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War, the international community and Tamil rights

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Tamils mourn Tamilselvan



Photo Lakruwan Wanniarachchi / AFP / Getty Images

TAMILS across the Diaspora and in the homeland mourned as S. P. Tamilselvan, the head of the Liberation Tigers' Political Wing and the movement's Chief Negotiator, who was killed Friday in a targeted airstrike by the Sri Lanka Air Force was laid to rest in a state funeral in Kilinochchi Monday.

Mr. Tamilselvan was posthumously promoted to the rank of Brigadier by the LTTE.

The Head Quarters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in a press communiqué Friday said it was conveying the loss of Brigadier Tamilselvan with profound sadness to the people of

Tamil Eelam, the Tamil Diaspora and the Global Community.

He was killed in a Sri Lanka Air Force attack that had specifically targeted the residence of the members of the Political Division. The LTTE military spokesman described the aerial attack on Tamilselvan's residence as a cow-

ardly assassination.

Others who died in the bombardment alongside Brigadier Tamilselvan were Lt. Col. Anpuman (Alex), Major Mikuthan, Major Neethaaji, Lt. Aadchiveal and Lt. Maavaikkumaran.

P. Nadesan, the head of the Tamil-eelam Police Force, was app-

ointed as the new head of the Political Wing later that same day. He will be in charge of the two departments from now on.

Commemoration and condolence ceremonies were also held by community organizations in the countries hosting the extensive Tamil Diapora.

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TAMILSELVAN

‘Sinhala nation has killed our peace dove’

THE Sinhala nation has taken the life of a political leader "deeply loved by the Tamil speaking world" and "greatly respected by the international community," said Velupillai Pirapaharan, the leader of Liberation Tigers, in a message to the Tamil people on Saturday, following the demise of the LTTE's Political Head and Chief Negotiator, Brigadier S. P. Tamilselvan.

"I raised him as a great commander, an unparalleled political head, a diplomat who communicated with the entire world, and a skilled negotiator.

"Buried within his beautiful smile, I recognized, right from the beginning, a thousand profound meanings, his abilities, and his leadership qualities."

The full text of Mr. Pirapaharan's message follows:

My beloved people,

Despite the repeated and continuous calls from the international community to find a peaceful resolution to Tamil national question, we have not seen any goodwill from the Sinhala nation. We do not see the Buddhist universal love. Sinhala nation did not open its heart and send a peace message. On the contrary, it is sending war-vultures that are dropping giant bombs. It has cruelly killed our peace dove.

Sinhala nation has taken the life of a political leader deeply loved by the Tamil speaking world and greatly respected by the international community. It has taken away an unrivalled leader who has won the hearts of the people of Tamil Eelam. Tamil Eelam nation is confronting an unparalleled loss after losing the head of our political wing, Brig. S P Tamilselvan and five other LTTE members. Our people are in profound shock and sorrow.

Tamilselvan was close to me ever since he joined our freedom movement. I loved him deeply. I taught him as my own beloved younger brother. Buried within his beautiful smile, I recognized, right from the beginning, a thousand profound meanings, his abilities, and his leadership qualities. I raised him as a great commander, an unparalleled political head, a diplomat who communicated with the entire world, and a skilled negotiator.

His thoughts were always about the liberation of the land and the people he so dearly loved. He longed for a free, honourable and safe life for our people. He was a fire that laboured selflessly and with determination towards the goal.

In a new form, he joins our liberation struggle which is moving on like a lengthy river of blaze. In this new form, he has set alight in our heavy hearts a deep yearning for the goal. He has nourished that yearning. Strengthened by his nourishment we will continue to travel on our path towards the goal with renewed determination.

V. Pirapaharan
Leader of the LTTE



Brigadier Tamilselvan



Lt. Col. Anpumani (Alex)



Major Neathaaji



Major Mihuthan



Lt. Aadchiveal



Lt. Maavaikkumaran

TAMILSELVAN

Jubilant Sri Lanka threatens to wipe Tigers out

TamilNet

HAILING the Air Force bombing raid Friday which killed the Tamil Tigers chief negotiator and Political Wing head, Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan and five other LTTE officials, Sri Lankan Defence Secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa said his government would kill other LTTE leaders 'one by one'.

Sources said he made his comments, quoted by Reuters, at a celebratory meeting at Temple Trees, the official residence of President Mahinda Rajapakse, who is also Mr. Gotabaya's brother.

Meanwhile, the Colombo stock market soared on news of the deaths.

Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa welcomed the news of the killings of Mr. Tamilselvan and the others, and said the Sri Lankan military would pick off the rest of the Tigers' leaders one by one.

"This is just a message, that we know where their leaders are. I know the locations of all the leaders, that if we want we can take them one by one, so they must change their hideouts," he told Reuters.

"When the time comes only, we take them one by one."

Mr. Tamilselvan was one of the LTTE's internationally recognized political officials, having been a negotiator for the Tigers since 2002 and having headed the Political Wing from several years before that.

The LTTE has conferred its

highest military rank, Brigadier, to Mr. Tamilselvan.

Late last year Mr. Tamilselvan was appointed Chief Negotiator by the LTTE, taking over from Mr. Anton Balasingham, whose failing health compelled his retirement.

The Sri Lankan government's decision to target Mr. Tamilselvan was a body blow to lingering hopes of a resumption of peace talks.

"The loss of Tamilselvan in this way would be a very big setback to any hope of peace talks in the near future - which in any case were not apparent either," Jehan Perera of the National Peace Council, an advocacy group, told Reuters.

Sri Lanka's largest Tamil political party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has expressed its shock at the killings and praised Mr. Tamilselvan's role in the Tamil freedom struggle.

"We shudder at the repercussions for peace of this act by the Sri Lanka government," the TNA said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's stock market rose on news of the death of Mr. Tamilselvan, closing a provisional 0.99 percent firmer in late trade, Reuters reported.

"Any sort of victory in the war will boost the market. So there was high activity after the news," said Harsha Fernando, CEO at SC securities.



Colombo stepped up security amidst celebration, firecrackers and jubilation as the news that Brigadier Tamilselvan had been killed broke. Photo Sanka Vidanagama/AFP/Getty Images

UNP hails killing, slams LTTE

TamilNet

SRI LANKA'S main opposition United National Party (UNP) hailed the killing of S. P. Tamilselvan as "a victorious moment."

Praising the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), UNP spokesman Lakshman Kireiella said it was not possible to talk peace with the LTTE.

Mr. Kireiella told the BBC Sinhala Service, Sandeshaya, on Friday that the UNP congratulates the SLAF on its airstrike.

He said the killing of Mr. Tamilselvan and five other LTTE officials "a victorious moment."

Mr. Kireiella said the LTTE has now been politically crippled by the loss of Mr. Tamilselvan and Mr. Anton Balasingham, the movement's late theoretician, who passed away a year ago.

The LTTE is thus being defeated politically, he said.

Mr. Kireiella said that there was no point holding peace talks with the LTTE.

"You can't have peace talks if only one party is willing to talk," he said.

"When the UNP was in power we tried to negotiate with them. But they were not willing," Mr.

Kireiella said.

Mr. Tamilselvan was a member of the negotiating team that Mr. Balasingham led in six rounds of Norwegian facilitated negotiations with the then UNP government in 2002 and 2003.

It was during these talks that the controversial agreement by the LTTE and UNP government to explore federalism was reached (later referred to as the 'Oslo Declaration').

Last month the UNP announced a u-turn on its support for federalism, saying it was 'repositioning' itself on power-sharing as a solution to the island's protracted conflict.

However, Mr. Vidar Helgesen, former Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway, who was responsible for the Oslo's facilitation in the peace process, told the NTB agency Saturday that Mr. Tamilselvan played a key role in the talks.

Meanwhile UNP stalwart S.B. Dissanayake told media Friday that Mr. Tamilselvan's death was no matter for regret - it was a "morale boosting victory" for the Air Force, he told the Daily Mirror.

LTTE political leader slain

Andrew Buncombe
Independent

IN OCTOBER 2006, when talks in Geneva between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government broke down, a journalist asked S. P. Tamilselvan whether the Tamil people had been given any hope by the discussions. The head of the Tamil delegation was to the point: "We ourselves are not hopeful, [so] how can the people be?"

In recent years, Tamilselvan had been the international face of the struggle by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or (LTTE) or Tamil Tigers, as they fought for a homeland in Sri Lanka.

With the group's leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, declining to appear in public, Tamilselvan was one of the points of contact for a conflict that has taken an estimated 70,000 lives.

On 2 November, he, too, became one of its victims when he was killed during a Sri Lankan air -force bombardment.

Tamilselvan joined the armed struggle in 1983 as fighting broke out between the LTTE and the government forces. He took part in several military operations in north Sri Lanka, including an abortive bid to storm the Elephant Base camp in 1992 and the battles in Pooneryn. But he was wounded in both the stomach and the leg and had to refrain from any further active military service.

Many observers saw Tamilselvan as a moderate, but earlier this summer he told reporters that the LTTE were prepared to launch major attacks on both military and economic targets to try to cripple the country's economy.

"Let the Tamil people live in their traditional homeland," he said in an interview in Kilinochchi, the LTTE's de facto headquarters. "Leave the Tamil people without any military occupation or persecution. That will be the day there is no war."

