai district. Sindujan died on the spot whilst Seelan escaped with injuries.

Pillayan, described as the 'supreme' commander of the Karuna Group was reportedly also coordinating its activities in the field on behalf of Karuna, who remains in hiding from the LTTE in Colombo.

According to the Daily Mirror newspaper, Pillayan is the strategist behind most of the operations carried out against the LTTE in the east while Karuna was focused on building a political platform to contest at future elections.



**Karuna (c) has fallen out with his deputy Pillayan (l) over control of the paramilitary group's finances and command. Photo TamilNet**

Following the outbreak of violence with the group Pillayan fled north with over 150 cadres loyal to him. He was helped by Sri Lankan military intelligence.

Indeed, some analysts argue that the split was engineered by the Sri Lankan military itself to make the management of the paramilitary group easier and to curb any political ambitions Karuna may have had.

As ordered by the military, Pillayan and his gunmen are now operating in Trincomalee district while rump of the Karuna Group continues to operate in Batticaloa and Amparai.

According to Pillayan loyalists, several military and political leaders of the Karuna Group, along with some 350 cadres had offered allegiance to Pillayan and joined him in Trincomalee.

"We will continue to fight against the [LTTE] but we will definitely not patch up with Karuna Amman," told a Pillayan spokesman to the Daily Mirror in mid May.

However within a week of this statement coming out, Karuna Group spokesperson Azad Moulana announced following lengthy discussions at a face-to-face meeting Karuna and Pillayan had resolved their differences.

"It is true there were differences between the two. I'm happy to say it has been sorted and we will function as usual," Moulana told the Daily Mirror in late May.

According to Moulana, it was

agreed in the meeting that Karuna and Pillayan would continue functioning in their previous roles as the leader of the group and supreme commander respectively.

But this announcement by the Karuna spokesperson was promptly refuted by a spokesperson from Pillayan faction who told the Daily Mirror that a central committee consisting of senior TMVP officials were to be formed to be the decision making body of the organization.

"It will be the central committee which will ultimately decide on financial issues and military action to be taken against the LTTE," the Pillayan representative added.

Amid the factions' conflicting claims a number of clashes between them have left many dead and injured. Many members of both factions also fled the eastern districts fearing reprisal from the other side.

Last week Daily Mirror, which has tracked the factional war between Karuna and Pillayan reported the latter had issued a final warning to the former giving him one month to leave the outfit or be forcefully ejected from it.

According to Pillayan loyalists the warning came after a failure to resolve the dispute and continuing misuse of TMVP funds by Karuna.

The Pillayan group further charged that Karuna was holding some of their cadres and supporters under house arrest.

In the meantime Karuna telephoned the Daily Mirror to deny there was a split.

"Some elements are attempting to divide the TMVP by making all these claims mentioned in your [paper]," Karuna said.

"There is no problem between me and Pillayan now. Everything is sorted but some people are trying to get involved in the internal matters of the TMVP to scuttle things," he said.

But Karuna also told Daily Mirror that the position of 'supreme commander' was not necessary as the TMVP was aiming to be a political party without a military unit and cited the TMVP proposal to the APRC as indication of the direction the party was going in.

But yet again Karuna's claims of patching up with Pillayan were rejected by the latter's response.

"Pillayan wants me to tell you there is a problem and within the space of one month he himself will come out with a public statement about his split with Karuna," a spokesman for the Pillayan group told the Daily Mirror.

"If Karuna could go ahead and remove his deputy and replace him with someone else it shows there is a problem."

The Pillayan spokesman meanwhile said they stood ready to work with Karuna if he admitted the mistakes including the alleged killing of Pillayan loyalists and the detention of several

others as a result of the split.

"But we will not wait too long," the Pillayan faction warned.

However in the last week the factional fighting has intensified with both factions attacking each other and Karuna cadre harassing and holding hostage supporters and relatives of Pillayan loyalists.

An ambush by Karuna group on Pillayan group in Polanaruwa left eight dead.

As a response to this attack a pair of three wheelers carrying Karuna cadres were attacked in Pottuvil in Amparai district leaving six dead.

According to Sri Lankan media reports, Karuna's faction is holding more than 75 Pillayan cadre in camps under extremely deplorable conditions in Ampara and Batticaloa who were on their way to Trincomalee to join Pillayan.

"Karuna's cadres have also taken hostage some 30 females, who are mothers or wives of pro-Pillayan cadres who have left Karuna and are now with Pillayan in Trincomalee," the sources told the Nation.

According to Sri Lankan papers many relatives of Pillayan loyalists including the wife and child of Seelan, the injured in the shoot out in early May are currently kept hostage in three camps located at Govindan Road in Batticaloa, Akkaraipattu and Vakara.

## EDITORIAL &amp; OPINION

## TAMIL GUARDIAN

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WEDNESDAY JUNE 06, 2007 No. 350

## On Our Own

## How is Sri Lanka's violence against Tamils to be stopped?

Despite the intense internationalization of Sri Lanka's conflict in the past few years, the ongoing deterioration of the human rights situation in the island seems inexorable. For decades international human rights organizations have lamented the culture of impunity that has allowed disappearances, extra-judicial killings, torture and sometimes rape to become a matter of routine in the island state. But the massive international intervention that accompanied the Norwegian peace initiative since 2001 promised implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, that such abuse was in Sri Lanka's sordid past. However the past 18 months have amply demonstrated that human rights is a meaningless concept in this bloody island. Instead it is defence of the Dharma that remains the Sinhala state's raison d'etre.

Some argue that today sovereignty is not a state's absolute right, but conditional on its responsibility. It is international pressure - either moral or tangible in the form of sanctions - that is the guarantee of a state's respect of human rights. This implies a responsibility on the international community to ensure abusive states are held to account. But leading members of the international community involved in Sri Lanka are doing precisely the opposite: funding, arming, advising and supporting the Rajapakse regime's brutality. The logic of the 'war on terror' is being prioritized over protection of international humanitarian and human rights norms. In other words, in the interests of destroying the Liberation Tigers, anything goes.

Of course each international actor vehemently rejects it is condoning or encouraging the Rajapakse administration's violence. The Western states seek cover behind the logic of sovereignty and blame the 'unlikeminded' states for the supposed impossibility of restraining Sri Lanka by sanctions. In the meantime, countries like US and UK use the opportunity provided by renewed high-intensity conflict in Sri Lanka to sell arms.

This week two ICRC workers were murdered. The killers picked the victims up from the middle of Colombo city and dumped their bodies elsewhere. At the same time, in the interests of 'national security' Tamil neighbourhoods and houses in the sealed capital are being turned over by the security forces. The Police Chief has ordered Tamils who 'have no reason' to be in Colombo to get back to the Northeast or Upcountry areas. Bodies

are dumped daily by roads and villages across the government - controlled areas of the Northeast and in parts of the South. The international community is not only aware of all this, they have a grandstand seat from which to view the bloodletting.

This contradiction has important lessons for the Tamil people. Since 2001, the panacea for Sri Lanka's ills has been 'federalism.' There is, of course, no body for this shell concept. But we are told that we will not be 'allowed' to have an independent state, so we'd better settle for something short. The Sinhalese are told they have to 'share power' but are to be assured the Tamils will be contained. We have 'grievances' and 'aspirations' the Sinhalese are told. But the core problem - the Sinhala dominated state is brutalizing and scattering our people, dismembering and colonizing our homeland and erasing our community's cohesiveness - is reduced to one of 'unresolved conflict.'

The question now for the Tamils is a simple one: what is the guarantee of our security in the future? If the international community is refusing to make the slightest effort to restrain the Sri Lanka state today, when vicious violence against Tamils is no longer even disguised, then on what basis are we to expect it to do so in future? The present Sri Lankan state is frail and utterly dependent on foreign aid for its very functioning. Yet we are expected to believe that a Sri Lankan state reinvigorated by the kind of international aid that a peace process alone will bring will be more likely to be responsive to international counsel. That is the basis on which we are to accept a federal solution - i.e. accept the disarming of the LTTE.

In short, the Rajapakse administration and the international community are together providing the strongest reason - beyond the question of the right to self-determination - as to why Tamils cannot live safely in a Sinhala-dominated Sri Lanka. There will always be vicious rulers like Rajapakse (and the President's steadily rising popularity amongst the Sinhalese is a solid indicator of the state of ethnic relations today). And international interests will always favour the state over the Tamils. The case for international intervention to restrain the Sri Lankan state cannot be made more clearly than by today's developments. Therefore, the question now is: in the face of international indifference, what options are the beleaguered Tamils left with?

# Can Sri Lanka wage war without US support?

Gajan Raj  
Tamil Guardian

IN early May the Asia Foundation published a report reviewing the United States' role in Sri Lanka's peace process from 2002-2006. It was written by Jeffrey Lunstead, who served as the US Ambassador to Sri Lanka from August 2003 to July 2006.

In this retrospective analysis, Lunstead, senior State Department official, now retired outlines what he considers the reasons for US involvement in the Norwegian peace process. He also looks at the relationships the US has with the parties to conflict and other countries involved in the peace process.

