

The Tamil have to be united if they are to be free

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Russia recognises independence of South Ossetia, Abkhazia



Thousands of Abkhazian residents at a rally in Sukhumi on August 21. South Ossetia and Abkhazia held rallies to ask Russia for recognition as independent states, weeks after Russian troops occupied both regions. The demonstrations aimed to put a popular stamp on appeals made by the separatist leaderships for Moscow to recognise their self-declared independence. This week, Russia formally recognised the regions as independent state, but the West has denounced the move Photo STR/AFP/Getty Images

RUSSIA has defended its decision to recognize two breakaway Georgian provinces, saying Tbilisi's attack on South Ossetia earlier this month canceled existing United Nations resolutions that assure Georgia's territorial integrity and created a "new reality".

Reading a statement from his Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Ambassador to the UN, Vitaly Churkin said his government has recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the face of an

"aggressive, chauvinistic policy pursued by Tbilisi."

He said Russia showed great patience in waiting this long to recognize the two breakaway regions and its decision to do so was unanimous in the Russian parliament.

"We waited for such a long time," Churkin said. "They have been urging us to recognize them for years now, so there was a remarkable patience on display from the Russian Federation."

Churkin said Russia has no intention of annexing the two

provinces, where many of the residents hold Russian nationality.

In a separate news conference, Georgia's UN Ambassador Irakli Alasania rejected the Russian move, saying it would further inflame an already dire situation.

"This step has no international, legal consequence," he said. "It has no impact on the internationally established borders of Georgia, and will not change in any way the international community's stand on the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Georgia."

But Russia's ambassador disputed that, saying Georgia's August 8 attack on South Ossetia negated existing UN resolutions that guarantee Georgia's territorial integrity.

"Their use of force against South Ossetia clearly dashed all those previous resolutions and created a completely new reality," said Churkin.

Western powers do not agree with Russia on that point, and many diplomats pointed out Tuesday that all previous Security Council resolutions reaffirming

Georgia's borders and sovereignty remain in effect and cannot be reversed through military action.

Earlier this month, Russia, Georgia and the breakaway provinces signed a peace plan comprised of six points, which include the opening of international talks on security arrangements for Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Ambassador Churkin says Moscow still subscribes to these points, despite its decision to recognize the provinces' independence before such talks can take place.



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NEWS



President Rajapakse (r) and Army Chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka (c) at a Buddhist ceremony to invoke blessings on the all-Sinhala armed forces, engaged in pitched battles with the Tamil Tigers in the north

Rajapakse predicts victory, Army sees challenges ahead

THE Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse and his brother, the Defence Secretary, Gotabaya Rajapakse predicted imminent victory even as the Army chief predicted great challenges ahead in its campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Gotabhaya Rajapakse, brother of President Mahinda Rajapakse, speaking to the Times newspaper in London declared: "It's possible by the end of this year,"

"You have to search for them and completely eradicate them. Only then can peace come," he added.

Addressing an election rally of his United People Freedom Alliance (UPFA) at Ruwanwella in Sabaragamuwa province,

President Rajapaksa, who is also the Commander-in-Chief, mirrored his brother's view and declared: "We liberated the eastern province and will liberate the north too very shortly"

"There is no turning back under any circumstances or influence now, until every inch of land is recaptured and each and every terrorist is killed or captured," the state-run Daily News quoted the president as saying at the rally.

Whilst the Rajapakse brothers saw imminent victory, the Sri Lankan Army chief saw big battles in the near future.

Last week, Fonseka, warned his soldiers that the future would be more challenging for them as they move forward to capture

LTTE administered territory in Vanni.

"I am very happy with the progress so far made on all Wannu fronts. We are now quite close to Kilinochchi. Though our future targets would be more challenging, I am sure we would be able to face them. Try to maintain the highest degree of morale among soldiers by speaking to all of them" said Fonseka when he addressed troops in Vavuniya on Friday August 22.

"Let us reach our targets with determination in the near future," Fonseka told the gathering of Divisional and Brigade Commanders, who briefed him on the current developments in respective areas.

Pakistan to arm Sri Lanka for 'final push' on LTTE

PAKISTAN has pledged to one shipload of the wherewithal every 10 days in coming months to help the Sri Lankan its final push to wipe out the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), according to Sri Lankan media.

"Pakistan has promised one ship-load of wherewithal every ten days in the coming months," the Sunday Leader newspaper said in its edition dated August 17.

"And all this support is thanks largely to the personal rapport between Army Commander Sarath Fonseka and Pakistan Army's Chief of Staff Ashfaq Pervez Kayani who had conceded to the request of Lieutenant General Fonseka at a time Sri Lanka Army was in urgent need of supplies."

"The Pakistani General who was formerly Director of Secret

Services, the Inter Services Intelligence, in a show of solidarity with General Fonseka agreed at the risk of depleting his own army's stocks to help meet Sri Lanka's requirements since it would otherwise have taken considerable time for Pakistan's ordnance factories to manufacture the Sri Lankan requirements which were of an urgent nature," the paper added.

However, a Taliban bomb attack outside Pakistan's main ordnance complex on Thursday, August 21 has raised concerns within the Sri Lankan defence establishment.

The attack on Wah factory in Islamabad, a heavily guarded complex, the hub of Pakistan's defence industry where about 25,000 workers produce explosives, ordnance and weapons in

about 15 factories, could disrupt Pakistan's plans to provide military supplies to Sri Lanka.

This is the second time Pakistan is helping Sri Lanka militarily in its hour of need. The last time it did was in 2000 when the 30,000-strong Sri Lankan army contingent in Jaffna was under an LTTE siege. At the time, Pakistan rushed Multi-Barrel Rocket Launchers (MBRLs) and ammunition to assist the besieged Sri Lankan Army.

With military analysts predicting major battles in coming weeks and months, the army needs ammunition in large quantities. Sri Lanka manufactures no arms, though it has been fighting a modern war since 1983-84. The main suppliers have been China, Pakistan, and the East European countries.