Tamilselvan was born into a humble background and worked originally as a barber, before rising through the LTTE ranks, partly through his association with the Tamil leader, Prabhakaran, for whom he once served as a bodyguard. His wife is a member of the Tigers' women's wing.

In 2001 he was considered of such importance that the Sri Lankan government dispatched its army's Deep Penetration Unit after him; on that occasion he survived the attempt to kill him.

His profile grew during the late 1990s, especially after Norway took an interest in the struggling peace process. When the Tigers' international spokesman, Anton Balasingham, became increasingly ill from kidney problems, Tamilselvan, who was already heading the organisation's political wing, found himself being asked to take a more prominent role as a spokesman - even though he did not speak English.

Following Balasingham's death in 2006, Tamilselvan was the Tigers' chief point of contact for the outside world.

TAMILSELVAN

Experienced and suave negotiator

Ethirajan Anbarasan

BBC News

S. P. TAMILSELVAN - who died in a Sri Lankan air force raid on Friday morning - is the most senior Tamil Tiger leader to have been killed in recent years.

The death of their media-savvy political wing leader at the age of 40 means the LTTE have lost an experienced and suave political negotiator.

For many years S. P. Tamilselvan was the public face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Since 1994, he had been a member of the LTTE peace negotiating team and had participated in almost every round of face-to-face talks with the Sri Lankan authorities and Norwegian mediators.

I met him on a number of occasions in recent years, both in Sri Lanka and during peace talks in Geneva.

He always came across as smiling and friendly - although his enemies say behind the warm exterior there lurked a ruthless, hardened military man.

Even recently, a senior LTTE source told me Tamilselvan was away in the north-west heading a fighting unit.

Rise to prominence

Unlike many of his comrades, S. P. Tamilselvan did not look like a veteran guerrilla fighter. Dressed in a suit he could have passed himself off as an executive and was very at ease at the negotiating table.

He was dedicated to the LTTE cause and firmly believed that one day they would realise their dream of a separate nation - Eelam - for Sri Lanka's Tamils.

He was always keen to tell the world what was happening to the Tamil population in north-east Sri

Lanka.

After the devastating tsunami in December 2004, he was quick to ring the BBC Tamil service to say what was going on inside rebel-held territory.

He supervised relief efforts in LTTE-held areas, and was praised in many quarters for his actions.

While sometimes long-winded, Mr. Tamilselvan was skilled at reflecting the views of the LTTE leadership.

Like many other Tiger cadres, he started in the armed wing and rose in prominence due to his military exploits.

Soon, he entered into the inner circles of Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran.

When Prabhakaran was in India in the early 1980s, Tamilselvan was his de facto aide-de-camp.

"He was very close to the LTTE leader. His demise may bring about a hardening of attitude in the LTTE hierarchy," according to Sri Lanka analyst DBS Jeyaraj.

S. P. Tamilselvan's closeness to the Tiger leader also helped him to rise in the LTTE hierarchy.

He was once the commander of the strategically-important Jaffna region. Many accuse him of leading a group carrying out assassinations in that area at the time.

Skilled with the media

Following a battlefield injury in 1993, S. P. Tamilselvan was asked to focus more on political matters.

It was to prove a crucial period for the Tigers.

At the time the LTTE was considered basically a military movement and its gradual entry



"Tamilselvan knew how to handle the international media ... and was adept at handling prickly issues"

into politics was a big challenge for the organisation.

The political wing leader soon adapted himself to his new role.

He led the Tigers' negotiating team during the first ever direct peace talks with the Sri Lankan government in 1994-95.

More recently, he represented the LTTE in various rounds of peace talks, including the last, fruitless meeting in Geneva late last year.

S. P. Tamilselvan knew how to handle the international media and - through an interpreter - was adept at handling prickly issues such as child conscription, political killings and questions on the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

After Tiger ideologue Anton Balasingham died last year, the LTTE projected Tamilselvan as their chief negotiator.

The rebels may find him diffi-

cult to replace.

He is survived by his wife, an

eight-year-old daughter and a son of four.

"THE thing that most people will remember about Tamilselvan is his huge smile.

For his enemies in this most bitter civil war the smile only masked his ruthlessness.

But for his friends he was a respected and popular fighter with a sense of humour.

Tamilselvan joined the movement in 1984 aged seventeen and was a key figure in fighting the Indian peace keeping force in the Jaffna peninsula where he was born.

In 1993 he was injured in an aerial attack and had to have all the muscles from one leg removed leaving him unable to walk without a stick.

For more than a decade

Tamilselvan has been the public face of the Tigers - heading its political wing and attending almost all the peace talks with the Sri Lankan government.

He's probably been interviewed more than any other politician in Sri Lanka - always appearing with two armed bodyguards.

He leaves behind a wife, an eight year old daughter and a son born four years ago during the heady days of the peace process when many rebels hoped for a better future."

Former BBC Colombo correspondent Frances Harrison who met head of LTTE political wing SP Tamilselvan on numerous occasions

Slain Tiger was public face of LTTE

Peter Apps

Reuters

ALMOST always smiling, smartly dressed and carrying a polished cane, S. P. Tamilselvan was the key contact point between Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers and the outside world.

Killed on Friday in a government air strike, the leader of the Tigers' political wing was the public face and mouthpiece of the LTTE who met foreign diplomats and reporters denied access to reclusive leader Velupillai Prabhakaran when they visited the de facto capital Kilinochchi.

While the government says his death shows they can strike senior rebels at will, analysts and

diplomats say it will make bringing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the government together even harder, further locking the country into its civil war.

In previous decades of war, Prabhakaran used English-speaking and British passport-holding negotiator Anton Balasingham for political advice. But Balasingham's influence appeared to have waned after he returned to London for medical treatment before his death last year.

Diplomats and observers could never agree whether Tamilselvan exercised significant influence over LTTE policy. But he effec-

tively replaced Balasingham as the voice of the LTTE, and led a delegation to peace talks in Geneva last year.

Born in 1967 on the northern Jaffna peninsula in what is now a government-held enclave, he joined the fledgling movement in the 1980s before being wounded the following decade by an Indian peacekeeping force that ended up fighting both sides.

ONCE A COMMANDER

Once a military commander, he joined the political wing - although he still occasionally appeared in public in the LTTE trademark tiger-striped camouflage carrying a sidearm.

Visitors would be shown into a glass-fronted peace secretariat office before his Landcruiser with

blacked out windows screeched into the compound and he stepped out accompanied by bodyguards with radios and assault rifles.

Both before and after a 2002 ceasefire collapsed into open warfare last year, he would express the commitment of the LTTE to peace. But he was unwavering in his demands for a separate ethnic Tamil homeland.

He clearly understood some English but preferred to use his veteran official translator George, a former postmaster, whose flowery translations drove some correspondents to despair.

"If the military decides to thrust a war on the people by escalating military violence ... and thereby create a situation where by we cannot just be onlookers

that may be a very decisive moment where we have to make decisions to make sure the people are safeguarded," he told Reuters in 2006 as violence flared.

He would reply to questions with an unnerving smile and would shift uncomfortably when asked about thorny topics such as human rights abuses, child soldier abductions or ambushes on troops that seemed designed to restart the war.

"We have need of such tactics," he said regarding child soldier recruitment. "But in the case of (a) 16-year-old child who was pulled out and shot dead by the military, can we go and say to the child's brother ... you cannot resort to violence because you are below the age of 18."

TAMILSELVAN

Anger, condolences pour in from TamilNadu

LEADERS of major political parties in TamilNadu, India, including the ruling party, expressed their deep sorrow and paid tribute to S. P. Thamilselvan.

In what is seen as a significant gesture, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and veteran leader of Tamils, M. Karunanidhi, paid tribute to the LTTE commander. Kalaingar Karunanidhi, quite typical of his style, used the medium of poetry and pun to pass a subtle message that the Tamils of Sri Lanka haven't gone brotherless.

The Chief Minister's emotion-filled condolence gains significance in the background of a prevailing impression that the government of India is fully backing the war efforts of the government of Sri Lanka aiming for a military solution.

Mr. Karunanidhi has been an opponent to military option to resolve the Tamil question. In March 1990, when the IPKF was withdrawn from Sri Lanka, Mr. Karunanidhi, who was then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, refused to attend the reception of the returning troops in Madras.

The veteran Tamil leader paid homage to the former LTTE political head by describing him as a man with an ever-smiling face but a heart that could annihilate the opposition (see poem translation below).

Dr Ramadoss, leader of Paa-tali Makkal Katchi (PMK) which is in the ruling coalition, said the news of the killing of Brig. Tamilselvan has shocked Tamils around the world, in a statement released on Saturday.

Describing the killing as an attack against peace and human rights, the PMK leader said humanity will not forgive the war mongering Sri Lankan government's racist act.

"Through the heinous assassination of Tamilselvan, the Sri Lankan government has clearly demonstrated its non-commitment to peace and its intention of wiping out the Tamil race from the island."

He further said people of Tamil Nadu - who share the ethnicity, language and culture with Sri

Lankan Tamils - should no longer spectators to the suffering of Eelam Tamils.

K. Veeramani, the leader of Dravidar Kazhagam, said the demise of Tamilselvan at a time when the struggle for independence by the Eelam Tamils is reaching decisive stage brings great sadness.