According to Lunstead, the degree of US involvement in the peace process was disproportionate as the US has little strategic or economic interests in the island.

Contradicting common wisdom, Lunstead dismisses Trincomalee harbour as a strategic location the US would be interested in. He cites the security threat from the LTTE, a lack of facilities and infrastructure and the harbours distance to major sea lanes as drawbacks. He also points out to the negative effect any US interest in Trincomalee would have on America's growing strategic relationship with India.

US trade with Sri Lanka at a relatively insignificant US\$ 2.3 billion per year, US economic interests in Sri Lanka is also limited, he says.

The reasons the US enhanced its engagement in Sri Lanka in 2001, according to Lunstead were the Bush administration's global war on terror, the pro-West and pro-free market policies of the newly elected Ranil Wickramasighe government and the personal interest of then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage.

Whilst the first two elements were considered to be enabling factors the personal interest of Armitage was considered to be the driving factor.

Lunstead says Armitage's personal interest stemmed from a belief that Sri Lanka's conflict could be resolved by peaceful political means assisted by the international community.

Essentially the US, he says, saw Sri Lanka as a testbed for a new approach to resolving long-drawn internal conflicts which, if successful, could be applied to other trouble spots around the world.

Lunstead feels the US adopted a nuanced policy in the Norwegian peace process: US offered the possibility of change in the US attitude towards the LTTE if the organisation changed its behaviour and renounced terrorism in 'word and deed' whilst encouraging the Government of Sri Lanka to develop a political strategy which included substantial devolution of power to address legitimate Tamil grievances.

Further more, differing from the other Co-Chairs (European Union, Japan and Norway) and taking a hardline position against the LTTE, the US sent a message to LTTE that a return to war would not be acceptable.

This, the US underpinned by strengthening the military capability of Sri Lankan state. However, according to the ambassador, the US also tried to make it clear to the government that the US military support was not an encouragement to seek a military solution.

With hindsight he raises number of questions on the consequence of US approach.

- Did the hard-line US approach to the LTTE have a positive effect, motivating the LTTE toward better behavior in the hope of gaining legitimacy?

- Did it convince the LTTE that it would never be accepted as an equal partner in the peace process?

- Did the LTTE understand the US message that removal of the terrorist designation was possible if LTTE behavior changed?

- Would direct US contact with the LTTE have made that position more clear?

- Did the supportive US military relationship with the Government of Sri Lanka have a positive effect by showing the LTTE that a return to armed conflict would be more costly?

- What effect did it have on the Government of Sri Lanka?

If Sri Lanka's peace process was to be a testbed, the bloody

## EDITORIAL &amp; OPINION



A US soldier prearing for training at the Sri Lankan military airbase at Katunayake. Photo US Army

violence into which Sri Lanka has now descended suggests it was a lesson in how not to do things.

To begin with, the Norwegian peace process was built on delicate military parity between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces. If the LTTE was to secure a power-sharing arrangement for the Tamils from the Sri Lankan state, it was paramount it was treated as a legitimate, equal partner during the peace process.

That was why the LTTE insisted Sri Lanka lift its ban on the LTTE before talks.

The US disrupted this parity by rapidly arming the Sri Lankan state during the peace process and also by removing the 'equal negotiating partner' status of the LTTE by isolating the organisation through hardline 'anti-terrorism' driven policies and actions.

In late 2001, when the LTTE entered the peace process, the organisation took a leap of faith and threw itself into an effort to building international legitimacy.

It attempted to engage with number of international organisations, including the United Nations agencies, to ensure its practices were brought inline with international norms. It also set out programs of change in areas deemed problematic.

Significantly, it stated explicitly it would be prepared to compromise on the demand for independence by agreeing to explore a federal solution.

It should be noted that the Sri Lankan government made the same pledge. Yet its preparedness to abandon a unitary Sinhala-dominated state was readily accepted. As President Mahinda Rajapakse is now demonstrating, this was never going to happen.

The LTTE during the peace process period behaved in a manner that should have encouraged the US-led international commu-

nity. But instead of rewarding the LTTE's tentative steps, the US simply stepped up efforts to isolate and weaken it.

By not inviting the LTTE to the Washington Development Conference in April 2003 US deliberately humiliated the LTTE (and the Tamils it was supposed to be negotiating on behalf of).

The US-led international community made it clear that the LTTE will never be treated as an equal partner in the process.

It should be noted that at the time of the US snub, the LTTE was engaged in a massive effort to win international acceptance. It had, for over a year, observed ceasefire, avoided belligerence and was eagerly exploring several forms of engagement with international actors.

As there were legal restrictions in LTTE members travelling to the US, would it have been difficult to host the conference in a venue that was acceptable to all for the sake of peace? At the time of the conference, was the LTTE showing any form intransigence for US to take a step that would be seen as hostile and detrimental to the spirit of peace building? Not really.

In the context of the present bloodshed and destruction, what would the cost of relocating that meeting have been?

If, as Lunstead argues, the LTTE used the non-invitation to the Washington Development Conference as an excuse to not attend Tokyo donor conference then US, though crass ignorance of the fundamentals of the conflict, paved the way.

In effect, for the Tamils, the US actions were simply an extension of the Sri Lankan state's second-class treatment of the Tamils since independence.

Fast forward two years to the time after the December 2004 tsunami.

Despite the Northeast having borne the brunt of the tidal wave, the international community was more inclined to not give the region its aid than accept having to direct rehabilitation funds through the LTTE.

Having withheld the desperately needed funds for months, no sooner had the LTTE signed the P-TOMS (Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure) aid sharing mechanism with the Sri Lankan state (which grudgingly agreed to sign after intense EU pressure), the US immediately snubbed the Tamils again, by refusing to send any funds through it.

The US's public dismissal of the P-TOMS effectively destroyed its credibility and undoubtedly encouraged the state not to aggressively oppose the Sinhala-ultra nationalist JVP's (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) challenge to the agreement.

Then in early 2006, amid what international truce monitors called a 'cycle of violence' or a 'shadow war' - in other words a cycle of tit-for-tat attacks - the US publicly called for the EU to punish the LTTE by banning it.

At a time when the Sri Lankan state was openly defying international calls to honour its obligations under the truce agreement to reign in the Army-backed paramilitary groups, the EU ban sent a clear signal to the LTTE and the Tamils.

Surprisingly, Lunstead wonders if the LTTE understood the message the US was sending.

Whilst he may argue that the US had a nuanced policy which offered clear incentives to the LTTE for 'good behaviour', it is clear no positive signal was sent and, in contrast, a series of humiliating and marginalizing messages were broadcast.

In word and deed, the US spurned LTTE efforts to engage

with international demands.

Equally important, the US failed to restrain the Sri Lankan state's belligerence and instead tolerated and encouraged it.

Whilst making the odd statement that there was 'no military solution to conflict', the US provided increased military and financial assistance to the state even when Colombo was stepping up military violence in breach of the ceasefire agreement.

The past eighteen months have made the US's lack of commitment to a negotiated solution absolutely clear.

In this time, the Sri Lankan state has unleashed a fully fledged war in the Northeast, dismantled previous peace agreements (including the Indo - Sri Lanka Accord) and closed the space for peace actors to work.

The Sri Lankan state has unleashed a military campaign that deliberately targets civilians, killing hundreds and displacing over 250,000 people.

Yet the US has not only failed to pressure the Sri Lankan state to stop, it has also worked to undermine the efforts of other international actors (such as some European countries) to do so.

Analysts are agreed that the US has given a 'green light' for Sri Lanka's violence against the Tamils - in stark contrast to Lunstead's assertion that the US never encouraged a return to war.

On the issue of direct contact between US officials and the LTTE, restrictions stemming from the FTO designation only apply to US territory. British officials, for example, regularly meet with the LTTE, despite the UK ban.

But US refusal to meet with the LTTE is a minor issue. What is more important is the US's pursuit of the LTTE's marginali-

sation, isolation and destruction in the midst of a fragile peace process.

Despite Sri Lankan state's historical record of discrimination, racism and violence against the Tamils, the US chose to give Colombo every advantage against the LTTE.

The rationale that Sri Lanka is a state is not tenable. Consider the ongoing case of Kosovo, or in Bosnia before that. Consider developments in Darfur.

Without any effort to understand the long and complex history of ethnic politics in Sri Lanka, the US has sought to impose an inflexible and simplistic ideology on Sri Lanka.

The lack of nuance in US policy was amply demonstrated in comments by US Under Secretary Nicholas Burns in November 2006:

"I'd just say on behalf of the United States that we have faith in the government and faith in the president of Sri Lanka. They do want to make peace. We also believe that the Tamil Tigers, the LTTE, is a terrorist group responsible for massive bloodshed in the country and we hold the Tamil Tigers responsible for much of what has gone wrong in the country. We are not neutral in this respect. We support the government. We have a good relationship with the government. We believe the government has a right to try to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country. The government has a right to protect the stability and security in the country. We meet often with the government at the highest levels and consider the government to be a friend to our country."