NEWS

LTTE calls on Tamils to unite behind freedom struggle

B NADESAN, the head of LTTE political wing, K. V. Balakumaran, the senior and prominent member of LTTE and Thamilini, LTTE Women's Wing Political Head called for the Tamil people to unite and pursue the freedom struggle, at a rally in Vanni.

Nadesan idescri-bed how support of Tamil people has transformed the liberation struggle over the years and decla-red that Tamils should join forces to provide a powerful response to the Sri Lankan government's military aggression.

"Tamil people must bring together all their strength to provide a powerful response to the Sri Lankan government," Nadesan said.

Citing peoples support for the liberation movement over the years Nadesan said: "At every key phase of our liberation struggle, people power has been instrumental in its development and growth."

This is the time to respond. If we want to put a stop to the Sinhala atrocities, as in the past our people must come together and join forces.

He referred to the contribution made by the Tamil people during the successful Mullaithivu military complex I 1996, LTTE's resistance to Jeyasikuru military campaign during 1997 and 1998 and Unceasing Waves 3 in 1999 in his speech.

"The Tamil liberation movement has fought Sri Lankan military which has the support of superpowers for 30 years. History teaches us that no super power can suppress a liberation struggle with people power."

Referring to Indian National Security Advisor, M.K. Narayan's comments to The New Strait Times newspaper, Nadesan said: The Indian Defence Advisor M K Narayan has stated that the LTTE cannot be defeated as long as they have people support. This is a good example.

"The Tamil liberation movement and the Tamil people cannot be separated. The people and LTTE are one and the same."

"As long as the people unite

behind the Tamil liberation movement, no power can destroy us."

Commenting on the current military strategy of Sri Lanka he said: "The Sri Lankan forces are weak and have overstretched themselves. The aggressive recruitment that's going on the south is a good indication of this."

"A Sinhala politician recently said 'the Sri Lankan forces are walking into a LTTE trap.' They are walking into a trap when they are weak. Our people must join hands as people forces to fight them."

"The Sinhala government and its forces are bent on wiping out the Tamils. This is the time to respond. If we want to put a stop to the Sinhala atrocities, as in the past our people must come together and join forces."

K V Balakumaran, senior member of the LTTE, speaking at the rally said: Our freedom struggle is moving forward, overcoming obstacles. Liberation struggles across the globe have made great sacrifices to win freedom. Our struggle is also moving forward with great sacrifices."

"Our enemy has launched a brutal attack against our people. However our movement will give an apt response soon."

"In the past, Makkal Padai (Peoples' forces) has been key in achieving great victories. Liberation struggles peoples participation always succeeds," he added.

Thamilini, LTTE Women's Wing Political Head in her speech said the Tamils were at a decisive stage of their long liberation struggle.

"Today Tamil people have been forcibly displaced and are facing immeasurable suffering. Displacement is not new to Tamils. However the difficulties they are facing is horrifying," said Thamilini.

"If our people want to return their land, the occupied areas should be liberated and the enemy should be defeated. All Tamils should prepare for this."

"Sri Lanka is pouring in all its resources into its war effort. The Indian Defence Advisor M K Narayan has stated that the LTTE cannot be defeated as long as they have people support. This is a good example."

"Only fighting back will save Tamil lives. We must prepare for this. All Tamils must stand together to inflict pain to the enemy who are unleashed suffering on our people," she declared.



LTTE soldiers set up an anti-tank gun during a training exercise in Vanni.

India warns Sri Lanka of Tamils' resentful hostility

INDIA warned its neighbour, Sri Lanka, that even if it wins the battle it might not win the war because the Tamils are not on their side.

The warning came from India's National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan. Speaking to The Straits Times newspaper, Narayan said: "I know the Sri Lankan government will be unhappy (at this advice) but we are not interested in preaching to them and that is the best advice they could get. India can give this advice better than the Norwegians or any other country. These are people that we know, we understand. Do they want a situation like many countries have faced?"

"What the Sri Lankans are not factoring in is the great deal of sullenness in the Tamil man. There are accusations of profiling even in Colombo. Our argument is: unless you give Tamils a feeling they have the right to their own destiny in many matters you will not succeed."

"I think they haven't got the Tamil population on their side," he added.

Stating that Iraq was a good example, Narayanan said: "What we are telling them is, get the Tamils on your side by greater devolution of power. For them to be part of Sri Lankan state, they need the huge Tamil minority on their side."

Commenting on the progress of the war, Narayan said the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) 'have been weakened' and have 'met with heavier casualties than previously.'

"The (Sri Lanka Army) has made a lot of progress in the last few weeks. But even if they win the battle I am not sure they will win the war," Narayan said.

"All signs are that they are having problems. They are also hurting because of the ban in many Western countries, so they have problems in fund collection,

movement of arms.

Although Narayan felt that Sri Lanka might be unhappy with his advice, Sri Lanka reacted coolly, interpreting his comments as endorsement of the government's war effort.

"There is nothing bad against Sri Lanka in what Narayanan has said.. It is significant that he has said the military is winning. And, he has never said that we should talk to the LTTE. These are very positive things" Defence Secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse said."As for Narayanan, I understand him very well. I know his vision."

However, analysts questioned how well Rajapakse knew Narayan's vision, considering he had missed out the main point which he clearly summarized by saying: "Our argument is: unless you give Tamils a feeling they have the right to their own destiny in many matters you will not succeed."

Even on the matter of negotiating with the LTTE, some analysts observe that Rajapakse may have got the wrong end of the stick.

Narayan is said to be of the view that if the Sri Lankan government is to go for peace negotiations with the LTTE, it must first be on a sound footing. Negotiations, if any, must commence after the LTTE is weakened. Today, in Narayan's own analysis the LTTE is weak.

According to Sri Lankan media Narayanan's comment could be the forerunner of an Indian intervention.

Reinforcing media speculation of an Indian intervention, an online media reported, India, through its high Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Alok Prasad, has requested Sri Lanka to initiate negotiations as per an agreement reached between Indian premier Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Rajapakse during the SAARC summit.