Expressing his sympathies to LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan, the LTTE and Eelam Tamils, Veeramani added that whilst these battle front losses are shocking, Tamils around the world should show their solidarity to continue the struggle to realize the dreams of these fallen heroes.

D. Pandian, the Tamil Nadu State secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), described Tamilselvan as a person who fought for the fundamental rights of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and worked towards resolving the ethnic conflict through negotiations, in a condolence message.

CPI expressed its condolences to Tamilselvan's family and described him as a man who gave his life for the Tamil peoples fight for rights.

The party also condemned the Sri Lankan government's approach of solving the ethnic conflict through military might and intention of annihilating the Tamils.

The Periyar Dravida Kazhagam held several commemoration meetings in Tamil Nadu to show respect to Tamilselvan. A commemoration meeting was held at the Boss stadium in Salem, where hundreds of Tamils took part to express their respect to Brigadier Tamilselvan.

V. Gopalsamy (Vaiko), the general secretary of Marumalar-chi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, described the demise of Tamilselvan as a great loss to the Eelam Tamils.

The air attack showed that the Sri Lanka Government had no faith in resolving the ethnic issue through negotiations, he said.

Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam president Vijayakant also condemned the attack and expressed his condolences at the death of Tamilselvan.



Mass gathering were held across Tamil Nadu to mourn the killing of Tamilselvan

'Targeted killing shatters hopes for peace' - TNA

SRI LANKA'S largest Tamil political party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Friday expressed its shock at the killing in a government airstrike of Mr S. P. Tamilselvan the LTTE's Chief Negotiator and head of its Political Wing and five other LTTE officials.

The TNA said the targeted killing of the LTTE's Chief Negotiator underlined President Mahinda Rajapakse's insincerity towards a negotiated solution, the TNA also said.

Saluting Mr. Tamilselvan's "selfless sacrifice for the Tamil Eelam struggle" the TNA said it joined the rest of the Tamil community in saluting him and the other LTTE officials killed by the Sri Lanka Air Force bombing.

"We salute his services to the Tamil people and selfless sacrifice for the Tamil Eelam struggle," the brief media release said.

"Although his death is destined to create thousands of new Tamilselvans who will doubtless serve our freedom struggle with dedication, we shudder at the repercussions for peace of this act by the Sri Lanka government," the TNA said.

The TNA said it joined the Tamil community and activists in saluting and paying tribute to Mr. Tamilselvan and the other LTTE officials killed in Friday's airstrike on their residence.

Speaking to TamilNet Friday, Mr. Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, of the TNA's Foreign Affairs Committee said that the targeted killing of Mr. Tamilselvan underlined the insincerity of the Rajapakse government's peace claims.

"In our meetings with numerous representatives of the international community, the TNA repeatedly stated that the Sri

Lankan state was not committed to negotiating an equitable solution," he said. "Despite our warnings, the state was fully backed in its hard line."

"When President Rajapakse came to power, the shift to a military track became much more pronounced."

"But when we protested to many members of the international community, we were told that this was only to get the LTTE to come to the negotiating table."

"The targeted killing of the LTTE's Chief Negotiator, in our view, means there can no longer be any illusion as to the State's interest in negotiating a lasting solution."

"In this context, the Tamil community will be closely watching the actions of the international community vis-à-vis its repeatedly stated commitment to a negotiated peace."

Condolence poetry by Kalaingar Karunanidhi

Always smiling face -
A mind that sets ablaze opposition!

Young, young, yet a heart of
Himalayan strength, strength!

A commander seasoned in the line
of the old lion Balasingam

The virtuous youth whom with determination
offered himself to the War for Rights -
his soul hasn't gone extinguished
he hasn't gone brotherless

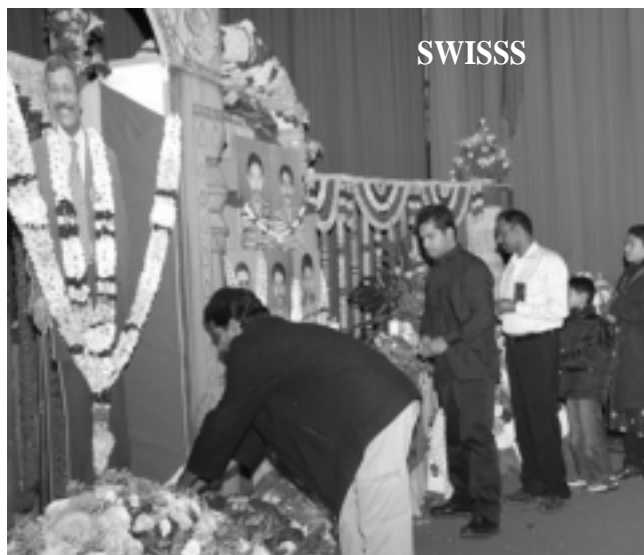
A beloved son who wrote his fame
all over the earth, wherever Tamils live -
where have you gone?

Translated by TamilNet

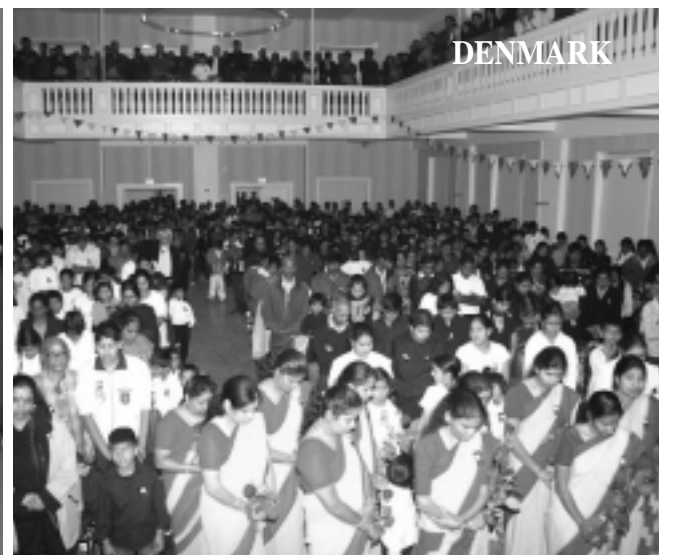
TAMILSELVAN



LONDON, UK



SWISS



DENMARK



FRANCE



TORONTO, CANADA



ITALY



OSLO, NORWAY



MALAYSIA



GERMANY

“We feel that peace died with him”

TRIBUTES to Brigadier S. P. Tamilselvan poured in across all the countries hosting Diaspora groups, with tens of thousands attending condolence events organised by community groups across the globe.

UK

Several thousand British Tamils paid their respects Monday. The event was addressed by parliamentarians of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), local Tamil councillors and community figures.

As mourners packed a large hall at the Harrow Leisure centre, thousands more waited outside, prompting organizers to make announcements, urging those who had placed flowers to depart so as to make room for others.

As queues of those waiting to place flowers before the portraits of the six LTTE officials continued to grow, organizers, decided to allow the scheduled speakers to address the crowd over the lines.

Mrs. Adele Balasingham, wife of Mr. Anton Balasingham, the LTTE's theoretician and chief negotiator who passed away last December, also paid her respects.

Amongst the speakers were three parliamentarians of the TNA, Ms. Padmini Sithamparanathan, Mr. Vino Noharathalingam and Mr. Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam.

Events were also held in other localities across the country.

Canada

Thousands in Toronto, Canada, braved lashing winds and rain

to flock to Markham Fairgrounds for a three-hour gathering to honour Tamilselvan with prayer, speeches and music. An hour after it started, there were still traffic jams as people waited to get in.

"The peace process is now dead and gone," David Poopalapillai, national spokesman for the Canadian Tamil Congress, said. "By killing the chief negotiator they are saying we don't want peace, we want war."

Mr. Tamilselvan had close ties to in Canada as his 75-year-old mother, two brothers and a sister all live in Toronto and were on hand at the commemoration at Markham Fairgrounds.

Paramu Sivasubramaniam - Tamilselvan's oldest brother - said his family is "devastated" by his brother's death and said it has put an end to the peace process in

their homeland.

"My mother wants to go home to the funeral but the Norwegian government has told us it is not safe," said Sivasubramaniam, 52.

As a huge poster of his brother was still being hung behind the stage and with someone holding an umbrella over him, S. P. Ravi, 44, told the crowd in Tamil that Canada had a responsibility to respect human rights in Sri Lanka and the aspirations of the Tamil minority.

When he came offstage, Ravi, still weeping, said he had spoken to his brother, who was 40, last Wednesday. "He was happy. He said he was still going hard on the peace process. He asked us here to keep it in our minds, too."

"They kill him, they kill peace," he said. "We feel now that peace died with him."

Borys Wrzesnewskyj, Liberal MP for Etobicoke Centre, and Jim Karygiannis, Liberal member for Scarborough-Agincourt, both made speeches.

Events were also held in the Canadian capital Ottawa and French-speaking Montreal.

Other countries

Hundreds of Diaspora Tamils also took part in events to pay homage to the slain Political Head and Chief Negotiator of Liberation Tigers, in other locations, including Zurich, Switzerland, Paris, France, Oslo, Norway, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Germany, Italy and Netherlands. At the time of going to print, events were also planned by Tamils living in Finland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

TAMILSELVAN

Truely demonstrates Sinhala racism

American Tamils

TAMILS all over the world are saddened by the death of Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan. He was assassinated by the Sri Lankan government air force which targeted and fired at him from the air. Such targeted assassination is yet another illegal act of the government of Sri Lanka.