It is encouraging that a former US diplomat is prepared to question of the US's conduct and even accept that perhaps things could have been done differently. But the fact that the realisation has not led to any change in US policy points to yet another shortcoming of the Washington's inflexible approach to complex conflict.

So, with hindsight, the US role in the Norwegian peace process appears less an effort to resolve the conflict than one to help Sri Lanka achieve what was proving very difficult to achieve on the battlefield: the destruction of the LTTE and the imposition of Sinhala hegemony on the Tamils.

The Sri Lankan state is today, with active US support, unleashing a war that relies on Tamil civilian suffering to break LTTE resistance. The US, according to Burns, believes the government has "a right to try to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country."

But could not the same argument have applied to Saddam Hussein's efforts annihilate Kurdish civilians in a bid to break their will to fight for an independent state?

It must be recalled how Saddam and Iraq continued to enjoy strong US support even as that genocidal war was unleashed against the Kurds.

The parallels to today's Sri Lanka are striking.



# Sri Lanka signs new arms deals

IAN S

UNMINDFUL of India's opposition to Sri Lanka turning to Pakistan and China for military hardware to bolster its offensive against the Tamil Tigers, Colombo has recently inked several significant defence agreements with Beijing.

Citing exclusive access to an internal Sri Lankan cabinet document, Britain's renowned Jane's Defence Weekly reported that Sri Lanka had signed a classified \$37.6 million deal with China's Poly Technologies in April to supply its defence forces with ammunition and ordnance for the army and navy in addition to varied small arms.

Gotabaya Rajapakse, the Sri Lankan defence secretary and a brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse, told Indian authorities May 30 that 'security compulsions' were driving Colombo to seek military equipment from China, Pakistan and other suppliers.

He is also believed to have informed India's security establishment that Colombo 'understood' New Delhi's internal political compulsions, foreclosing enhanced military co-operation between the neighbours.

The Sri Lankan official was reportedly making a direct reference to Tamil Nadu, which is separated from Sri Lanka by a strip of sea and where there is considerable support for the Tamil guerrillas.

Senior security officials concede that a bilateral defence agreement between Colombo and New Delhi drawn up over two years ago remains 'hostage' to India's Tamil concerns. This, in turn, forces Colombo to seek alternate weapon suppliers.

Jane's current edition says that Colombo has declined to renew its long standing agreement with China's North Industries Corporation (Norinco) for defence equipment, opting instead for Poly Technologies, founded as a rival in 1984 by Beijing's military establishment.

While outwardly a subsidiary of the China International Trust and Investment Corp, military analysts said that in reality the Beijing-based Poly Technologies was a 'front company' for China's military-industrial complex.

It reports to the armament department of the People's

Liberation Army General Staff Department and is authorized to sell conventional military equipment including short and medium-range ballistic missiles.

While the reasons for the Sri Lankan government switching to Poly Technologies appear unclear, it seems the change was prompted by the debt of \$200 million it owed Norinco, which has maintained a bonded warehouse in the southern port city of Galle since 1993.

Colombo's long-standing agreement with Norinco was exclusive, prohibiting it from sourcing specific military items from any another Chinese supplier.

The contract with Poly Technologies, however, contravenes this clause, seemingly invalidating the earlier agreement providing the Sri Lankan military an alternate materiel supplier, Jane's states.

The agreement with Poly Technologies, however, 'aims to avoid the development of any debt through a system of staggered payments', Jane's says, necessitating an advance 25 per cent payment and the balance payable in 10 quarterly installments.

The largest single order with Poly Technologies is for 120 mm mortar shells for the army, of which 70,000 rounds are priced at \$10.4 million.

Additional imports include 68,000 rounds of varied 152 mm artillery shell worth nearly \$20 million besides 50,000 81 mm high-explosive mortar bombs for \$3.7 million, all of which the army needs to reinforce its 'proactive' military strategy against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Jane's declared that the China National Electronics Import Export Corp is to provide Sri Lanka a JY 11 3D radar for \$5 million over the next few weeks once the site for its location near Colombo is ready.

It was Gotabaya Rajapakse, the defence secretary who concluded the contract for the radar for the Lanka Logistics and Technologies Co Ltd that he heads.

Colombo had initially ordered the JY 11 radar two years ago, making payments in advance but was forced to call off the deal following Indian protests that the system would 'over arch' into its



(Clockwise from top) Sri Lanka's Defence Secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse, pictured at a military ceremony, is routing a major radar deal with China through his own company. In the coming months, as it prepares to fight the LTTE, Sri Lanka's military plans to buy at least five Mig 29 fighter jets from Russia; along with new Mi-24 gunships; and vast quantities of ammunition, including rockets for its multi-barrel launchers.

defence capability following four recent strikes by the fledgling Tamil Tiger air force that has resulted in international airlines declining to operate night flights to Colombo.

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air space.

Thereafter, India supplied Sri Lanka two Indra IN-PC-2D radars free of charge and is believed to have agreed to Colombo's request for at least one more following the spate of LTTE air raids.

The Indra radars have become a source of tension with India, with some Sri Lankan officials claiming they failed to detect the ingress by a Tamil Tiger propeller aircraft to an air force base outside Colombo in March. Three airmen were killed and 16 wounded in the attack.

Sri Lanka is also negotiating with the Chinese conglomerate for three additional mobile radars for use across the country as the second Tiger air strike was conducted against the government's Palaly military base in Jaffna peninsula.

In an associated development, Sri Lanka is also planning on acquiring an unspecified number of MiG 29 fighters to boost its air power.

The director of Aeronautical Engineering, Air Vice Marshal Prashantha de Silva, is scheduled to visit Moscow to discuss the acquisition, states Jane's.

Indian defence sources said New Delhi, which also operates at least three MiG 29 squadrons, could play an 'important' role in Sri Lanka's proposed purchase of similar fighters by agreeing to provide training, spares, servicing and other logistic back-up. Sri Lankan officials are also planning visiting Ulan Ude in Russia to negotiate the purchase of four helicopter gunships and to Ukraine for talks on overhauling and possibly upgrading An 32 transport aircraft.



# India to develop KKS harbour, mulls patrols

INDIA is to develop the KKS harbour in the Jaffna peninsula and boost Colombo's air defences, reports quoting ministers from both states said this week.

India will explore helping Sri Lanka patrol the seas between the countries, the reports said.

The Indian Government is to resume expansion of the Kankesanthurai harbour in the Jaffna peninsula following the Sri Lankan government informing Delhi that the security situation in the area had "improved considerably," press reports said Monday.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama told the Indian government that the development of the harbour to its full

potential will facilitate the transport of supplies to the Jaffna Peninsula, including directly from India.

Sri Lanka's military has at least three divisions (some 40,000 troops) on the northern peninsula which is cut off from the rest of the island by a swathe of territory controlled by the Tamil Tigers.

The Sri Lankan garrison in Jaffna is entirely reliant on precarious sea and air supply lines.

The expansion of KKS harbour and the prospects of resupply from India would greatly assist the Sri Lankan military to sustain its military operations against LTTE held areas in the south of the peninsula.

But while Sri Lanka announced 'coordinate naval patrolling' with India's navy was to take place, India's Defence Minister A.K. Anthony said India was "examining the idea."

Last week Indian National Security Advisor M K Narayanan ruled out a unified command for the Lankan Navy and the Indian Coast guard, but indicated that the Indian government was willing to look at proposals for 'coordinated patrolling.'

Mr. Bogollagama and Indian Defence Minister A.K. Anthony held discussions on the sidelines of the 6th Annual IISS Asian Security Summit in Singapore.

India had said it would continue

# India opposes Sri Lanka buying arms from China and Pakistan

SRI LANKA should not seek weapons from Pakistan or China and it should come to India whatever might be their requirement, National Security Advisor M K Narayanan was quoted by India media as saying last week.

"It is high time that Sri Lanka understood that India is the big power in the region and ought to refrain from going to Pakistan or China for weapons, as we are prepared to accommodate them within the framework of our foreign policy," Narayanan said.

"But it should be clear to Colombo that we cannot supply completely offensive military equipment," he was quoted by IANS as saying.

"We are, however, willing to look at other options like better radars and tracking ordnance to (meet) the Sri Lankan government's defence needs in the light of repeated air attacks by the LTTE."

To reporters' query on opposition from political leaders in Tamil Nadu for providing radars to Sri Lankan government, Narayan said, "Radars are seen as a defensive capability. Hence, we have provided the Sri Lankan government with them."

Reacting to a question whether he saw air capabilities of LTTE as a threat to India's security, he said, "We are not in favour of any terrorist organisation having air capabilities."

Separately, in Singapore, India's Defence Minister, A.K. Anthony confirmed the sale of radars to Sri Lanka.

"rise of the LTTE air power in Sri Lanka is of concern to India," Mr. Anthony said that India "will give Sri Lanka reasonable support

for that."

At the same time, he expressed India's preference for a "political solution" in Sri Lanka, reports said.