However, some analysts are of the opinion that Narayan's comments are aimed at soothing TamilNadu leaders. At a time, when anti-Sri Lankan sentiments are running high due regular killings of TamilNadu fishermen by Sri Lankan navy, a poll conducted by an influential magazine earlier this month showed that there is strong support for the LTTE and the Eelam cause in the south Indian state.

The Congress led central government is concerned with the developments. It is keen to show TamilNadu that it shares the concerns of the people of the state on the wellbeing of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Narayan's comments are seen in this context by these analysts.

As if to validate this argument, Narayanan on Monday August 25 met the Chief Minister of TamilNadu Muthuvel Karunanidhi and assured that there will be no firing by the Sri Lankan Navy on Indian fishermen.

Speaking to journalists, after the meeting Narayan said: "In the event of arrest of the fishermen, they would be released in the 'shortest possible time.' They would be given 'humanitarian treatment as far as possible,' and there would be no 'maltreatment' of the Indian fishermen'."

A personal visit by Narayan to TamilNadu to provide an assurance on behalf of Sri Lanka is seen as an indication of the close ties between the governments of India and Sri Lanka.

Unfortunately for Narayan, at least eight Indian fishermen with five boats were reported missing Sunday (August 24) after alleged attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy.

K. Vishwanathan, a 48-year-old fisherman, said a flotilla of over 450 Indian fishing vessels was attacked by the island's defence personnel who confiscated their catch, disrobed the fishermen and assaulted them.

NEWS

Fuel crisis cripples Vanni relief effort

TamilNet

MORE than 100,000 Internally Displaced People in Vanni, languishing in dark beneath shrubs, bushes and in public buildings throughout Kilinochchi district, and affected by various hardships imposed by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has crippled the ability of the IDPs to move themselves and their belongings, according to the Government Agent of Kilinochchi district. 134,868 IDPs belonging to 35,353 families are heavily affected by the economic blockade in Kilinochchi district. Meanwhile the rainy season has begun in Vanni and more than 75 percent of the families are getting drenched by the torrential rain.

Since 2006 Colombo had imposed a wide spread economic blockade in Vanni. There was a total ban on transporting many items including fuel, iron rods, cement, spare parts for motor vehicles and bicycles. This precipitated a wave of problems in the region. Construction of various buildings including houses being built for Tsunami victims, stalled. The local transport was crippled.

The supply of petrol and diesel for Kilinochchi District was completely banned and only 500,000 litres of kerosene oil per month was permitted by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence. The activities including those of the

government departments were conducted only in a very limited scale due to various restrictions. The limited amount of kerosene was apportioned among the civilian population on the basis of 5 litres per family. However due to the recent influx of war affected people from the Mannaar district and the bordering areas, the amount of kerosene per family has been drastically reduced and they are being issued only one litre per month.

When asked about the present situation the Government Agent (GA) of the district said: "We are facing a severe fuel crisis. We understand the hardships faced by the displaced people living under unsafe conditions under the shade of the trees and bushes. With the available, meager supply of fuel we are able to distribute only one litre of kerosene per family."

One litre of kerosene is sold at 95 rupees in Multi Purpose Cooperative Societies (MPCS). Private traders are selling one litre of petrol at 950 rupees. One litre diesel costs 400 rupees while engine oil is being sold at 1450 Rupees. Kerosene oil is sold at 250 rupees per litre. However, even at these prices they are not available at all business establishments.

The details of the quantity of fuel (in litres) available in the eight cooperative societies were submitted to the Government



A displaced woman comforts her children. Over 100,000 people have been forced to flee their homes

Agent on July 04, 2008.

Karaichchi East - No Stock
Poonahari - 1,590
Akkaraayan - 47,455
Pachchchlaippalli - 15,088
Thiruvaiyaaru - 7,270
Vadamaraadchi East - 3,066
The stock details of Karaichchi South and Karaichchi North were not available.

Petrol and diesel were not available in any of these cooperative societies.

Similarly, the managers of the eight cooperative societies attending the meeting held August 12 at Kilinochchi District Secretariat to discuss the need for essential items told the Government Agent that their stock of fuel has been exhausted.

Up to August 12 only seven bowzers and two Lorries carrying fuel arrived in the district, according to the GA.

Jaffna Bishop's plea over plight of Tamil refugees

BISHOP of Jaffna, Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam, urged the Sri Lankan government authorities to ensure the safety of the civilians and also appealed to all Catholics in the Jaffna peninsula to contribute to a relief fund to assist the internally displaced in Vanni.

Speaking to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, Bishop Savundaranayagam described how nearly 200,000 civilians fled their homes because of the fighting between Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in recent weeks.

The refugees, who have been driven to Kilinochchi district by the fighting, face a bleak situation, living rough and taking shelter under the trees.

"They have no place to stay and little to eat" said the Bishop.

"There is no shelter, no water, no toilets, no food, and no medical assistance," he said.

Tents and other essential items were not being allowed in to the area, even though they were desperately needed to provide shelter for the homeless.

The bishop also accused the Sri Lankan army of blocking the supply of food and medicine into Vanni through the Omanthai check point. He also hit out at the fact that medical aid was not being allowed through the check point to reach the homeless.

"The government is not permitting necessary medicine," he said.

Although the Sri Lankan military has always adopted indiscriminate bombing and shelling as a tactic, in recent weeks it has

stepped targeting civilian population centres including hospitals and schools.

"In this war the civilians are the ones who get hurt. May God preserve them in this on-going war," the bishop added.

Meanwhile, the critical situation in Vanni was discussed last Monday in a meeting organized by Jaffna Bishop Rt. Rev. Thomas Saundranayagam where the attendees decided to hold special mass on Sunday in all Catholic churches in the peninsula to pray for the IDPs and organize a relief fund.

Rev. Vasanthaseelan, the

They have no place to stay and little to eat. There is no shelter, no water, no toilets, no food, and no medical assistance

director of Caritas of the Social Economic Development Centre (SEDEC) for Vanni, in an interview to Catholic Guardian, said that in 15 days in July 50,000 people belonging to 9,175 families have been displaced from places including Muzhangkaavil, Mallaavi and Naachchikudaa .