The Tamils all over the world are one with his family in mourning the loss of a great man. We convey our heartfelt condolences to his family and the families of Anpumani (Alex), Mihuthan, Nethagy, Adchivel, and Mavaikumar who were also killed in the air attack.

Mr. Tamilselvan was completely dedicated to the Tamil quest for the realization of their right to self-determination. He believed that through diplomatic means both the Sinhala nation and the Tamil nation could exercise their right to self-determination and peacefully co-exist on the island of Sri Lanka.

He has worked tirelessly to shed light upon the sufferings of the Tamil people under the yoke of the permanent Sinhala domination and has articulated the moral justifications of the Tamil cause to the international community. He told the Tamil story in a persuasive and meaningful manner.

The assassination of Mr. Tamilselvan is an irreparable loss to both the Tamil nation and the peace process. With an ever smiling face coupled with confidence and firmness he worked with various international diplomats and earned their respect.

Mr. Tamilselvan firmly believed that the Tamils' quest for self-determination is, in essence, a campaign for the right of democratic entitlement. He envisioned a democratic Tamil Eelam.

Tamils all over the world strongly condemn this targeted assassination. It is illegal under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the

UN Principles on Effective Prevention and Investigation of the Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.

We call upon the international community to join us in condemning this terrorist act. We also believe that any material support provided by the international community in support of the government of Sri Lanka facilitated this terrorist act.

The Tamil National Leader Mr. Pirabakaran has called Mr. Tamilselvan as the "peace dove" of the Tamil nation.

We are bewildered to learn that he was on the top of the GOSL's hit list, as targeting the Chief Negotiator would be a clear indication that the Sinhala nation still seeks to resolve the Tamil national question through military means.

By targeting the Chief Negotiator, the Sinhala racism of the GOSL is sending a clear message to the Tamil nation and the international community that it is not interested in a negotiated settlement.

Peace maker killed deliberately

Canadian Tamil Congress

S. P. TAMILSELVAN, an internationally respected Peace negotiator for the Political Wing of Liberation Tigers was killed by the Sri Lankan Air Force.

The Canadian Tamil Congress is profoundly saddened and deeply hurt on hearing this heart-breaking and painful news.

Tamilselvan was the chief negotiator for various peace talks with the Sri Lankan state since 1994. He voiced the concerns of the Tamil community at the Peace Talks with a clear unwavering commitment and determination to resolve the conflict through negotiations.

Many prominent international leaders, diplomats and media personal met with Tamilselvan regularly basis. He also met with Canadian elected officials to work towards a negotiated political settlement for the civil war.

"To deliberately target a peace negotiator sends a clear message

that the Sri Lankan government is not even interested in talking about neither in peace nor in negotiations," says David Poopalapillai spokesperson for Canadian Tamil Congress.

Tamilselvan had traveled to many countries and brought awareness about the plight of Tamils in the hands of the oppressive regime in Sri Lanka. He worked tirelessly to expose the human rights violations committed against the Tamils in Sri Lanka to the world community.

Canadian Tamil Congress extends its heartfelt condolences to the families and colleagues of Mr. Tamilselvan.

We believe that this deliberate and cruel action of the Sri Lankan government shuts the door for a negotiated solution. The Sri Lankan State has demonstrated its unwillingness to commit to peace by taking the life of a strong political leader of Tamils.

'Only unable to compromise on commitment to Tamils'

Jon Hanssen Bauer, Norwegian special envoy for the peace process

"WE received the very sad news yesterday that S. P. Tamilselvan has been killed in the suburb of Kilinochchi. Anpumani or Alex whom we knew in the facilitation of the negotiation process was also among those who were killed.

Tamilselvan took part in all negotiation meetings in the peace process in 2002 and 2003, next in line of Anton Balasingam. Nearly for ten years he played a central role in the endeavours to find a political and peaceful solution to the Sri Lankan conflict.

Last year, he took part in negotiations in Geneva in February where he was the Chief Negotiator when Anton Balasingam became ill.

In all my visits to Sri Lanka and in my meetings with the visiting LTTE delegation, it was Tamilselvan who received me. He received all the other envoys in the same way, although he was a busy man in his position as the political head of the LTTE.

Over the years, he became LTTE's smiling face to the outside world, the most important channel, not only for Norway, but also for many other countries. In fact, he was the important link we had towards the LTTE.

His role was important for our understanding of the politics, point of view and analysis of the Tigers. He was a patient man in explaining the rightful demands of Tamils.

In the many and long conversations, I had with him, I gained the impression that he was a pleasant man of intelligence, patience and moderate outlook.

He was extremely well-formulated in his descriptive responses which were elegantly interpreted and conveyed to us by Mr. George. He impressed me as a person who was hopeful and was willing to find ways ahead, even in such situations in which things seemed impossible to others.

He never expressed anger or bitterness. He could only show a weak irritation on occasions when I insisted too much. We both knew that we were doing our jobs within our mandates.

I had the impression that whenever he was unable to meet the wishes put forward by Norway, he expressed regret and tried to find out an alternative way. As you could expect from a responsible negotiator, he was ready with the willingness to compromise.

He was a moderate person

within the LTTE, one who sought political alternatives. When he led the delegation to Geneva last year in October, he already evolved to the level of filling the gap created by the absence of Anton Balasingam.

The only area I noticed which he was not capable of compromising was his commitment of sacrificing himself to the cause of Tamils.

Within a year, both Anton Balasingam and Tamilselvan have passed away. We have lost the two leaders of the delegation who have played crucial roles.

They have left behind a big vacuum at a very critical juncture of the Sri Lankan process. Tamilselvan's demise is a big loss for all of us. The only way to honour him is to find a political solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka. Far too many have died; many children have lost their parents and many have lost their sisters and brothers.

Our deepest sympathies go to all the victims. Especially today, our sympathies go to the families of Tamilselvan and his colleagues who were killed in this terrible air attack of yesterday. Peace shall shine on their memories."

The Daily Mirror of 3 Nov reported that Comet Holmes appeared in the skies over Sri Lanka. Shakespeare said: "When beggars die there are no comets seen / The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

Canadian MPs mark Tamilselvan's death

The Globe and Mail

CANADIAN Liberal MPs took part in a community event Monday night commemorating the recent death of a senior member of the Tamil Tigers in defiance of the Conservative government's decision to list the organization as a terrorist entity.

S. P. Tamilselvan, 40, the public face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, was killed in an air strike by Sri Lankan authorities last Friday. The LTTE has long fought for an independent Tamil state; Mr. Tamilselvan was both the political chief and top peace negotiator in talks to end the decades-old civil unrest in Sri Lanka.

Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis told The Globe and Mail that he was on stage at the event alongside fellow Liberal MPs Derek Lee, Maria Minna, Yasmin Ratansi and Borys Wrzesnewskyj.

Mr. Karygiannis said he met Mr. Tamilselvan personally when

he visited the region after the 2004 tsunamis and had the approval of then-prime minister Paul Martin to do so. The LTTE should not be on Canada's terror list, he said.

"Here you've got a Conservative government that wants to divide and conquer and pit one community against another community," he said.

"I am encouraging the Canadian government to get involved and speak to both sides in order to find a long-lasting peace in the region."

The Scarborough MP said the Conservative policy divides immigrants from Sri Lanka along Tamil-Sinhalese ethnic lines.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government added the LTTE to the terror list as one of its first acts upon taking power.

According to David Poopalapillai, the national spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress, the death of Mr. Tamilselvan shows the Sri Lankan government was not interested in peace talks.



EDITORIAL

TAMIL GUARDIAN

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WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 07, 2007 No. 360

No Choice

Any rights the Tamils secure depend entirely on the outcome on the battlefield.

The targeted killing last Friday of Mr. S. P. Tamilselvan, the LTTE's Chief Negotiator and the head of its Political Wing, along with five other LTTE officials, by the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) shocked the Tamil community. Across Diaspora centres and in the homeland, there is palpable grief and anger. The specificities of the attack - whether the SLAF knew Mr. Tamilselvan was at the location, for example - are irrelevant: the military has been trying repeatedly to kill him for years, frequently bombing his offices, residences and convoys. The assassination is a quintessential reflection of the Sinhala mindset. President Mahinda Rajapakse, along with the vast majority of Sinhalese, see the island's ethnic problem purely as a Tamil terrorist challenge. For all the lip-service (and there's not much of that about now) about power sharing, the south is single-mindedly focused on a military victory. The abandon with which the military has for two years blasted Tamil villages, driven hundreds of thousands of Tamils from their homes and continues to abduct, torture and murder Tamils is underwritten by the confidence the international community, despite its distaste, is nonetheless solidly behind Colombo's war.

Both the Sinhalese and the international community have their legitimating theories. For the Sinhalese, once the LTTE is destroyed, the Tamils will docilely accept whatever limited (and decidedly undeserved) powers they are given. The leading members of the international community in Sri Lanka agree. But they also believe that once the LTTE is destroyed, the island can be 'developed' whereupon Sinhalese, Tamils and, for that matter, the Muslims, will come to see each other as fellow Sri Lankans and live happily ever after. Despite the decades of Sinhala oppression the Tamils have faced by successive governments since independence (i.e. three decades before Tamil militancy was triggered), the international community bases its strategy today off a utopian vision of an ethnic harmony to come. It is not that such a vision is impossible that is staggering but, rather, the belief it can be realized by enabling a violent Sinhala conquest of the Tamils followed by economic development.