Mr. Narayanan was speaking to media after meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi in Chennai, Thursday.

On coordinated patrolling along the Tamil Nadu coast to protect fishermen, he said, "I will check with the navy if there is a problem for functioning under a unified command. I think it is a good idea."

Talking about his meeting with Karunanidhi, Narayanan said: "We discussed the security scenario and the problems faced by the Tamil Nadu fishermen."

"The chief minister was apprised of the centre's view of strengthening the defence of our coastline in the south with special emphasis on the Tuticorin port and its hinterland," he added.

When asked whether the fishermen should be instructed not to cross the international boundary line between Sri Lanka and India, he said, "Fishermen will go wherever there are fishes. To prevent them from crossing the boundary line is asking for too much."

"For something as minor as that, the Lankan Navy firing on our fishermen will no longer be tolerated. I have conveyed this personally on telephone to senior officials in Colombo," Mr. Narayanan disclosed.

"Fishermen are going there for their livelihood. We have told the Sri Lankan navy not to fire at them and they have assured us that there will be no firing. By and large they are adhering to this."



## NEWS

# Colombo lodges told to throw Tamil residents out

TAMILS in Colombo "without a valid reason" for being there are being sent back to their villages, Sri Lanka's police chief said last Friday.

Hundreds of Tamils, many from poor rural areas, live in boarding houses in Colombo while they work, search for jobs or seek employment abroad.

Many Tamils in Colombo complain they are being deliberately targeted by the security forces, detained and searched as the military conflict with the LTTE heats up.

"Because there is no a special label to identify an LTTE terrorist and a civilian, we took the decision to send them back to their villages after they finished their work here in Colombo," Inspector General of Police Victor Perera told a news conference.

"Some people who have arrived in Colombo do not have a valid reason to stay," he added.

"Anybody can come to Colombo, there is no restriction. But they can't stay loitering in Colombo. We have decided to provide transport facilities for them to go back to their own villages."

The police instructed the owners of 68 lodges in Pettah to expel Tamil tenants to their 'native places' within 24 hours, warning that the military would step in to force the evacuation if they failed to comply.

Chief Inspector Jayaratne summoned the lodge owners last Thursday on short notice to convey the warning.

Individuals in Colombo for medical treatment, individuals waiting to go abroad for education or employment, families in the capital to meet with family members visiting from abroad and those with military clearance are among more than 5000 Tamils instructed to leave, according to lodge owners in Pettah.

"Even those who were scheduled to leave Colombo to India on Sunday were not allowed to stay in the lodges after Friday," a lodge owner told TamilNet.

"Are you from North, go back to Vavuniya. Are you from Hattton, go back to Hattton," Inspector Jayaratne told the lodge owners, stating he had clear instructions from 'higher authorities'.

The restriction on Tamils rang alarm bells.

"If a democratic society takes this course of action, it is unacceptable because it is clearly a serious violation of their human rights," said Jehan Perera of the

National Peace Council. "This is a very harsh decision."

"This is the first time such a thing has been spoken about officially, so it suggests the conflict is deteriorating," he added. "This is a new low."

While Tamil political parties expressed their objections, police Saturday moved in to check the identity of inmates living in lodges before deciding whether they would be allowed to remain in Colombo or face immediate eviction to their villages, The Sunday Leader reported.

Police said that lodge occupants with no proper identity would be ordered to move. Tamils in possession of regular identity cards living in lodges and in rented houses in Colombo say they live in fear that they may be arrested anytime if the police feel suspicious.

Muttiah Pillai, a lodge owner in Pettah said "There are families and individuals coming from the north-east areas and from the hill country. Some come for medical treatment, some for studies, while others come to obtain visas and a few to earn little money... We can't believe why they are doing this to all Tamils, he said.

Though his hometown is in Jaffna, Mr. Pillai has lived in Colombo since 1966.

According to him, police claimed there were 250 suspected LTTE cadres in Colombo and it was difficult to find them because of the numbers of Tamils living in the lodges of Colombo.

S.B. Yoganathan, another lodge-owner in Pettah, said that people coming to Colombo from the north and east had to get the clearance from the Army. A copy of this clearance note was needed to stay in the lodges he said.

"There are many Tamil youth desperately wanting to go abroad but haven't any financial support. They are unable to find jobs either in Colombo or in their hometowns. Due to this some of them come with agreements with unregistered agencies and have no proof that they are hoping to go abroad. Ultimately these youngsters end up in jail as suspects" he said.

S. Sridhar, a lodge owner in Pettah said that most of the families stay in Colombo for long periods, as they were either too afraid to go back to their home towns, or faced delays in obtaining passports and at times when either breadwinner of the family



A Tamil woman pleaded with President Mahinda Rajapakse (not in photo) to find her loved one when the President met last Saturday with over 100 relatives of people who had gone missing in recent months to discuss their plight. Extra judicial killings and abductions continued on the island, amid allegations of involvement by government forces and policemen. Photo STRDEL/AFP/Getty Images

## Terror of abductions grips businesspeople

Sunday Times

TWO weeks ago, a group of businessmen received a fax messages purportedly from a foreign company, saying one of its representatives was due in Sri Lanka to talk business.

The fax message to the businessmen said they had been recognized as leading figures in the trade and that the visiting representative would meet them.

The businessmen were naturally impressed and eagerly awaited the visit.

They were given a contact mobile number and told to seek an appointment.

Accordingly, some of the businessmen had responded and sought an appointment.

They were told the foreign representative would be staying at a hotel in Dambulla because of the security situation in Colombo.

The scenario became a little suspicious when two businessmen who sought appointments and went to Dambulla were turned away - one because he was accompanied by his wife and the other because he had sent his secretary and manager instead of himself.

Undeterred by this, apparently because the prospects were so attractive, another businessman went to Dambulla and was thrilled when he got an appointment.

The businessman was met in

the lobby of the hotel by a person who claimed to be the local agent of the foreign representative.

He said they could proceed in the businessman's jeep to meet the representative, apparently in another hotel.

A gang armed with T56 automatic rifles stopped the jeep and forced the businessman and the so-called local agent to get into a van and the chill ran down the businessman's spine when he realized that it was one of those notorious white vans.

A Sunday Times investigation revealed that the businessman was forced to put his head on his lap and driven to a secret place where his abductors demanded a staggering Rs. 50 million for his release.

It turned out to be three days of horror with the businessman first pleading he could not raise such a huge amount, but the torture increased till the abductors finally settled for about half that amount.

This came after the businessman was allowed to give telephone calls to his family and partners to raise the money.

Arrangements were made for the cash to be brought in a briefcase and left at a lonely place where some members of the gang would pick it up.

The businessman was then released somewhere in the Kandy district and told where he could find his jeep.

According to investigations, other possible victims who received the same fax message escaped because they had suspicions about the manner in which the appointments were worked out in Dambulla.

The victim and the would-be victims are, however, afraid and unwilling to even make a complaint to the police because of possible reprisals.

They are even afraid to speak to the media but only tell their horror story to family members and close friends.

Our investigations also reveal that the fax message was sent to businessmen who were known to be doing well in the trade and thus quite wealthy.

Apparently the aim of the gang was to get a big ransom and questions are now being raised as to how and from where the gang got the information about the assets and the profits of the businessmen in this trade.

One possible source is a state agency.

The ransom demands to this group of businessmen are part of a countrywide crisis involving abductions, ransom demands and even killings.

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Continued on page 15

## NEWS

# Violence/ week ending 3 June

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since 28 May

## 3 June

● The LTTE destroyed a SLA artillery launch pad and seized military hardware, including a Buffel Armoured Personnel Carrier, as they attacked the SLA FDL along the Mannar-Vavuniya border (see separate story).

● The LTTE counter-ambushed a SLA DPU inside their territory in Palamodai on the Vavuniya Mannar border. The DPU unit suffered casualties and withdrew leaving behind a dead body, four claymore mines and a T-56 rifle.

● The SLA and police conducted search operations covering Grandpass, Fort and Maradana areas in Colombo city, Western Deputy Inspector General of Police Rohan Abeyawardene said. Private houses where persons from north and east provinces and upcountry are staying were subjected to careful search.

● The bodies of two Tamil Red Cross workers from Batticaloa, who had gone to Colombo for training and were abducted Friday by men claiming to be Sri Lanka Police, were found in Ratnapura (see separate story).

● The SLA fired artillery from the bases in Palali, Vadamaradchi and Thenmaradchi into LTTE controlled territory. Several populated civilian areas shook due to the heavy fire.

● Fishermen from Valvettithurai to Point Pedro along the northern coastal areas of Jaffna Peninsula were barred by the SLA from going out fishing. Fishermen who set out to fish in the morning were asked to return home.

● Subramaniam Santheepan, 30, a postmaster and a father of two, was shot dead in Chavakachcheri, Jaffna, by armed men who followed him on a motorbike. Santheepan, from Mirusuvil North, was riding his motorbike with his wife and two children when he was shot.