The IDPs have sought refuge in the areas of Akkaraayan, Skanthapuram, Vannearikkulam and Koaddaikkaddiyakulam in Kilinochchi district, he said.

The IDPs are in desperate need of temporary shelters, essential food, and medicine, and the funds raised will help to ease their suffering, he added.

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NEWS

Jaffna clergy protests suffering of Vanni people

AMID pouring rain and thundering blasts of artillery and mortar shells, more than 170,000 Internally Displaced Persons in Vanni are facing a great human tragedy, which is calculatedly concealed from the world outside, said Rev. Fr. James Pathinathan, the president of the Vanni branch of the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Jaffna, in an urgent appeal to the U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, on Tuesday.

"If the International Community doesn't act at once, it will be too late," he told TamilNet after handing over the memorandum to the Residential Representative of the UNHCR in Vanni.

"If the International Community fails to take such a bold step, it would lead the Tamils to think that the IC is supporting the military agenda of the GoSL, at the cost of the lives of the innocent IDPs in Vanni," he told TamilNet.

A ceasefire will greatly help NGOs taking food and other essentials to the IDPs who face the risk of annihilation, he said.

"The International Community and other interested nations, if they want to usher in peace with justice in Sri Lanka, they must first effect an immediate cease fire and address urgent humanitarian needs of the innocent civilians here," he added.

In his appeal to U.N. Secretary General, Fr. Pathinathan noted that epidemics were threatening the people in the absence of sufficient medical facilities. "Drinking water has become a scarce commodity."

The JPC staged a protest march against the Sri Lanka government's war on Vanni civilians, joined by hundreds of people including religious heads that began from Ki'linochchi St. Theresa's Church at 10:15 a.m. Tuesday.

Following is the full text of the appeal signed by Rev. Fr. James Pathinathan:

JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION - WANNI
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JAFFNA
St. Theresa's Church, Kilinochchi

His Excellency Ban Ki Moon
The Secretary General
United Nations.
Date: 26 August, 2008

Your Excellency,

PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF WANNI

Wanni has been the eye of the war storm for the past two years. Deaths, injuries, displacements and attendant misery pervade the lives of the innocent Tamil civilians. The Draconian economic embargo imposed slyly on Wanni has become a monstrous obstacle even in giving relief and solace to the 170,000 persons recently displaced. Day and night, Wanni is thundering with Artillery Guns, Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers, Supersonic fighter jets and Naval gunboats.

A great human tragedy is exploding in Wanni which is calculatedly concealed from the world outside.

The Sri Lankan Government and its Security Forces with scant regard to, leave alone the Geneva Ethical Codes on the Conduct of War, humanitarian concerns for their fellow citizens, wage an aggressive and ruthless war in Wanni. The sanctity of the civilian settlements, hospitals, schools and places of worship are blatantly violated with impunity.

The Sri Lankan security forces heavily bombard villages after villages forcing the people to flee from their traditional homeland. Not once, but again and again displacements continue. Even before the displaced people begin to settle down in one place, they are shelled to flee again. This inhuman exodus goes on and on. People are languishing under trees and on the waysides under the scorching sun and dusty winds, and in pouring rain and thundering blasts of artillery and mortar shells. Only a few of the displaced take shelter in schools, places of worship and with friends and relatives. All these innocent people continue to live amidst severe deprivations.

The assistance that reach the people from GOs, NGOs, INGOs and the people of goodwill, even though praiseworthy, are not adequate to cater to the basic human needs of theirs. Even though the Government claims to allow all the necessary amenities, essentials such as Tarpaulin sheets, water containers, fuel, medical supplies and food are drastically slashed at the entry-exit points in reality. There are severe restrictions imposed on the movement



Catholic priests including Fr. James Pathinathan and Wanni civilians taking part in the protest march.

of the INGOs thus hampering their humanitarian services to the helpless displaced people.

Besides the old and the sick, pregnant women and lactating mothers and children are the most affected ones. School children are subjected to untold hardship and bitter and traumatic experiences. The General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) examinations is being held in the country now and imagine the plight of these children who are sitting this exam under these tragic conditions.

If the situation is such with the grown ups, imagine the plight of Grade 5 children who sat for the

scholarship exam on the 17th August, 2008. Epidemics are threatening the people in the absence of sufficient medical facilities. Drinking water has become a scarce commodity.

These innocent people continue to live amidst dire distress.

These fundamental human rights violations strike all over Wanni, and the truth of which doesn't reach the world at large. There are numerous obstacles calculatedly laid across the path of truth so that the dissemination of it is effectively arrested. Instead, diabolic lies are spread with ease. Prevention of the media personnel from entering Wanni and

reporting impartially on the horrendous situation of the innocent Tamil people is the most cruel and cunning mode of the repressive violence perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Government.

The call of the hour is urgent. Protect the people of Wanni who are threatened with death and destruction and dehumanization.

This is an ardent appeal from the Justice and Peace Commission - Wanni to the people of goodwill all over the world.

Fr. James Pathinathan,
The President,
Justice and Peace Commission - Wanni

EDITORIAL & OPINION

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Why Flexibility Breeds Contempt

The importance of standing firm and united on Tamil Eelam

Russia's recognition this week of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states and the Western recognition of the independence of Kosovo in February are important developments in the dimensions of the Tamil liberation struggle. The West has reacted angrily to Russia's moves over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, just as Moscow did earlier this year over Western support for a free Kosovo. The most strident defenders of 'territorial integrity' have thus proven ready to abandon this 'principle' the moment it suits their strategic interests. Even India, long positioned alongside the West and Russia as committed to Sri Lanka's territorial integrity, readily dismembered Pakistan to create Bangladesh in 1971.

Western states have this week been citing international law to justify their opposition to the freedom of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Ironically, Russia is also citing international law for supporting their independence. It is therefore clear that the inconsistencies among the unenforceable (except by the powerful states against weak states) rules of international 'law' allow plenty of room for recognition of new states. Both Russia and the West cited genocide and oppression by Georgia and Serbia respectively for their pro-independence interventions of 2008. Genocide was underway in these places, but there are many other sites where Russia and the West have supported murderous regimes. Sri Lanka is a classic example.