The various reactions to the Sri Lankan military's assassination of Mr. Tamilselvan should serve as food for thought for anyone out there who still believes either that peace talks might end the bloodshed or, even more naively, that the international community will act to protect the Tamils against the rampages of the state. As President Rajapakse crowed in Parliament this week, he has

secured the assistance of the international community to defeat the Tigers. As we have argued before, for all the noise about human rights (and much of that has dissipated now), the state actually wants for nothing. Ironically, the more the international community is convinced the LTTE can be defeated, the freer the hand the Sinhala state will have.

Let there be no mistake; irrespective of the extent of the casualties or suffering the Sinhala military inflicts on Tamil civilians, the international community will not restrain the state. Not, that is, until the military is checked on the battlefield by the LTTE's counter-violence. At that point, as in 2001, international peaceniks will rush back to help Tamils and Sinhalese solve 'their' problem. The insistence by some international actors, especially those who proudly proclaim their support and assistance for the Sinhala state, that 'there is no military solution' is duplicitous. The solution must be political, we all know that. But it can be rammed down the Tamils' throats on the end of bayonet. Which is why several members of the international community advocating 'peace' in Sri Lanka have also banned the LTTE.

When Sinhalese unite

Last week Sinhalese reveled in Mr. Tamilselvan's assassination. Traditional drums were played in the street. Parties were organized at home. Some Buddhist temples held all night celebrations. For any Sinhalese who genuinely desires a negotiated solution, the killing of the other side's top diplomat should have been deeply worrying and regrettable. But very few in the south feel this way, something the Tamils need to bear in mind as they make their way in the time to come. For decades, when faced with violence and brutality by a Colombo government, many Tamils have rushed to the feet of the Sinhala opposition, voting it into power in a laughably futile effort to end their suffering, if only for a while. They have chased after the SLFP and UNP in turn, insisting, despite the evidence of their past suffering, that this time round it would be different.

In reality, for the Tamils, there is nothing to choose between the main Sinhala parties. This is because all of them are beholden to the sentiments of the majority of Sinhalese voters who, as is now starkly clear, bitterly oppose sharing of any power with the Tamils. The point was underscored this week by the reaction of the UNP - still the darlings, incidentally, of the 'peace through development' international community - to Mr. Tamilsel-

van's assassination. Firstly, the UNP hailed the killing as a 'great victory' for the (Sinhala) Air Force. It then went on to tacitly back Rajapakse's brutal war, saying there is 'no point' negotiating with the LTTE. Let us be clear; whenever the LTTE negotiates with the state, it is about the rights, powers and extent of self-rule that we, the Tamil people, are to have. The UNP, drunk with the same confidence in Sinhala military victory that the SLFP regime is, believes, like the government, that there is no point in negotiating with an enemy who is about to be defeated. The optimism may be misplaced, but the UNP sees no reason to hide it.

This week Tamils in the homeland and abroad have mourned Mr. Tamilselvan and his colleagues killed last Friday. We join them. Both Mr. Tamilselvan and Lt. Colonel Anpumani (Alex), who was also killed in Friday's airstrike, were friends of this newspaper. From the outset of the Norwegian peace process, concerned that the Tamil people be kept informed of developments, they, along with the LTTE's then Chief Negotiator, Mr. Anton Balasingham, went out of their way to ensure we were briefed on the peace process. We will miss them.

A time to struggle

Despite its bans on the LTTE, as the international community has openly acknowledged, every time the Tigers sit across the table from the Sinhala state, the interests they are negotiating for are those of the Tamil people. Whether it is a political solution - remember the fuss about the LTTE giving up independence for federalism? (Now the movement is thought to be weak, no one wants to use that word now) - or an interim administration or international aid for the Northeast, the Tigers were accepted by the state and the international community to be negotiating on behalf of the Tamils. Yet there is thundering silence after the Sinhala state assassinated the Tamils' chief negotiator. The international community has thus made it clear that any rights the Tamils secure depend entirely on the outcome on the battlefield. We therefore have to brace ourselves for an even more brutal military onslaught in the time to come. We must therefore be united in our resolve. Despite our skepticism, Tamil efforts to argue our case abroad, to win hearts and minds, must continue. But not in naïve optimism. If the state fails to defeat the LTTE then it will be compelled to negotiate with the Tamils. If it wins, we are lost. But, then, it was ever thus.

TAMILSELVAN FUNERAL

Tamilselvan's loss "consequence of international injustice"

MORE than 25,000 people took part in the funeral procession of Brigadier S. P. Tamilselvan, despite the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) Kfir bombers circling over the Kilinochchi town.

The remains of Brigadier Tamilselvan were taken in procession from the LTTE Peace Secretariat to Kilinochchi Cooperative Training Hall Monday morning and kept there for the public to pay their last respects. Liberation Tigers Intelligence Wing Chief Pottu Amman and the new Political Head, P. Nadesan, addressed the gathering.

"We tried our best to convince the International Community of our grievances. We are a small nation, struggling all alone to uphold our rights," said Poddumma, the intelligence wing chief of the Liberation Tigers, in the obituary address at the funeral of Brigadier Tamilselvan.

"But the International Community in an uneven judgement in applying its norms, scaled us with Sri Lankan government abounding with military and economic resources. The scale was not fair. The price we paid for the International Injustice is the life of Tamilselvan."

Narrating his close association with Tamilselvan in his early days in the LTTE, Poddumma recollected events of exemplary bravery and leadership, shown by Tamilselvan during IPKF times and the first Elephant Pass operation.

However, he continued, "many of us were not aware of the inherent political abilities hidden in him, but our leader Pirapaharan rightly identified them."

"Our leader always used to say that fear comes from attachment to life. Only one who is fearless to sacrifice his own life to the welfare of people can become a political leader - Tamilselvan was one such man."

"What is the payback for the killing of Tamilselvan, many ask us... A few Sri Lankan soldiers, perhaps thousands, or a few Sinhala leaders cannot match the price for Tamilselvan."

"The relentless effort to achieve Tamil Eelam is the price. The Sinhala nation should realise that we will never stop in this effort."

Brigadier Tamilselvan was laid to rest at Kanakapuram Heroes Cemetery at 7:45 p.m. His funeral cortege towards Heroes cemetery started around 4:45 p.m. and reached the cemetery at 6:15 as SLAF bombers circled over the town.

Several LTTE commanders, officials, religious leaders and Tamil National Alliance parliamentarians took part in the funeral procession.

In his address, Poddumma revealed that the LTTE came to know through briefings of Norway, that the Sri Lankan government blocked Tamilselvan's mother and siblings, living abroad, from attending the funeral.



TAMILSELVAN

Dubious logic of targeting leaders

J. S. Tissainayagam
TamilCanadian

TO many it might appear poetic justice. Only a fortnight ago the LTTE in one of its most daring Black Tiger attacks, destroyed or damaged almost 20 aircraft at the SLAF's Anuradhapura base.

The extent of the damage was such that expert and popular opinion predicted that with its air surveillance and intelligence gathering equipment destroyed, even if the SLAF retained air offensive capability, there was no way it could hit targets with accuracy.

But last Friday morning a bombing mission by the SLAF killed the LTTE's political wing leader, S. P. Tamilselvan and five other senior cadres. The Tigers made no bones about the fact that the SLAF had targeted the homes of its leadership.

As to whether the hits were a hit-or-miss effort that paid off, carelessness by the Tiger leadership, or if a fifth column behind the LTTE lines had tipped off the attackers, only time will tell.

In the armoury of the counterinsurgency the elimination or the debilitation of guerrilla leadership figures prominently. This is due to the importance leadership has in any insurgency. Leadership provides coherence, purpose and logic to a movement.

Especially in guerrilla warfare, where stealth and surprise is of utmost importance, military operations become known to the rank and file only at the time they need to know. Otherwise, they remain locked in the minds of the guerrilla leadership.

In the context of the war in Sri Lanka, India has consistently shown an interest in eliminating top-level leadership of the LTTE.

New Delhi has mapped out dealing with an LTTE without Tiger Leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. They believe it would be less hard-line and easier to handle. Even while the IPKF was on Sri Lankan soil attempts were made to eliminate him which failed.

An example of these moves is in the memoirs of Major General Harkirat Singh who was the first general-officer-commanding the IPKF in Sri Lanka.

He is quoted in a review of his book by A. G. Noorani: "On the night of 14/15 September 1987, I received a telephone call from (Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka) Dixit, directing me to arrest or shoot Pirabakaran when he came for the meeting. Telling Dixit that I would get back to him I placed a call to the OFC. Lt. Gen. Depinder Singh directed me to tell Dixit that we, as an orthodox Army, did not shoot people in the back when they were coming for a meeting under the white flag." (Frontline 08/Sept./07)

However, a study by Bruce Hoffman and Kim Cragin published in the Summer 2002 edition of the Rand Review says that targeting the top leadership of "terrorist" organisations do not always pay.