## 2 June

● The SLA withdrew from a fresh ground operation towards Kudumpimalai (Thoppigala) when the LTTE put up stiff resistance amid two aerial bombardments by the SLAF, LTTE military spokesman Irasiah Ilanthirayan said. The SLA troopers were moving out of Mavadiyodai Bridge, on the route linking Badulla Road with Kudumpimalai jungle. Sri Lankan military officials in Colombo claimed that they had attacked two LTTE camps, but the Tigers said their positions were intact.

● The LTTE and SLA fought heavy artillery duels along the Thenmaradchi FDL in Muhamalai, but neither the SLA nor the

LTTE officially released information on casualties or injuries. However, reports said SLAF helicopters flew at least three trips transporting dead and injured soldiers to Palali military base. The intense artillery exchange occurred amidst wide speculation that a large scale war is about to break out along the northern FDL.

● Anti-aircraft guns were installed in police stations and major security detachments in Mannar, Talaimannar and Murunkan. Trained operators were also posted to the stations and detachments. Colombo instructed the police stations and security detachments to be on red alert against possible air strikes by the LTTE air wing.

● More than sixty Tamils were arrested during a search operation by the police in Mt Lavinia, Ratmalana, Wellawatte, Bambalapitiya, Mattakuliya, Kirilapone and Kohuwela areas of Colombo. SSP for Colombo Central region, Ajith Fonseka, said twelve special branch police groups participated in the search and most of the arrested were from the northeast and Hill country areas. Those who proved their identity and provided satisfactory reasons for their stay in the location were released after preliminary inquiry.

● Seven Tamil civilians were arrested in Uddapu, Chilaw, in SLA search operation.

● The police recovered bodies of four unidentified persons in the south of Sri Lanka. Two bodies were recovered at Wellawaya in Sabragamuwa, one body at Walakande in Matale, and the fourth at Madawachchi. The body recovered at Walakande was found with severe head and body injuries caused by very sharp instruments, while the other three bodies were found with gunshot injuries.

## 1 June

● The SLA and police arrested 12 Tamil civilians during a search operation in Wattala. The majority of the arrested are natives of the north east. Police said they were taken into custody when they failed to prove their identity by producing national identity cards and other legal documents.

● Attackers shot and killed a SLA soldier and a homeguard who were riding a motorbike in Thiruveigama, Kebitigollawa, which is south east of Vavuniya.

● An accidental bomb explosion killed three STF troopers in Thampaddai, Akkaraipattu, Amparai.

● Businesses and banks in Kaluvanchikudi, Batticaloa, shut down protesting against robberies at twelve business centres within three days. Armed men broke into the businesses and robbed jewels,



LTTE cadres at a mortar position they destroyed as they overran SLA bases in Vavuniya Photo LTTE

# LTTE destroys SLA artillery bases in heavy fighting

THE Liberation Tigers destroyed Sri Lanka Army bases last Sunday, leaving 82 combatants dead according to figures released by both sides.

The LTTE said they launched commando attacks along a broad front in Vavuniya and Mannar districts.

They captured armoured vehicles and heavy weapons after destroying long-range guns belonging to the military. They also said they destroyed seven gun positions.

The Tigers also released pictures of a Buffel Armoured Personnel Carrier and bases they captured. Heavy weapons such as medium machine guns, AK-LMGs, 40 mm grenade launchers and 60 mm mortars were among the

goods and money during three consecutive nights.

## 31 May

● DNA testing confirmed that a mutilated torso found in the Punkudutheevu sea on March 14, packed in a military sand bag, belonged to the disappeared Catholic priest Rev. Fr. Jim Brown. Earlier a medical legal officer confirmed that blood samples from Fr. Brown's parents and the torso had been sent to a Colombo hospital. Rev. Fr. Thiruchelvam Nihal Jim Brown, 34, parish priest of Allaippiddi and his aide Wenceslaus Vincent Vimalan, 38, disappeared on August 20, 2006, after being interrogated by SLA soldiers at Mandaitheevu checkpoint.

● The owners of lodges in Colombo were ordered to send Tamils staying at lodges back to their native places in the north and east (see separate story).

● A Tamil civilian from Vavuniya, arrested in Colombo on May

weapons seized by the Tigers.

The Tigers said they killed at least 30 Sri Lankan military personnel in a five-hour battle to capture several gun positions and military detachments. They also said they had recovered 16 bodies by last Sunday evening.

LTTE spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan also admitted that the organisation lost 18 cadres in the action.

Military sources in Vavuniya told TamilNet at least 20 SLA troopers were killed, 40 wounded, an ammunition dump destroyed in Pampaimadu, and that the Tigers seized a big haul of weapons in their raid.

The Defence Ministry said heavy fighting raged in the area, but claimed that the military had

beaten back a LTTE offensive by killing at least 52 Tiger cadres. Officials also admitted to 35 soldiers being injured.

Ilanthirayan said the LTTE had established a forward defence line in areas previously held by the military following the commando-style attack which began Saturday night.

"The LTTE troops are consolidating their positions in the recaptured area," Ilanthirayan said in a statement. He said a military artillery unit was also "completely destroyed."

Sporadic artillery exchanges continued in the areas of the Vavuniya district bordering LTTE territory. Residents and officials said they heard continuous heavy shelling from Saturday night.

24, was released after the prosecutors admitted there was no evidence against him. Kollupitiya police arrested Emmanuel Nesarajah, 39, a father of two and a carpenter, while he was walking along a road near the Presidential House. He told the police he had gone to Colombo in search of employment.

● Armed men lobbed hand grenades at SLA troopers and Karuna Group members jointly engaged in a cordon and search in Valaichenai, Batticaloa, injuring two troopers. The SLA troopers killed

a youth, identified as Mahendran Gajendran, 27, when they returned fire. The SLA claimed the youth was a LTTE member and that a T56 rifle was recovered from him.

● A combined SLA and police search operation in Battaramulla, Talangama, resulted in the arrest of twelve Tamil civilians who were taken into custody as they failed to provide satisfactory reason for their stay in the location.

● Six people were killed when

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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

# Violence - week ending 3 June

*Continued from page 11*

two three-wheelers transporting paramilitary Karuna Group personnel from Amparai to Poththuvil were ambushed at Inspector Eattam in Poththuvil. The attack took place in the wake of internal strife within the Karuna Group, and after 8 personnel of the break-away Pillayan Group reportedly went missing in Polonnaruwa, allegedly at the hands of Karuna cadres.

## 30 May

● Tiran Alles, publisher of the Sinhala weekly Mawbima, was arrested by the TID, taken into custody from a private hospital in Colombo. Mr. Alles had been Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority when Mangala Samaraweera was the Minister of Ports and Civil Aviation. Formerly a strong ally of President Mahinda Rajapakse, he became a political enemy following the dispute between the President and former Ministers Mangala Samaraweera and Sripathi Sooriyarachchi.

● An abandoned auto rickshaw with a suspicious parcel inside, found close to a Buddhist Shrine in the Fort area, Colombo, caused panic during the evening peak traffic time. SLA soldiers and policemen rushed to the site blocking traffic, but the bomb disposal squad discovered a number of bricks inside.

● Twenty Tamils were arrested in a cordon and search operation in Ratmalana and Mt. Lavinia areas of Colombo.

● The SLA and police arrested ten Tamil civilians in a cordon and search operation in Tissamaharagama, Matara. Police said they were taken into custody as they failed to prove their identity and the reason for their stay in the location.

● A civilian, identified as Balasubramaniam, was killed in Iyakkachchi, north of the Elephant Pass, as the SLA intensified artillery shelling, hitting the houses in the village.

● More than one thousand SLA troopers and police officers launched an intensive cordon and search operation in Jaffna, covering Koddadi and Navanthurai coastal areas.

● The LTTE said they confronted a contingent of SLA troopers who attempted to advance through the LTTE defence line in Madu. The SLA suffered casualties and fled the battleground carrying their own casualties, Rasiyah Ilanthirayan, the military spokesman of the Tigers told media representatives. Sri Lanka military spokesman Brigadier Samarasinghe, told the press in Colombo that five SLA troopers were killed in action in Madu. There were no LTTE casualties, according to the Tiger spokesman.

● Three SLAF bombers targeted a civilian area in Puthukkudiyirippu, Mullaitheevu, for a second

day, injuring a 7-year-old girl named Nilaxana.

● Uyilankulam checkpoint, gateway to LTTE controlled territory from Mannar, was reopened after a one-week closure, and a large number of civilians travelled across the divide soon after the opening. Farmers and fishermen transported their produce from LTTE held territory to Mannar town. The SLA said the Uyilankulam checkpoint will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only.

## 29 May

● The SLA and police conducted cordon and search operations in several parts of Colombo following a claymore attack the previous evening targeting a bus carrying STF personnel from Ratmalana in which eight were killed and 35 injured. Kotahena, Borella, Wellawatte, Bambalapitiya, Mount Lavinia, and Pettah areas were subjected to the search. Four suspects were taken to Ratmalana Police station for further interrogation.