There are two lessons the Tamils can draw from the successful freedom struggles of the Kosovans, Eritreans, East Timorese and, now the South Ossetians and Abkhazians. Firstly, the reasons routinely given by powerful states for not recognizing the Tamil demand for self-determination are bogus. Territorial integrity and sovereignty are, according to both the West and Russia, contingent on the states concerned behaving responsibly towards the peoples within their territories. Sri Lanka's brutality towards the Tamils is now undisguised, but the First World bastions of democracy are standing firmly with the chauvinist ethnocracy. It is also notable that for all the support they gave Georgia, the US and Europe did not persuade the Georgians to treat the South Ossetians and Abkhazians with respect and dignity. Instead, like in Sri Lanka, this year they encouraged Georgia to militarily crush these freedom struggles.

Western backing for a 'negotiated solu-

tion' to Sri Lanka is also equally false. This is a mantra maintained to disguise their extraordinary support for Sri Lanka's brutal military project. The West is simply waiting for the Sinhalese to crush the Tamil Tigers. Thereafter, the Tamils will be abandoned to accept whatever status the Sinhalese give them. Remember, the Western democracies are less interested in ending the oppression of the Tamils than in doing business with the Sinhala leaders when the LTTE is not around to disturb the investment atmosphere in Colombo. Western support for democracy, federalism, autonomy, human rights protection and so on are patently false. The states have not stood up for these principles in many other places. Indeed, the only places where a lasting solution has emerged is when the 'terrorism' of the oppressed people has proven impossible to destroy militarily.

Western confidence that the Tamils can be pacified has come about to a great extent because even when we are being brutalized, the Tamils have been looking for compromises with the Sinhalese - instead of standing up clearly for our rights as a nation. In short, it is precisely because the Tamils keep bending over backwards to show that we are flexible (and the Sinhalese are intransigent) that a belief has emerged that we are a people without dignity, ever ready to accept less than we are due. On what basis can some Western states assert 'most Tamils don't want Eelam' other than because the Tamils still keep saying they are prepared to accept devolution, autonomy, federalism, etc? Notice how those Tamils hailed by the West as 'moderates' are usually spineless collaborators of the Sri Lankan state - that is because powerful states think these individuals, not the defiant - i.e. 'fanatical' - Liberation Tigers, reflect the mentalities of the ordinary Tamil.

Thus, the second and most important lesson for the Tamils from the successful freedom struggles of the recent past, is to stand united behind a single goal: an independent Tamil Eelam. Being flexible on the right to self-determination does not impress powerful states and find favour with them, it only breeds contempt for us. Being 'reasonable' and prepared to compromise will count for nothing as these states, including the liberal democracies of the West will not stand up for principles of popular will, democracy, justice and so on - unless it suits their strategic interests.

Genocide, territorial integrity and international 'law'

What are the lessons for the Tamils from Kosovo, Abkhazia and South Ossetia?

J. T. Janani
Tamil Guardian

UNTIL about a month ago, most people paid no attention to the two liberation struggles of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Both are de-facto states that, having declared their wish to be independent of Georgia in 1992, have been running their own affairs, with the support of Russia, ever since.

Both regions have their own state structures and governments - self-rule in Abkhazia has been conducted via their own parliament. But despite these two peoples' demonstrable desire to rule themselves, the West would not accept their claims and instead insists their homelands belong to Georgia.

A month ago, in a major miscalculation, Georgia launched a massive and ruthless military operation with the intention of occupying South Ossetia and dismantling the de-facto state there. The attack was legitimised as "defending Georgia's territorial integrity".

Unexpectedly, Russia has intervened militarily, driven back the Georgian forces and now, in response to a clear appeal by the governments of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, has recognized these states. The Russian decision was unanimously backed by the Parliaments in Moscow.

These developments, coming just months after the people of Kosovo won their liberation struggle - over the strong objections of Russia, but with the enthusiastic support of Western states - demonstrate how international 'principles' are manipulated by the world's most powerful states to suit whatever their interests are at the time. Of crucial importance for the Tamils, these 'principles' include 'genocide', 'territorial integrity', 'democracy' and even 'self-determination'.

The Tamil people will instantly recognise the sentiments expressed by South Ossetia's Foreign Minister when Russia's recognition of their statehood was announced: "In less than 100 years, the Georgian military has three times carried out genocide against the Ossetian people. ... Why are they killing us? Because we simply want to live as equals with all the other nations."

The language used by various leading states in discussing South Ossetia and Abkhazia - and before that, Kosovo - will also ring a bell with the Tamil people: Russia says it intervened in South Ossetia against Georgia to prevent 'genocide'. The West intervened in Kosovo against Serbia to prevent 'ethnic cleansing'.

Democratic Will?

Recognising Kosovo's independence, the West said, correctly, that "over 90%" of the people there want independence. The Russians have, also correctly, pointed out that the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia want independence.