They cite the example of Israel's regular targeting of the Hamas and Hisbollah leadership as not being effective. The study recommends that it is the mid-level leadership that counterterrorist organisations should target.

"Targeting the top leaders of a terrorist group is often ineffective. The success or failure of a terrorist organisation's operations - and even perhaps its longevity -



Was Tamilselvan, serving in the political wing, a legitimate target of the counter-insurgency campaign?

depends more on the ability of the mid-level leaders to step into decision-making roles or carry out operational objectives than on the top leaders themselves."

But the study that covered insurgencies goes on to say that in the case of Peru, the arrest of Abmael Guzman a top level leader of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) was a contributory factor to the collapse of the organisation.

The assassination brings up the question as to whether Tamilselvan, now serving in the Tigers' political wing, was a legitimate target of the government's counterinsurgency operations.

Tamilselvan began his career in the LTTE as a combatant and is credited with having acquitted himself with distinction on the battlefield. It was an injury that brought him into the political wing of the LTTE, which he arose to head.

The fact that Prabhakaran

conferred on him the posthumous title of brigadier reveals his connection with the LTTE fighting cadre, but not necessarily in active service. His wounds anyway rendered him hors de combat. Posthumous promotions of ex-soldiers are part of military traditions everywhere.

Even in Sri Lanka, Sir John Kotalawela, former prime minister and a volunteer officer, was promoted general after his death. So was Ranjan Wijeratne, who was killed, while serving as minister of national security.

Whatever might be his past, Tamilselvan's substantive role at the time of his death, was in the field of politics. His role as a chief negotiator only complemented that of the head of the LTTE's political wing.

In other words, he worked to reach a political solution to the national question. He might have been consulted on military matters as an ex-combatant, but then so would, one imagines, the secretary ministry of defence, Colonel Gotabaya Rajapakse!

It will be interesting to see how the international community reacts to the killing. When civilian leaders die violently in government-controlled areas the international community condemns the act.

However there has hardly been any condemnation of the killing of LTTE cadres, though deaths like that of Kausalian were deplored because they would unravel the ceasefire.

To those who wish to draw parallels, Tamilselvan's counterpart on the government side is chief negotiator Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva. If the LTTE interprets the death of Tamilselvan as the killing of its peace negotiator, it will see the act as giving it elbow room to go beyond strictly military targets and armed forces personnel it has been targeting recently. The consequences of that are frightening to imagine.

Assassination, as anything else, can only be justified if it brings about the desired result to the agent. As such, the killing should either bring to the position of leader of the LTTE's political wing and chief negotiator someone who is less hard-line than Tamilselvan, or whose capability in discharging the duties in the two capacities is found to be wanting.

The study by Rand quoted above makes the following observation, "In the case of Hamas, Israel managed to deport almost its entire top-level leadership in 1992, but the strategy backfired. The top-level Hamas leaders had been relatively moderate, and their removal served only to radicalize the group. The mid-level leaders that stepped up in 1992 increased the use of suicide bombers to the extent seen in the attacks against Israel today." (Rand Review Summer 2002)

The LTTE as an institutionalised guerrilla movement that runs a semi-state is a collective body that has laid out procedures to deal with such eventualities.

Chief of the Tamil Eelam Police P. Nadesan has been appointed to head the political wing too. He accompanied the LTTE's delegations to negotiations with the government. Only time will tell how he performs, but to this writer, the change is unlikely to be more accommodative of the Sri Lankan state and its leaderships.

In what was an example of sound communication strategy, the LTTE publicised the information of the assassination a few hours of the incident. The statement was clear and unambiguous, unlike the statements of dithering Sri Lankan leaders on the loss of aircraft after the Anuradhapura attack.

The Daily Mirror of 3 November reported that Comet Holmes has appeared in the skies over Sri Lanka. Shakespeare said, "When beggars die there are no comets seen / The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

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TAMILSELVAN

Sacrifice, death and national vision

Dr. Chandra Bose
TamilCanadian

THERE is such a high premium placed on the Tamil nationalist struggle, human sacrifice is unimaginable. The loss of Tamil cadres, fighters and leaders in the past indicates that such sacrifices are unavoidable in the quest of national liberation.

The killings of Tamil Chelvan, LTTE's political wing head, and his five of his colleagues once against demonstrate that the high premium paid by Tamils for national salvation and dignity.

National liberation movements are built and sustained on the basis of collective solidarity and vision. While individual leaders are important, there is, however, a general acceptance of the necessity of supreme sacrifice.

This would explain why national liberation movements do not falter when certain individual leaders are killed or maimed in conflicts. On the contrary, history of liberation movements has shown that death of leaders do not necessarily constrain movements from achieving their political goals.

However, no movement willingly sacrifices its leaders or cadres. Sacrifice, death and injuries are often sustained in the collective struggle for a national good. No sacrifice is bigger than the goals of acquiring freedom from oppression and servitude.

In this respect, LTTE is no different from liberation movements like the African National Congress, Irish Republican Army, Free Aceh Movement, Free Papua Movement and many others.

Tamils in the island called Sri Lanka have made huge sacrifices in the pursuit of freeing themselves from the oppression of the majoritarian Sinhala state. The movement to liberate Tamils from the oppression of the Sinhala majority is under the leadership of the LTTE.

While the LTTE shares many features with other liberation movements, however, it is different in the sense it is the most determined movement to seek a separate state for Tamils in the northeast of Sri Lanka-area of historical Tamil habitation and control.

However, the determination of the LTTE to push for a separate state is not something devised by it alone. The inability of the Sinhala state to conceptualize and understand the sentiments of Tamils, the continued military occupation of Tamil areas, the

slow but sure attempt to colonize Tamil areas by Sinhalese, the difficulty posed by the international community and the opportunistic role played by India have left the LTTE with no option.

Under these difficult domestic and international circumstances, the LTTE is forced to rely on the strength of Tamils in the northeast of Sri Lanka and the support from the Tamil Diaspora to pursue the option of Tamil Eelam-a futuristic Tamil nation.

In comparison with other affected peoples, Tamils have put up with tremendous difficulty as result of the hardship imposed by the ruthless majoritarian Sinhala state.

In recent years, as result of the breakdown of ceasefire brokered by the Norwegians in February 2002, hundreds and thousands of Tamils have been displaced from their homes, hundreds have been abducted and killed by the combined forces of the Sri Lankan armed force and Tamil para-militaries and most importantly, sections of Tamils population have been denied food and other essentials by the Sri Lankan armed forces in the name of defeating the LTTE.

The suffering and humiliation of Tamils is something of a great worry and concern to the LTTE. While it is able to protect Tamils in areas under its control, it cannot do the same where the army is in control.

While the Sri Lankan armed forces have been beefed up with military supplies from the international community, the LTTE as a non-state actor has to rely on itself to acquire arms and ammunition to fend off attacks from the armed forces of the state.

In recent years, as result of the assistance rendered by countries like Pakistan and Israel, the Sri Lankan government has re-equipped its air force with bombers and fighter planes.

Aerial strikes in the name of defeating the LTTE have merely imposed further hardship on Tamils in the northeast. Hundreds of Tamils, women and children have been killed and injured in air strikes.

After each air strike, the government's propaganda machine announces to the world of the killing of the Tigers. But in reality, known to the government, these strikes are merely to terrorize innocent Tamils from supporting the national cause.



No sacrifice is greater than the dream of a separate and dignified state of Tamil Eelam

The difficult and trying circumstances of the war has meant that Tamils in general and the LTTE in particular have to make supreme sacrifices in pursuit of their goal. Over the last three decades of so, the LTTE has lost hundreds and thousands of cadres in the fight against the armed forces of the government. A few weeks back, the LTTE had to use its Black Tigers to destroy the government's air force based in Anuradhpura.

The LTTE has lost some very capable leaders in the past. This something very painful for the organization in general and to its leader Piraphakaran in particular. However, as I have said earlier,

no sacrifice is greater than the dream of a separate and dignified Tamil state of Eelam.

Tamil Chelvan was great Tamil diplomat. If he had remained alive and the future of Tamil Eelam secured, he would have been the nation's foreign minister. The death of Tamil Chelvan and his five dedicated men is a loss that will be mourned by the Tamil Diaspora for years to come.

But one thing is certain. Contrary to the prognosis of the right-wing Sinhala establishment, the loss of Tamil Chelvan is not going to derail the move to achieve an independent state.

In Aceh, the killings of some

leaders of the Free Aceh Movement including the commander did not derail the struggle for independence in the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, the freedom movement gained strength after these killings with entry of new individuals.

Similarly, it would be wrong to assume that the demise of Tamil Chelvan will be blow to the Tamil liberation movement. Tamils will keep his dream and commitment alive by increasing their support for the LTTE.

As Sinhala colonization increases in the East, more and more cadres from here will be joining the LTTE. Do they have an option?

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NEWS

UK urged to charge Karuna for war crimes

TamilNet

KARUNA, a former Tamil Tiger commander and later the leader of TMVP paramilitary group that has been deployed by the Sri Lankan forces in their war against the Tigers, has been arrested in Britain on suspicion of immigration offences, including travelling on a false passport, British press reports said this week.