● One person was killed and two injured when two SLAF fast attack crafts bombed Puthukudiyirippu in Mullaitheevu twice. Meyyaappillai Alaku, 56, a mother of three from Chinna Chalampan, Oddusudan, was killed and I. Irasiah, 50 and Neelakandan Jegatheeswari, 26, from Karainagar, Jaffna, were injured. The attack targeted a civilian area and resulted in damage to 12 houses, while children from a school 75 meters from the attack site narrowly escaped.

● The president of the Kalmunai Auto Drivers' Union was shot by gunmen on a motorcycle. Two men used a T56 rifle to kill Illayathamby Shanthakumar, 40, a father of two, at a shop close to his house in Kalmunai, Amparai. Shanthakumar had previously had acrimonious exchanges with Karuna Group members on union related issues, and locals speculate that this had a bearing on the killing. Athambawa Jabar, 38, who was nearby at the time of the shooting, sustained serious injuries.

● Brigadier Samarasinghe claimed that nine LTTE fighters were killed in a confrontation in Manal Aru (Weli Oya).

● Gunmen abducted Mylvaganam Vigneswaran, 20, and Kunesekaran, 32, both from Karupola village in Aaraiyampathi east, Kathankudi, Batticaloa. A Karuna Group office is near the Aaraiyampathi STF camp, and Karuna Group members allegedly ride the motorcycles through Karupola regularly.

● Armed men opened fire on troopers at the Madduvil SLA camp in Thenmaradchi, Jaffna, killing two. The exchange of fire lasted nearly ten minutes and the SLA arrested a 14-year-old boy during a search soon after the fire fight.

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Red Cross representatives paid homage to S. Shanmuganathan and K. Chandramohan, two Red Cross workers whose bodies were found a day after they were abducted in Colombo by Sinhalese speaking armed men who claimed to be policemen. Photo TamilNet

# Two Red Cross staff abducted and killed

THE Sri Lanka Red Cross on Monday demanded a probe into the killing of two of its volunteers as it paid homage to the men in the capital, amid a rash of abductions and murders.

The corpses of the two Tamil men were found Saturday dumped in the gem-mining district of Ratnapura, southeast of Colombo, a day after they were taken away by men who identified themselves as police at a train station in the capital.

Police denied any involvement in the killings, discovered after President Mahinda Rajapaksa said most complaints about abductions - many of which are leveled at state security forces - were false.

Representatives from the Sri Lanka Red Cross head office in Colombo took charge of the bodies of Sinnarajah Shanmuganathan, 38, and Karthigesu Chandramohan, 28, and arranged a public viewing on Monday, before the bodies were taken to Batticaloa for a funeral planned for Wednesday.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society strongly condemned the abduction and murder.

They called on "Sri Lankan authorities to carry out an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the killings," the press release said.

"We are shocked by these brutal murders and wish to convey our sincere condolences to the family members and colleagues of the dead," said Sri Lanka Red Cross director general Neville Nanayakkara.

"The movement calls upon the

Sri Lankan authorities to carry out an immediate and comprehensive investigation into the killings," Nanayakkara said in a statement.

"The movement reminds the parties to the conflict that murder is prohibited under international humanitarian law, and that they must respect the work of humanitarian agencies and refrain from any acts that might jeopardize humanitarian staff or activities."

"The two were part of a group of six aid workers brought from Batticaloa for a training program related to tsunami relief work last week," Nanayakkara told AFP.

"Some people in civil clothes said they were from the police and wanted to see the identity cards of the six workers. They took away two of them saying it was for further questioning."

He said they were alerted to the bodies found in Ratnapura after a local television channel showed images of unidentified bodies found in the area on Saturday. Nanayakkara said he had informed the island's defence secretary and police chief about the missing aid workers early Saturday, but there was no response.

The defence ministry said people who "claimed to be from the (police)" had abducted the aid workers in a white van and added that police were investigating.

Separately, the head of the Sri Lanka Red Cross in Batticaloa, S. Vasantharajah, told the media that after completing the training program on Thursday and Friday, the group had gone to the Fort Railway station to take the train to Batticaloa.

A group of Sinhala speaking men had examined their identity cards and taken Shanmuganathan

and Chandramohan in a white van for 'questioning,' according to the other four members of the group.

The leader of the aid workers had told the men that the two did not know Sinhala volunteered to help with the questioning, but the men declined the offer.

Shanmuganathan, who joined the Red Cross in 1997, is from Vilavettan, Vavunatheevu, while Chandramohan, from Kaluwankerni, had been with the Red Cross since 1999.

As a token of protest against the killing, the Batticaloa branch of the Red Cross stopped all activities until further notice. More than 5,000 volunteers suspended their services in the district, Vasantharajah said.

At the Colombo office black flags were flown and banners condemned the killings.

Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the leader of the parliamentary opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe, Minister Rajitha Senarathna, Member of Parliament Ravi Karunanayake, Mano Ganesan, the Leader of Western Peoples Front, and several other diplomats and politicians paid homage to the slain workers.

Rajapaksa's office said on Monday the Red Cross volunteer murders were an attempt to damage his and the government's reputation ahead of a meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva later this month.

"The killing of the two Red Cross workers appears to be part of a deliberate campaign to discredit the president and the government and tarnish the image of Sri Lanka vis-a-vis human rights violations," a presidential spokesman said.

## NEWS

# Violence round up - week ending 27 May

Summary of incidents - apart from major clashes - since 21 May

## 27 May

● SLN soldiers confiscated all outboard engines belonging to Neduntheevu fishermen while allowing passenger transport by boat between Kurikaduvan in Punnakudutheevu and Neduntheevu. Neduntheevu residents trapped in Jaffna for three days were able to return to the islet. SLN commanders summoned fishermen for a meeting and accused residents of not providing vital information on impending attacks by the Tigers and of failing to co-operate with the troops. The Commanders then ordered all fishermen to handover outboard motors.

## 26 May

● Eighteen elite STF commandos were wounded when the STF launched an offensive into LTTE controlled Kudumpimalai (Thoppigala) jungles. 18 STF personnel were wounded in LTTE mortar and artillery attack.

● Unknown men in a white van, pretending to be CID officers, took away a trader, Nadarajah Swaranathan, 43, in Dehiwela, Colombo, according to a complaint by his wife to the Dehiwela police.

● The SLA and police arrested eleven Tamil civilians in a cordon and search operation in Poona-gala estate, Bandarawela. The operation was conducted on a tip off that several LTTE cadres had infiltrated in the tea estate.

● Unidentified persons shot and killed a mother of six children, Mahendran Thankeswary, 45, of Kali Koyil Veethi in Kathankudi, Batticaloa, when she went out on a personal errand.

## 25 May

● Fourteen Tamil civilians aged between 18 and 26 were arrested in Wennapuwa, Puttalam, in a

cordon and search operation by the SLA. All were employees at a local shoe factory and are natives of Hatton and Pussellawa. Among them four are women.

● The ICRC Batticaloa representative handed over the bodies of six LTTE combatants shot dead by the SLA on Wednesday in Eravur, Batticaloa. The SLA said it had shot and killed seven who launched a hand grenade attack on its troopers as they were engaged in a search. One body was handed to the dead man's mother from Thalavay, who identified her son's body. Two of the LTTE combatants killed were females.

● The SLA command at Palali extended the nightly curfew into the next morning in Thenmaradchi, Jaffna. The announcement did not say how long the extended curfew hours would continue.

● Unidentified armed men opened fire on the SLA sentry post in front of Chavakachcheri Divisional Secretariat, Jaffna, within the SLA HSZ, killing a trooper and seriously injuring another.

● Three Tamil traders arrested by Wellawatte Police in a lodge in Colombo on January 27 with a consignment of wristwatch batteries were released on a report from the Attorney General that they did not commit any offence, after four months in detention under the Emergency Regulations. Nithiyanandam Mayuran, 32, Gopalan Senthoooran, 28, and Gopalan Gangatharan, 24, owners of business establishments in Thirunelveli, Jaffna, had gone to Colombo to buy goods in short supply in Jaffna.

## 24 May

● The Sea Tigers attacked Delft islet off the Jaffna coast, inflicting heavy losses on the SLN (see separate story).



arate story).

● Two SLA soldiers were reported killed in Mesalai, Thenmaradchi, Jaffna. The killings, not officially confirmed by the SLA, took place a day before an SLA trooper was killed and another injured in attacks by unidentified armed men in Thenmaradchi.

● A SLA soldier succumbed to his injuries and six people, including three soldiers, were injured after a bomb attack targeting a bus carrying SLA soldiers through the capital Colombo. The bomb, attached to a bicycle, was detonated near the main entrance to the Colombo port. The dead soldier was identified as Corporal Nanayakkara.

● A female IDP and her brother were killed on the spot when a SLA DPU triggered a claymore mine targeting their motorbike near Kunchukulam on the Vavuniya-Mannar border. The two siblings, Nathiya Selvarajah, 22, and her 24-year-old brother, Kobi Selvarajah, were on their way from Nadankandal to Kunchukulam to check their vacated house.