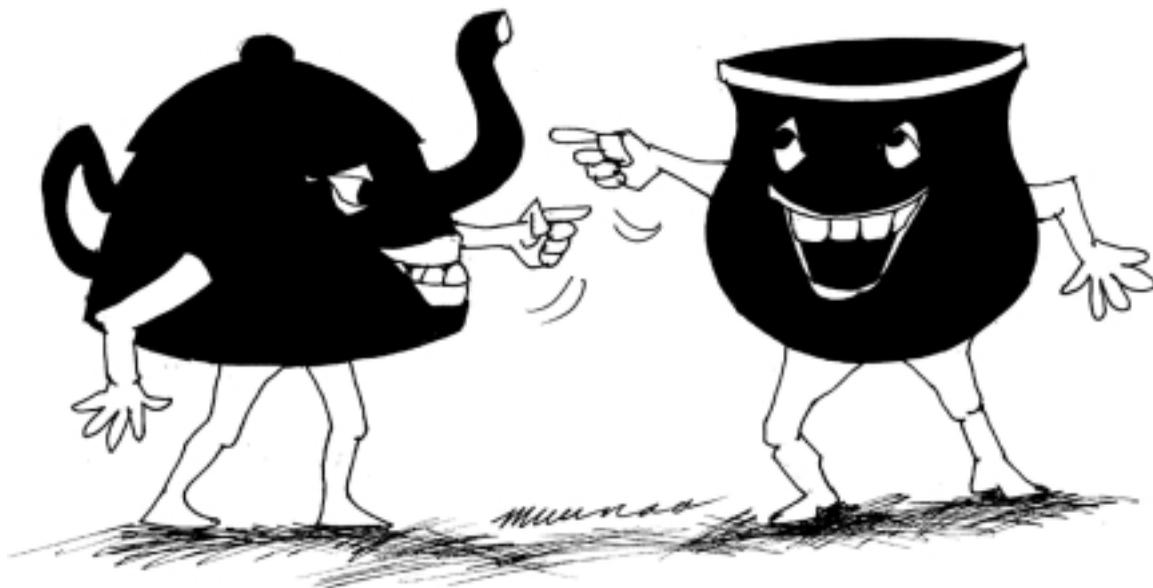
But notice how Russia was unconcerned about the Kosovars' views, when they opposed that their independence from Serbia.

And notice how yearning of the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia for independence and freedom aren't even mentioned by the West in the present crisis.

Instead, the West's only concern is about the territorial integrity of "little" Georgia - and about the welfare of Georgians in South Ossetia and Abkhazia!

Britain's Guardian newspaper, for example, has praised Georgia as "an independent state - unstable, immature, chaotic, corrupt, but hopeful." There is, again, simply no consideration of the views

OPINION



of the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia trying to free themselves from Georgia's chauvinist rule.

The Western states have condemned Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia - and rejected, without the slightest consideration, the desires of the peoples there.

These desires, it is worth noting, were democratically endorsed. To begin with, South Ossetians and Abkhazians assert their right to self-determination having voted at referendums at elections to their own parliament.

In 1991, then Russian leader Gorbachev called for an "All Union" referendum on the continuation of the Soviet Union. Although Georgia boycotted the referendum, in Abkhazia, 52.3% of the population (virtually all the non-Georgians) took part in the referendum and voted by 98.6% to stay with Russia.

Within weeks of the referendum, Georgia declared independence from the Soviet Union. A powersharing agreement between the Georgians and Abkhazians failed in 1992.

In 1992 the Abkhaz contingent in the Supreme Council of Georgia (i.e. the elected representative of their people) declared independence for Abkhazia from Georgia. This resulted in war and the mass migration of ethnic Georgians from Abkhazia (about half left, making Georgians about 21% of Abkhazia's residents).

Similarly, in South Ossetia, the European Union refused to recognise referendums for secession in 1992 and 2006 - even though South Ossetians voted by 98% for independence in 2006.

Even before the 2006 vote, the EU had warned that it would consider the referendum meaningless; European Union Special Representative to the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby, declared "the results of the South Ossetian independence referendum will have no meaning for the European Union."

In short, the EU had no interest what the South Ossetians themselves wanted.

Abkhazia is a full fledged democracy. Parliamentary elections were held in 2004 - where the Russian-backed candidate lost and a coalition government with 90% of all votes was formed.

Notably, both political parties in Abkhazia supported secession from Georgia.

And interestingly, Abkhazia is a multi-ethnic country - Abkhaz, Armenians and ethnic Russians in the region all voted for self-rule, and against Georgian rule.

All this puts into context how 'democracy' is certainly not a principle the Western states or Russia are actually committed to. Or rather, the results of elections only matter if these suit their interests.

If the views of people matter, then the case for the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, just like those of Kosovo is utterly incontestable.

'Special Case'?

When Kosovo declared independence from Serbia - on the principle of self-determination - the various countries of the EU (except Spain, battling Basque demands for self-rule) decreed that Kosovo deserved to be exempt from 'international law', on the basis of Serbia's racist oppression and Serb leaders' rejection of a negotiated final status for the territory.

But Kosovan independence in 2008 is notably the culmination of a decade of unilateral military intervention by NATO in Serbia since 1999.

In 1995, when the Dayton peace accords were being negotiated, the US and EU rejected Kosovo's pleas for independence because of ethnic persecution by the Serbs.

Four years later, the West invaded, supposedly to defend the Kosovars. The basis? Genocide! The Serbs had launched a major offensive into Kosovo, driving over 250,000 people from their homes.

President Clinton's Secretary of Defense, William Cohen, later declared: "The appalling accounts

of mass killing in Kosovo and the pictures of refugees fleeing Serb oppression for their lives makes it clear that this is a fight for justice over genocide."

President Clinton also argued "NATO stopped deliberate, systematic efforts at ethnic cleansing and genocide". He later compared the Serbian aggression against Kosovo to the Jewish Holocaust.

However, this month the US supported a massive Georgian invasion of South Ossetia, which drove almost the entire population from their homes.

Russia's intervention in South Ossetia and Abkhazia has, however, been condemned by the West as against international law.

It follows that NATO intervened in Kosovo to gain advantage in the geopolitical competition with Russia. Kosovo is effectively a NATO ally.

Russia refused to recognise Kosovo's independence in February 2008 - citing the "territorial integrity" of Serbia and warned, then, that the West's recognition would have implications for Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

And so it has. Pro-Russian South Ossetia and Abkhazia, similarly, are clearly part of Moscow's re-emerging sphere of influence in the region.

Thus, although at the time, the European Union was keen to label the secession of Kosovo as an "exception", it is now difficult to see how this is so.

Russia has always been seen as staunch defender of 'territorial integrity' - particularly given the problem of Chechnya. Russia has not traditionally been much interested in promoting democracy or preventing of genocide.

But following the Kosovo secession backed by NATO, Russia has quickly moved to support the self-determination of the Abkhazians and South Ossetians, where it is Russian, not NATO troops, who will "underwrite" the peace.