International human rights groups are now calling on the UK government to investigate Vinayagamoorathi Muraleetharan (Karuna) for war crimes and are assembling evidence to see whether they can trigger a prosecution, reports said. Amid fears by rights groups that Karuna would be deported to Sri Lanka, some press reports said he had applied for asylum in Britain.

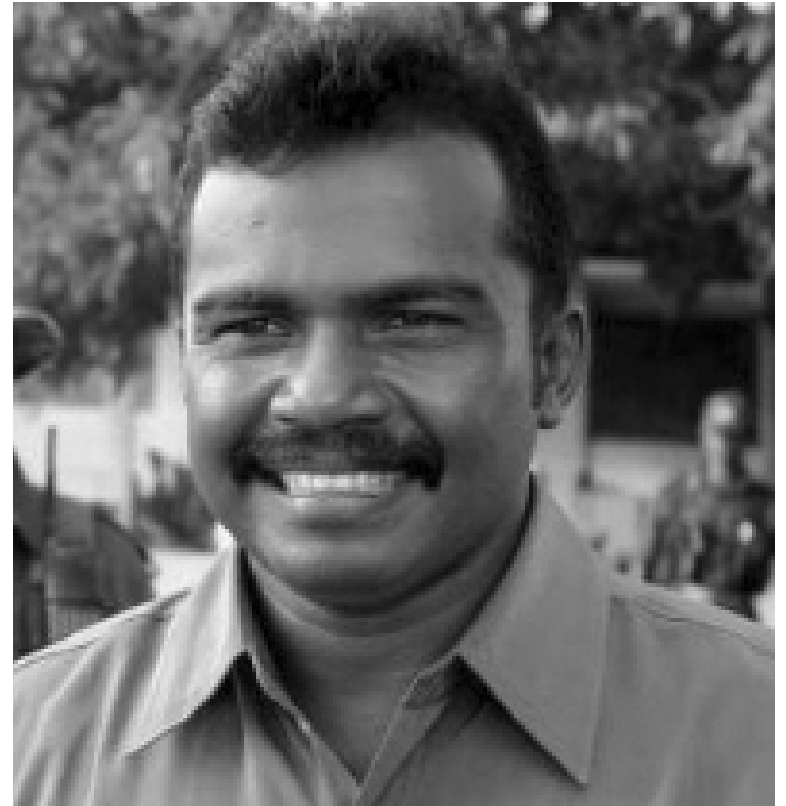
Muraleetharan alias Karuna was detained last Friday in a combined operation by immigration officials and the Metropolitan police, The Guardian newspaper reported.

It is thought the raid took place in London; his wife is also understood to be in the country, the paper said.

He was reportedly ousted last month following an internal coup in his paramilitary organisation, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP), which runs armed camps in eastern Sri Lanka.

Karuna, the Tamil Tigers' former eastern commander, had formed the TMVP in 2004 after his six week rebellion against the LTTE leadership collapsed, whereupon he defected to his erstwhile enemy, the Sri Lankan armed forces.

He was also allegedly used by



UK is being urged to try Karuna, who is allegedly claiming asylum after being arrested on suspicion of travelling on forged documents

the Sri Lankan armed forces did not need Karuna any more and were promoting Pillaiyaan instead.

The UK Home Office confirmed to The Guardian newspaper that former Tamil Tiger commander was being held in an immigration detention. It would not say whether his case was being studied by its internal war crimes unit.

The LTTE is banned in the UK as a terrorist group.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Coalition to Stop Child Soldiers are all

inquiry under UK law.

"If one person was to complain with credible evidence then there would have to be an investigation. We are in touch with international groups about bringing evidence to this country to help the police and prosecution services."

James Ross, legal and policy director of Human Rights Watch in New York, said: "We have raised our concerns with the UK government. We would like [the government] to see whether there's a valid basis under the principle of universal jurisdiction to prosecute Col Karuna for possible war crimes or human rights abuses such as torture."

Lucia Withers, Asia programme manager of the Coalition to Stop Child Soldiers in London, said a possible prosecution of Col Karuna would be an "exemplary" case.

The question is whether in Britain universal jurisdiction for war crimes extends to the use of children, she added.

Karuna has been accused of conspiring children.

The Home Office said: "We have a war crimes unit, formed in 2004, to ensure that we are not providing sanctuary to [war criminals]. Where appropriate we refer cases to the Metropolitan police for criminal action."

Human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, fear Karuna will be deported by the Home Office before he can be charged in Britain.

Meanwhile, the Hindustan Times reported that Karuna, who had been arrested by the UK authorities for travelling on a false passport, had applied for asylum.

"In many other countries that I have visited, there's real impunity ... for torture. This is not the case in Sri Lanka"

**- Manfred Nowak,
UN Special Rapportuer on Torture for
the Human Rights Council,
backing down from claims of wide-
spread torture in Sri Lanka (page 16)**

the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's foreign intelligence agency, in a failed attempt to forge a front between a India based paramilitary group, the ENDLF and the Karuna Group in the east.

This year the TMVP itself split, with the second-in-command, Pillaiyaan, breaking away, apparently with Sri Lankan government support.

The Hindustan Times said that

investigating the possibility of initiating an official investigation.

Charges can be brought in the UK by the government against those suspected of war crimes or torture committed anywhere in the world.

"Under article six of the Geneva conventions," an Amnesty spokesman said, "if the UK is satisfied there's reasonable testimony of torture the government would have to start a preliminary

NEWS

Rape by Sri Lankan troops - in Haiti

TamilNet

THE UN has asked Sri Lanka to prosecute 'to the fullest extent of the law' 108 Sri Lankan soldiers with the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti for sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of minors, including prostitution, the Sunday Times reported.

The number is one of the biggest single withdrawal of soldiers from a United Nations peacekeeping mission. During the conflict numerous local and international NGOs protested both frequent rapes by security forces and the climate of impunity in which they occur.

The charges against the Sri Lankan soldiers may include rape (which is constituted a "war crime" in the context of military conflicts) involving children under 18 years of age, the paper said.

The ejection of 108 out of Sri Lanka's contingent of 950 for sex crimes highlights the frequency of rape during Sri Lankan operation in the Northeast during the decades long conflict.

In 2001, the year before a ceasefire ended the fighting, Amnesty International said it "has noted a marked rise in allegations of rape by [Sri Lankan] police, army and navy personnel."

"Among the victims of rape by the security forces are many internally displaced women, women who admit being or having been members of the LTTE and female relatives of members or suspected male members of the LTTE," Amnesty said.

"Reports of rape in custody concern children as young as 14," Amnesty also said.

Amnesty said "to [our] knowledge, not a single member of the Sri Lankan security forces has been brought to trial in connection to incidents of rape in custody although one successful prosecution has been brought in a case where the victim of rape was also murdered."

Also in 2001, Amnesty wrote to then Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, "urging her to take action to stop rape by security forces and bring perpetrators to justice" in response to reports of rape by security forces "in Mannar, Batticaloa, Negombo and Jaffna."

"To date, no response has been received to the appeal," Amnesty later said in a special report titled "Sri Lanka: Rape in Custody" which was published in January 2002, just as the Norwegian brokered Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) came into being.

Earlier, in March 2000, the then United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomaraswamy, expressed her "grave concern" over the lack of serious investigation into allegations of gang rape and murder of women and girls by the Sri Lankan security forces.

In 2000, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)



108 Sri Lankan soldiers serving in the UN mission in Haiti are being sent back to Colombo amidst allegations of rape, including of children under 18, and of sexual abuse for profit (prostitution). Photo Sanka Vidanagama / AFP / Getty Images

protested that "Sri Lankan security forces are using systematic rape and murder of Tamil women to subjugate the Tamil population... Impunity continues to reign as rape is used as a weapon of war in Sri Lanka."

Apart from the ejection of 108 Sri Lankan troops from Haiti, the actions Colombo takes against them would also determine whether the UN will deploy Sri Lankan soldiers in future peacekeeping operations, the Sunday Times said.

A UN source told the paper that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would monitor what action the government proposed to take against the 108 soldiers who were part of a 950-member contingent from Sri Lanka.

"If they are found guilty, they should be punished for their crimes under the criminal justice system in the country," he said.

The UN would be very unhappy, he said, if only administrative and disciplinary actions were taken against the soldiers.

Asked how many soldiers would be repatriated, UN spokesperson Michele Montas told reporters Friday that all 108 soldiers would be repatriated on disciplinary grounds. The total number is one of the biggest single withdrawal of soldiers from a UN peacekeeping mission.

Asked about the nature of the charges, a UN spokeswoman said the allegations were against members of the Sri Lankan battalion stationed in a variety of locations in Haiti, and were of a "transactional sex" nature.

She also acknowledged that they involved prostitution, including in some cases with minors.

In its 1999 annual report, Amnesty International, said rape of female detainees was used amongst a range of torture methods.

In a statement to the UN in 1998, the World Organisation against Torture observed: "Sri Lankan soldiers have raped both women and young girls on a massive scale, and often with impunity,

since reporting often leads to reprisals against the victims and their families."

"The consistent policy of rape and violence against Tamil women that we have documented for many years is a fundamental military tactic of the Sri Lankan forces," International Educational Development, an NGO, also told the UN that year.

Human rights NGOs have frequently protested the impunity Sri

Lankan soldiers enjoy regarding rapes and other abuses.

"Only one of the thousands of rapes which have been reported, has resulted in a conviction," Pax Romana said.