● Four people, including a child and two women, were shot dead by a home guard at Keppitgollawa in Anuradhapura. One of the women killed was the wife of the

home guard, who fled after the shooting. Police began a search operation to apprehend the home guard.

● The courts released four Tamils who had been arrested and held under the Emergency Regulations on the basis that there was no evidence against them. Velupillai Rajkumar, 21, and Gnanaseelan Gajendran, 21, natives of Jaffna, had been arrested in Jaffna. Separately, Kanthasamy Ravichandran, 36, of Kaarainagar in Jaffna and Tharmalingam Thirukumar, 26, of Vavuniya had been detained since March 30.

● A young Tamil mother taken into custody in Colombo two weeks previously on suspicion of being a member of the LTTE was released when the prosecution told the court there was no evidence to implicate her in any offence. Fort Police took Alagarajah Koushalaya, 27, of Vepankulam in Vavuniya into custody with her three-year-old child in a cordon and search operation as she was in possession of three SIM cards for a cell phone in her handbag.

● Kandy Police town took four Tamil youths, natives of Vavuniya, Walapane, Ginigathena in Kandy, and Mahiywa into custody. All except the youth from

Vavuniya were not in possession of national identity cards at the time of arrest. The youth from Vavuniya was visiting his sister but was found in another town and was taken into custody to find out the reason for his visit to Kandy.

## 23 May

● Ganesan Ushananth, 30, a former employee of Jaffna Secretariat at presently living in Colombo, was reported missing since Sunday, when he went to a shop near his residence. The father of one from Anaikoddai, Jaffna, who was working at a church in Colombo, had been receiving death threats on his mobile phone, his wife told the Colombo office of the SLHRC as she reported his disappearance.

● Sri Lanka security forces conducted a cordon and search operation in Anuradhapura town and arrested about 23 Tamil civilians, from lodges and rental houses. Most of them are said to be natives of Batticaloa and Vavuniya, while some are natives of Badulla.

● Twenty-five Tamil civilians were arrested in a cordon and

*Continued on page 14*

## Thiriyai residents flee abductions

AN increase in abductions and disappearances have forced resettled families from the Thiriyai area in Trincomalee to flee their homes.

At least fourteen individuals have disappeared or been abducted from the traditional Tamil village in the east since October last year, according to reports submitted to the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) and Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) by civil groups.

At least four Tamil civilians are reported to have been abducted or disappeared from the village

in May. Since then several resettled families have left Thiriyai village, reports say.

One village in the region around Thiriyai, Kalampathai, is completely empty, after all 86 Tamil families resettled in the area fled, leaving their newly rebuilt houses.

The houses had been constructed as part of a resettlement project, with a Non Government Organisation (NGO) responsible for the construction. Each house cost nearly six hundred thousand rupees, according to reports from the region.

Of the 190 families resettled at Kattukulam, another village near Thiriyai, 140 have left, with only about fifty families still remaining in the village. This is from the estimated 385 families who lived in Kattukulam before 1990.

About 242 families were resettled in Thiriyai village itself, but only 62 families now remain in the village.

The program to resettle this area commenced after the signing of the ceasefire agreement in 2002 between the then Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

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  
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SLN - Sri Lanka Navy  
STF - Special Task Force



## NEWS

# Amnesty International: human rights have 'deteriorated dramatically' in Sri Lanka

AMNESTY International said the human rights situation in Sri Lanka has 'deteriorated dramatically', as it also warned of a 'human rights meltdown' across the world.

In its 2007 report on human rights released in the last week of May, Amnesty said of Sri Lanka: "Unlawful killings, recruitment of child soldiers, abductions, enforced disappearances and other human rights violations and war crimes increased."

"...Hundreds of civilians were killed and injured and more than 215,000 people displaced by the end of 2006."

"...A pattern of enforced disappearances in the north and east re-emerged. There were reports of torture in police custody; perpetrators continued to benefit from impunity."

On the issue of child soldiers, Amnesty said: "At least 50 chil-

dren a month were recruited as soldiers in the north and east. According to UNICEF, the UN Children's Agency, by mid-2006 there were still 1,545 under-age fighters in LTTE forces."

"In June over 100 children were reportedly recruited in government-controlled areas in the east by the Karuna group."

"In November, a special adviser to the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict reported that government forces had been actively involved in forcibly recruiting children to the group."

The report said the Human Rights Commission "reported 419 enforced disappearances in Jaffna for the first half of 2006."

"A local non-governmental organisation recorded 277 abductions from April to September. Disappearances and abductions were attributed to several forces,

including the security forces, the LTTE and the Karuna group," the rights organisation said.

The disappeared list included, Father Thiruchelvan Nihal Jim Brown, a Catholic priest from Allaiipiddy, and Wenceslaus Vines Vimalathas who went missing after crossing a navy checkpoint in August on Kayts Island.

It was feared they had been taken into custody by navy personnel, Amnesty said.

Recently a body discovered in the seas north of Jaffna has been positively identified as that of Father Brown.

Over 215,000 people were displaced in the north and east as a result of renewed fighting, and at least 10,000 fled to India, Amnesty said.

The report added that although camps of tsunami affected people were well funded, "people displaced by the conflict often

lacked electricity, transport and proper sanitation. Concerns remained about this disparity of treatment."

Amnesty also warned of a global 'human rights meltdown' as powerful governments and armed groups were deliberately fomenting fear to create an increasingly polarized and dangerous world.

Amnesty called on governments to reject the 'politics of fear' and invest in human rights institutions to maintain the rule of law at national and international level, as it presents the report in London.

"Just as global warming requires global action based on international cooperation, the human rights meltdown can only be tackled through global solidarity and respect for international law," Amnesty's secretary-general, Irene Khan said.

"Through short sighted, fear-mongering and divisive policies,

governments are undermining the rule of law and human rights, feeding racism and xenophobia, dividing communities, intensifying inequalities and sowing the seeds for more violence and conflict," said Khan.

"The politics of fear is fuelling a downward spiral of human rights abuse in which no right is sacrosanct and no person safe."

The report singled out that so-called war on terror and the invasion of Iraq, with their 'catalogue of human rights abuses,' as having created deep divisions that cast a shadow on international relations.

Scarred by distrust and division, the international community was too often impotent or weak-willed in the face of major human rights crises in 2006, whether in forgotten conflicts like Chechnya, Colombia and Sri Lanka or high profile ones in the Middle East, the report said.

## Violence - 27 May

*Continued from page 13*

search operation by Sri Lanka security forces at Uddapu, a traditional Tamil village in Chilaw. One is a Jaffna native and another is from Trincomalee. Six civilians were natives of Thampalakamam, a Tamil village in Trincomalee and eighteen are residents of Uddapu. All were taken into custody as they failed to prove their identity and provide satisfactory reason for their stay in location.

●The police claimed three LTTE cadres and a SLA trooper were killed and a STF trooper injured in Chavukkadi, Thalavai, Eravur, Batticaloa. The SLA and STF had been conducting a search operation in the Chavukkadi coastal area after receiving a tip-off of LTTE presence, and a clash erupted during the search, the police said. The police claimed that many LTTE combatants were injured in the fight and that 6 claymore devices, 4 T56 rifles, mortars, rounds, machine guns, pistols and many hundreds of thousand rupees were recovered.

### 22 May

●The body of Thiruchelvan Thiruparan, 19, from Chunakam, was found dumped in shrub land near an Electricity Power Plant in the Jaffna suburb. He had gone missing in Chunakam while taking food to his father who works at the power plant. Thiruparan, who had been receiving continuous death threats, had obtained permission from the SLA to travel to Colombo with the view to escape death. He was killed two days after the travel permit was granted. He is the latest in a series of young men from the Inuvil and Chunakam areas who were killed

within three days of obtaining permission to leave the peninsula.

●Six Tamil youths were taken into custody in Anuradhapura, on an anonymous tip that they were taking photographs of Anuradhapura police station with their mobile phone cameras while hiding in a bush. The arrested are said to be natives of Valaichchenai, Vaharai, and Batticaloa.

### 21 May

●Kayts police recovered the body of a EPDP member hacked to death at the beach in Naranthanai north in Kayts, an islet of Jaffna. Chithiravel Shanthakumar alias Vastin, 30, who left the office of EPDP Kayts the previous morning had been missing since then.

●Relatives told the SLHRC that two men from Karaveddi, Jaffna, had been missing since April. Sithamparapillai Vimalaraj, 17, a student on his way to his relatives house on April 25 by bicycle had gone missing in Charachalai, Thenmaradchi. Finansco employee, Krishnapillai Vivekanandan, 31, went missing on April 30 while he was on his way by motorcycle from his home at Karanavay north, Karaveddi, to his workplace.

●Four fishermen from Mannar, arrested by the SLN in Nedunthevu seas, were released unconditionally after being produced in the courts. The SLN arrested the fishermen and confiscated their boat on the charge that they had entered Nedunthevu seas without permission. The fishermen explained that they lost control of their boat due to the rough seas, and were set free by the courts. Another five fishermen who disappeared in the area have yet to be found.