Historically, the US has backed dictatorships and genocide in other parts of the world. For example, the US strongly

supported Indonesia's invasion and annexation of East Timor in which up to a third of the East Timorese people were wiped out.

Then in the late nineties, when the US saw itself as the sole supervisor, they condemned Indonesia's occupation and secured East Timor's independence.

Territorial Integrity?

But the principle of 'territorial integrity' arises from a specific need - formalised after World War II - to discourage nations invading each other.

But there is a huge difference when the 'threat' to territorial integrity arises from within, from a people wishing to secede from the rule of another. Here 'territorial integrity' conflicts directly with the UN convention on civil and political rights, on the UN's declared right of a people to self-determination, and so on.

The international developments of 2008 have a direct bearing on the Tamil people's struggle for their self-determination and secession from Sri Lanka.

The Tamil people have a strong case for Eelam. They meet all the requirements to exercise self-determination - they have a distinct ethnic identity, a contiguous, historic geographic territory, a history - i.e. they constitute a 'nation'. They also have capability of self-governance and the will to self-determination.

Leaving aside international laws of self-determination, even when compared with the 'special case' rationales presented by the West in Kosovo and Russia in South Ossetia (and Abkhazia), the Tamils have an ample argument: oppression and popular will.

It is worth briefly revisiting some of the Tamil arguments for self-rule.

For sixty years the Tamils have suffered relentless marginalisation by the Sinhala dominated state. We have suffered bouts of communal violence and pogroms.

In July 1983 three thousand of our community were butchered - while the world stood by and even supported the Sri Lankan state with money (World Bank etc) and arms (US, Britain, etc). It is worth remembering the Tamil guerrillas were denounced as 'Communists' - after the Cold War ended, they became 'terrorists'.

The figures for Kosovars killed by Serbian forces were less than 5,000 (as reported to Human Rights groups), though the actual figures of Kosovan deaths "directly or indirectly" attributed to war are estimated at 12 000.

When comparing the figures of Tamil and Kosovan casualties, it is instructive to note Kosovo has a population of circa 1.9 million (87% of whom are ethnic Albanians), compared to the Tamil population of 3.2 million in Sri Lanka.

The NorthEast Secretariat for Human Rights (NESOHR) has thus far recorded the killings of 37,000 Tamil civilians (in the North East alone) from 1974 to 2004, and estimates, including deaths of internally displaced Tamils outside the North East, the total at 75 000.

Since 2005, international

human rights groups have recorded several thousand more deaths at the hands of the Sinhala-dominated security forces. (These figures do not, of course, include the 22,000 Tamil Tigers killed in the armed struggle for self-rule)

In 2007 alone, the West-backed Sinhala army drove more Tamils from their homes in just the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka than the number of Kosovar displaced cited as justification for NATO intervention against Serbia in 1999. The total number of Tamils displaced within Sri Lanka or fled abroad is 800,000.

Given that some genocides are ignored or supported and others invoke intervention, it is clear that the international community's decision to accept genocide is taking place is a politically motivated one; 'genocide' then becomes a label of international politics, conveniently applied to justify violations of 'international law' by powerful states.

Convenient rules

So is 'territorial integrity'; various countries, including especially, the US and the West, Russia and India, have repeatedly asserted the inviolability of Sri Lanka's 'territorial integrity'.

It is worth remembering India helped Bangladesh become independent by attacking Pakistan and hiving off that country. India also intervened in Sri Lanka in the eighties, violating Sri Lanka's sovereignty with airdrops over Jaffna.

The point here is that sooner or later, just as Sri Lanka's sovereignty and territorial integrity are presently useful to powerful states, sooner or later, intervention of one sort or another against Sri Lanka will at some point become useful.

It is then that it will conveniently be remembered the Tamils are enduring slow genocide - just as the suffering of the East Timorese, the Kosovars, the South Ossetians and Abkhazians all became useful at some point.

The ideal route to independence would, of course, be by mutual agreement with the Sinhalese - just like the Eritreans and Ethiopians decided a decade ago. However, the Sinhalese are not going to even treat us as an equal people.

We must survive the slow genocide the West-backed Sinhala state is carrying out, expatriates must continue doing what we can to ensure the suffering of our people in the Northeast is minimised.

We need to repeatedly assert our demand for Eelam - irrespective of the confident assertions of international actors that most of us don't want independence and actually want to live within the chauvinist Sinhala state.

We can take much heart from the successes of the Kosovars, South Ossetians and Abkhazians in securing their independence from oppressive and racist states.

In short, the lesson for the Tamils is to redouble their efforts and ensure the Tamil nation survives genocide, while building and reiterating their case for independence.

FEATURES



Last week Sri Lankan government touted the capture of what they referred to as Jeevan Base. According to the Army it was one of the largest training camps of the LTTE known located in the Mullaitivu jungle. The camp located 10 km northwest of Kokkuttoduvai and about 1.5 km west of the southwestern edge of the Nayaru lagoon, had 100 underground bunkers, 4 buildings, 25 lavatories and two concrete bunkers, the army said. However the pictures released by the army showed few demolished huts.

War rhetoric and the numbers game

Ranjith Jayasundera
The Sunday Leader

WHEN Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake ascended the stage to address an SLFP rally in the Kuruwita area of Ratnapura last week, he roared that the military was in a position to capture Kilinochchi town by last Saturday.

"We are very, very close. Kilinochchi is not very far from our site," he insisted, emphasising that "Our boys might even take Kilinochchi by August 23." Unfortunately, in a telling sign as to how much enthusiasm the government is received with in Ratnapura, the rally was practically deserted.

This, of course, the PM attributes to the fact that people were afraid to attend due to terrorist threats, according to the BBC Sandeshaya Service. It appears that as the war draws closer to an end, the level of terrorist threats seems to increase in proportion.

Not alone

As startling as the Prime Minister's claim was, it was quickly rebuffed by a retired army general with political ambitions. "I am puzzled as to why always these predictions coincide with elections," was the wry comment of Major General Janaka Perera, the UNP's main candidate in the North Central Provincial Council election.