"There also seems to be little point to expect justice on the basis of the constitution since the constitution itself provides the mechanisms and justifications for the commission of these war crimes and encourages impunity."

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NEWS

Torture in routine in Sri Lanka - UN

A TOP United Nations official last week charged the Sri Lankan government with inability to rein in "widespread torture practised by security forces" against the Tamil population in the island.

But under pressure from the Sri Lankan government, which dismissed the reports saying it adopts a "zero-tolerance" policy on torture, he backed off, following in the footsteps of other international observers who have backed down in the face of the government's aggression.

There is evidence that beatings, asphyxiations and burning are widely practiced by Sri Lankan security forces and use of torture is becoming routine dur-

ing counter-terrorism operations, Manfred Nowak, UN special rapporteur on Torture for the Human Rights Council, told the UN General Assembly committee dealing with social, humanitarian and cultural issues, known as the Third Committee.

However, Sri Lanka's Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe dismissed the UN official's comments, saying such conclusions did not figure in Nowak's preliminary findings.

"The Ministry of Human Rights strongly refutes any such conclusions which did not find any place in Nowak's preliminary findings," he said.

On being challenged by Sri

Lanka, Novak backed off - telling an interviewer "I should also say that notwithstanding the serious situation of armed conflict, Sri Lanka is a country that has managed to uphold an independent judiciary and a democratic system."

"I should add that in many other countries that I have visited, there's real impunity that nobody has ever been brought to justice for torture. This is not the case in Sri Lanka; so much is done, has been done and the government by inviting me also proved that it's willing to cooperate with the United Nations and to further improve the situation," he told Radio Australia - see transcript.

"The high number of indict-

ments for torture filed by the Attorney General's Office, the number of successful fundamental rights cases decided by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka, as well as the high number of complaints that the National Human Rights Commission continues to receive on an almost daily basis indicates that torture is widely practiced in Sri Lanka," Novak said.

He made this observation along with a list of recommendations following a week-long visit to Sri Lanka in early October. The UN official urged the international community to assist Sri Lanka follow up on recommendations.

During discussions with officials, Novak said that the use of

torture was not systematic in Sri Lanka, Samarasinghe was quoted by AFP as saying.

"At the meeting, Mr. Novak made it clear that his usage of the term 'widely practised' was in reference to instances of alleged torture that he witnesses in diverse locations ... that such alleged instances did not relate exclusively or predominantly to the conflict or conflict-affected areas," AFP said quoting Samarasinghe.

Samarasinghe maintained that Sri Lanka had adopted a "zero-tolerance" policy on torture and is closely studying Novak's preliminary recommendations with a view to strengthening local institutional and legal frameworks.

Sri Lanka has 'done so much' - Nowak

Following is the transcript of an interview by Linda Lopresti of Radio Australia with Manfred Nowak, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture for the Human Rights Council, following his recent visit to Sri Lanka.

NOWAK: First I should say that I was invited by the government, and I had the full cooperation of the government, but they did not want me to go to the LTTE area. So it means that I focused more on the general criminal justice system and I went to all kind of prisons, pre-trial detention centres, and police lockups and I heard many allegations and they had a forensic doctor who also corroborated that evidence. But most of the evidence that I found was in relation to the terrorist investigation department, so that means against suspected LTTE persons.

LOPRESTI: And those that alleged they were being tortured, were being tortured by security forces?

NOWAK: They were both tortured according to their allegations by the army, but also by the police and the terrorism investigation department people themselves, whether it was at the headquarters of the terrorist investigation department, or also the criminal investigation department in Colombo, or in the detention facility in Pussar itself.

LOPRESTI: And what kind of methods are being used?

NOWAK: Mostly it is beatings, but various forms of beatings, but then suspension or what we sometimes call Palestinian hangings, so that you are suspended with your hands cuffed behind your back. In two cases, we also found torture methods which I have never seen before, which is that people have been suspended on their thumbs, that creates very, very strong pain and people then of course also were unconscious. These were allegations against the army.

LOPRESTI: Has the kind of torture worsened or is it more common, given that as far back as 1999, Amnesty International were saying that torture is among the most common human rights violations reported in Sri Lanka?

NOWAK: I mean torture has a long history in Sri Lanka, but after the ceasefire agreement with the LTTE, the situation certainly improved and in recent years, in particular under the present government and again under the emergency regulations you can detain persons up to one year by the police, so without being under pre-trial detention. And most of the persons whom we found had credible allegations of torture and

those also that were cooperating for medical evidence. Those were persons held for a prolonged period of time under these detention orders.

LOPRESTI: But Sri Lanka does have measures in place to prevent torture. In 1994, the government in-acted the torture act, so is it your view that the law is not being upheld here?

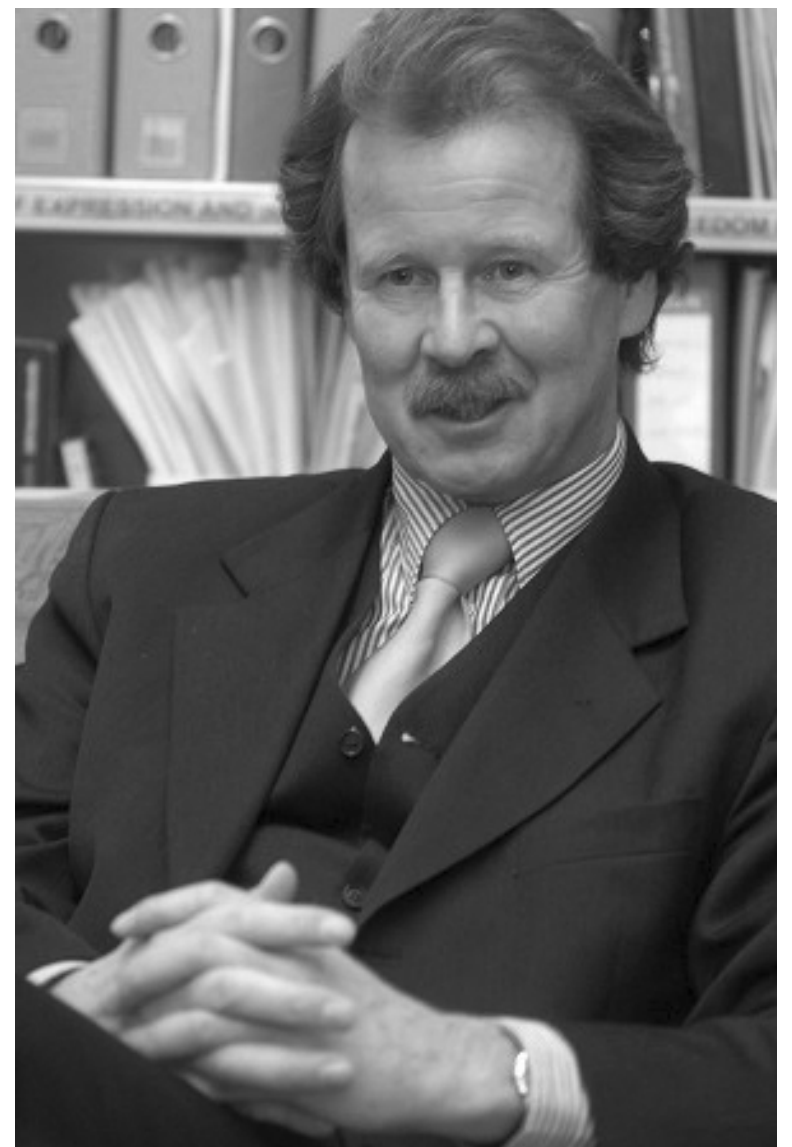
NOWAK: No, I should also say that notwithstanding the serious situation of armed conflict, Sri Lanka is a country that has managed to uphold an independent judiciary and a democratic system.

So the 1994 act is a very good example that torture was criminalised and we have quite a few cases where the Attorney-General indicted police officers or other persons for torture, but we have only had three convictions in those 13 years.

One of the reasons might be that the minimum sentence is very severe. It's seven years and that might be a disincentive for judges not to actually convict a person of torture.

But I should add that in many other countries that I have visited, there's real impunity that nobody has ever been brought to justice for torture. This is not the case in Sri Lanka; so much is done, has been done and the government by inviting me also proved that it's willing to cooperate with the United Nations and to further improve the situation.

LOPRESTI: Yet earlier in October, Sri Lanka actually rejected demands for international monitoring of human rights in the country, after UN human rights chief Louise Arbour warned of a disturbing lack of investigation



Nowak: No 'real impunity' for torture in Sri Lanka

into reports of killings and abductions?

NOWAK: That is unfortunate. Louise Arbour and I made the same recommendation. It's my experience if the high commissioner of human rights establishes an office in a country, which has opposed monitoring and human rights cooperation functions, that usually improves the situation. I know that the government is in the course of establishing further

domestic bodies for such monitoring.

But, of course, international monitoring is always more effective unless you have really independent domestic bodies. So we also propose that a more independent national preventive mechanism should be established with the right to carry out unannounced visits to all places of detention. That is a very strong preventative tool.

"I respect them profoundly and consider them as the most disciplined Forces in the world. They have not killed or raped anybody."

- President Mahinda Rajapakse after the UN repatriated 108 soldiers amidst allegations of sexual exploitation (page 15)