Police inspect the site of a claymore attack on a SLA bus on May 24, another incident in an increasing cycle of violence. The military said an explosive packed motorbike was detonated by remote control as the bus carrying soldiers passed by, killing the driver and wounding six. Photo TamilNet

●The body of Ananda Rajendran, 28, of Udaperadeniya, Peradeniya, was recovered from a drain in Peradeniya, Kandy.

●Mahendran Krishnaraj, 19, a fisherman was shot dead by gunmen in Kaluvankerni, Eravur, Batticaloa, while he was riding to his employer's house on his bicycle. Krishnaraj, who lived with his elder sister, was on his way after dinner to his employer so that he could go fishing with him early next day.

●Sivalingam Indran, 31, a fisherman and a father of a child of Kaluvankerni, Eravur, Batticaloa, has been missing since he left for Kathankudi on his motor cycle with money to buy a van. Relatives allege he was abducted by the Karuna Group, which has camps in Batticaloa near where he disappeared.

## Tamils ordered to return 'home'...

*Continued from page 10*

or a child is hospitalised over a long period of time.

Colombo District MP Mano Ganesan, speaking on the crisis said the problem faced by these people should be seen as a humanitarian crisis. He demanded that authorities treat Tamils as human beings and not as cattle.

"With the support of the UNP, we are watching the situation closely and hope to take up this issue in Parliament" he said.

Following complaints of the

police enforcing an eviction order on lodgers in Colombo, UNP MP's Ravi Karunanayake and Lakshman Kiriella visited the Pettah police and held discussions regarding the issue.

However when Mr. Karunanayake confronted the officer in charge of the Pettah police station, he allegedly claimed that there had been an overreaction to a comment, The Sunday Leader reported.

He claimed it was impossible to evict nearly 10,000 persons to catch a suspect or two.

## NEWS

## Violence - w/e 3 June

Continued from page 12

● Two youths arrested by the SLA on charges of possessing claymore mines and produced in court in Chavakachcheri, Jaffna, maintained their innocence, claiming the SLA planted the mines to incriminate them. Kumaru Thayanathan, 18, of Varani, Thenmaradchi, and Arumugam Kamlatheepan, 19, of Manthuvil, Thenmaradchi had been arrested the previous day.

● The relatives of three fishermen from Analaitheevu Island reported at the SLHRC Jaffna off-ice that the men failed to return after going fishing on May 17. Jeganathan Jeyanthan, 24, Velaut-ham Thevan, 30, and Thangarasa Jegan, 22, left for fishing in a catamaran and since

there was heavy rain and strong winds on that day, relatives expressed fear that the men may have encountered trouble with their boats.

## 28 May

● Armed men in a white van took Mahendran Matheeskumar, 25, from his house in Colombo. The men questioned Matheeskumar outside his house and then took him away, saying he would be released after interrogation.

● A bomb exploded in Ratmalana near the domestic airport, targeting a military vehicle carrying STF troopers. Eight were injured and 35 injured in the blast which targeted a vehicle carrying STF troopers traveling from Katukurunte training base to Kadawatte

STF camp.

● SLA soldiers on security duty along the A9 highway in Thenmaradchi, Jaffna, between Kodikamam and Chavakachcheri, were attacked by armed men. Local residents said they saw injured troopers being taken in military ambulances.

● Three civilians were killed in a bomb explosion near the well in a house compound at Poonthodam in Vavuniya. One body was found inside the well, the other near the well and the third victim died on the way to hospital. Kumarasamy Sureshkumar, 32, a father of two children, Chandran Thanushan, 26 and Satheeskumar were killed.

● A Tamil youth, Weeramalai Jegan, 29, was found dead in his paddy field at Kattaikadu, Munthal, Chilaw.

## Abductions and ransoms...

Continued from page 10

The crisis has drawn international attention and condemnation with world human rights groups painting a grim picture of Sri Lanka.

In one of the recent cases, a timber merchant from Panadura was abducted and a ransom of Rs. 10 million demanded.

His wife made a complaint to the police and the merchant was released the next day but he is not saying anything about whether the ransom was paid while the police also claimed they do not know how he was released.

Deputy Inspector General N.K. Illangakoon, acting police spokesman had tried to record a statement from the merchant but he was reluctant to do so and police were not sure whether he had

paid any ransom for his release.

In many cases where ransom had been paid after abducting businessmen, they had reportedly been warned not to talk to the police or the media.

The trend has created fear and panic among the business community and many are reported to be making arrangements to go overseas with their investments and families.

One businessman told The Sunday Times he was leaving with his wife and children even without informing the principals of the schools where they were studying.

Several businessmen warned that if the dangerous trend was not effectively checked, the economy would suffer a major blow.

Explaining the position of the

police, DIG Illangakoon said they could not act effectively because the victims were apparently afraid or unwilling to make complaints or give details.

He said that wherever complaints were made and details given, the police were able to track down some of the gangsters.

But the businessmen say their fears are valid because in many cases, the victims had recognized some of the gangsters as former police or military personnel or even personnel still in service.

One victim provided evidence to this claim by saying that his abductors had stopped the jeep, some distance from security forces checkpoints, and got clearance after one or two of the abductors walked up to the checkpoint and showed some identity cards.

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## NEWS

# Life in Colombo is dangerous

Sri Lanka's abductions depict the insanity generated by absence of rule of law.

Asian Human Rights Commission

ABDUCTIONS, killings and robbery have become regular incidents in Sri Lanka. The telltale symptoms of a broken down rule of law and a system that has failed to address it. The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has issued several statements in the past expressing its concern over the widening gap between the fact and fiction in Sri Lanka.

The fact is that there is no semblance of rule of law in Sri Lanka whereas the fiction of governance is projected. Rule of law has broken down to such a state that people look at their law enforcement agencies with suspicion. The fear of suspicion has crept into every facets of human life. No body is certain of anything. This is reflective in the day-to-day human conduct. A capital city that gets deserted by early evening is nothing but a visible symptom of enormous fear that has engrossed the society.

The recent abduction of the Sri Lankan Red Cross workers and the recovery of their bodies

with gun shot wounds is the latest in the series of incidents that has fortified peoples' fear. The very fact that often law enforcement agencies are being blamed or suspected for such gruesome incidents shows the extent to which the system has broken down. As of today, even police officers are not immune from fear of abduction and insecurity.

A policing system that is corrupt to the core and a judiciary which has made a mockery of justice alienated the people from their administrators. What Sri Lanka is witnessing today is the collapse of the centre, a wilt within the core. Justice institutions within the country have become non-functional as far as an ordinary person is concerned. Even professional communities like lawyers have succumbed to this.

A government that cannot address these problems do not have a right to claim that they are in power. What was reflected time and again from various sources within the government in the past



Relatives of those missing after being abducted mourn at a recent protest in Colombo. Photo TamilNet

few years is the utter unwillingness and helplessness of the government to deal with the breakdown of rule of law in the country. Every imaginable pivot of administration and governance was let to be manipulated for personal and short-term gains and the imbalance within the system has reached a level that it cannot be set straight anymore.

In circumstances of complete chaos arising out of the absence of rule of law often the people look to the centre - government - to reinstate law and order. The life in the capital city is what the people in such circumstances look up to witness the presence of relative safety. However, in Sri Lanka life in the capital itself has become dangerous. Abductions in Colombo have become so regular that people have started referring to abductions in casual conversations as a hazard that they have to

live with like their police.

Abduction is a crime that requires meticulous planning and execution. It often requires the involvement of more than one person and plans to meet contingencies. This is because crimes of such nature are hard to be kept hidden and is difficult to avoid prosecution. The ease with which such crimes of serious nature is committed in Sri Lanka indicates the there is nothing much to be concerned about for the perpetrators and that crimes of such nature does not anymore require any planning.

Indeed what is reflected in Sri Lanka today is the result of the absence of sensible planning and execution of ways and means to address the downfall of a justice system. What was done instead was trying to cover holes of imperfection and ineptitude with darkens of lies and deception of

varying nature. Lies and deceptions practiced at the highest order to satisfy the greed of a few persons. This is not however what the people in Sri Lanka deserve. They deserve an honest administration that is willing to bring back sanity to the day-to-day affairs of life that is now challenging their existence as a civilised society.

There is no place within the country that could provide these though, neither are there any capsule solutions. The possible recourse is through the intervention of the international community that has recently expressed its interest in addressing these issues in Sri Lanka. This could be possible by facilitating a process by which an interim administration could be put in place in Sri Lanka to address immediate concerns of the country, particularly issues of law and order.

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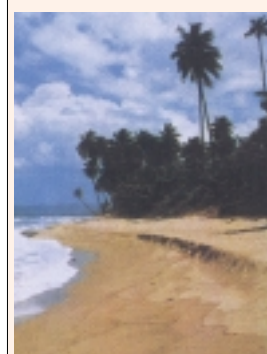
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