But the Prime Minister wasn't alone in his proclamations; his was simply the most outlandish. The Defence Secretary,

Gotabhaya Rajapakse, was not far behind with his pledge that Kilinochchi will be captured by the army within the next few months.

His was a follow up to a statement by the military that the army had already entered the Kilinochchi District from an undisclosed location. Yet the Army Commander himself admitted, the military's strategy is one that might allow the LTTE insurgency to "last forever."

No Direction

As many analysts have been saying since the military campaign in the Wanni started, it is one that lacks clarity or direction. At various times officials have made statements so self-contradictory that they lead to fears that - despite the ruthless professionalism emanating from the soldiers on the ground - the top brass do not know whether they are coming or going.

It also begs the question whether overall military strategy is being compromised at the altar of political expediency as was evident with Prime Minister Wickremanayake's desperate claim that Kilinochchi will be captured by election day, August 23.

The Defence Secretary, for example, told the New York Times in a May interview that the government's main aim was "to destroy the leadership" of the LTTE. This has in the past been

the work of the army's deep penetration units and air force bombers, coupling their strikes with accurate intelligence information on target positions.

But by last week the Secretary Defence had changed his mind. He told the UK's Times Online that he had to "go after (the Tigers) and completely eradicate them." His brother, President Mahinda Rajapakse has often insisted that the ongoing war was part of a humanitarian campaign to free civilians, or systematic retaliation to LTTE aggression.

Yet in the heat of the elections with opinion polls not favouring the government, the Commander in Chief too came out with his real thinking on the war while he was addressing a rally in Ruwanwella, Sabaragamuwa. "There is no turning back under any circumstances or influence now, until every inch of land is recaptured and each and every terrorist is killed or captured!" he thundered to the crowd.

Given all its contradictions, the government will find it difficult to maintain its facade of impending victory, unless it finds some form of tangible 'victory' to show to the public. Over 14,000 soldiers have deserted the forces in 2008, Military Spokesman, Brigadier General Udaya Nanayakkara told The Sunday Leader. This figure is around 5.4% of the army's total strength over a period of just over half a year.

Heavy expenditure

Although these soldiers are not from the army's most battle-hardened regiments, they are

troops who have seen combat, and whom the military depends on to hold the territory behind its advances. The military spends over Rs. 1 million on the 15 week training periods for each and every one of these soldiers, the Brigadier said.

Rising Cost

"That cost includes the cost of their starting salaries, paying their instructors, buying their uniforms, rations, weapons and other equipment, as well as rations and accommodation," he said. Even the lowest ranking soldier serving in an operational area would collect just under Rs 30,000 monthly, according to the military - a figure that even adjusted for inflation, is far higher than that ever paid to soldiers over the last few decades of conflict.

The general thus doubts that deserters have left the army for economic reasons and instead suggests that 'personal reasons' played a bigger role. Brig. Nanayakkara also said that during the late 1990's, the desertion rate was much higher and over 30,000 would desert the army in a year.

"Now the figures are far lower," he said. 5.5% however, is an extremely high rate of desertion for any army - enough to cause alarm. At the peak of the US military's Vietnam debacle, when a draft (effectively conscription) policy was in place and tens of thousands of American soldiers were being slaughtered, the desertion rate peaked at 5%.

A senior military officer, who wished to remain anonymous due to a witch hunt against officers who speak with 'traitorous' jour-

nalists, felt that the military was taking the desertion issue too softly. "When we are supposed to be in a successful military campaign, 5.5% is a crazy rate. Don't forget, you're saying 5.5% out of the whole strength of the army, but that is including all from engineers to admin officers. If you look at what number of combat troops are deserting, that's a huge and scary number."

It is impossible to independently establish the ground situation faced by soldiers on the Wanni battlefield, since the military does not allow access for journalists to visit the front lines. Yet the threat of insurgency faced by the military, especially in the light of outright retreats by the LTTE, has been significantly downplayed.

Even in the cleared Eastern Province, which is now effectively the domain of Karuna and Pillayan, the military and the STF find signs of LTTE infiltration nearly every day. Barely a day has passed since Pillayan was appointed Chief Minister in May, without the military and STF either encountering an LTTE splinter cell, or discovering a stash of weapons - ranging from automatic weapons, to claymore mines, rocket propelled grenade launchers to light artillery mortars.

If this is the situation in the Eastern Province, whose former LTTE czars are on the government's side, it is easy to imagine the abundance of military hardware stashed in safe-houses and jungle hide-aways, behind the army's advances.

Continued on p13

NEWS



As the Sri Lanka Army advances into western Vanni, thousands of former LTTE cadres and other civilians have been called up to join the Tamil militia. They are expected to take over supply and guard duties from LTTE cadres, so the latter can move to the front.

Thousands join civil militia, Tamil reserves called up

RESERVES and former LTTE fighters returned to their ranks in large numbers following a call by the Political Wing of the Liberation Tigers, whilst thousands of people enrolled themselves to fight against invading Sri Lankan forces, Tamil press reports said.

On Sunday August 17, the political wing of LTTE called all former cadres who left the organisation to lead a non-military life and reserves to join their units to fight the occupying forces and protect the homeland.

Scores of people responded to the call and returned to take up arms against the Sri Lankan army, the reports claimed.

In addition to the reserves returning, thousands of civilians also enrolled themselves in the Makkal Padai (the Peoples Forces as the civil militia is known), the reports said.

According to reports from the ground, people from all walks of life including public servants, private sector workers and business persons are joining the Makkal Padai.

The training for the first batch of one thousand cadres started on

Monday 18 August 2008 in Kilinochchi.

Head of LTTE finance division, Para hoisted the national flag of Tamil Eelam and initiated the training programme.

The key note speech was given by Head of Voice of Tigers N. Thamilanban.

The Sunday Times newspaper quoted a government official and reported that more than 5,000 former Tiger guerrillas and civilians have been enlisted following an urgent appeal by the group's political wing.

"Those who enrolled have been advised to report on a regular basis to the LTTE for training and were told that their main task would be to prevent the military from entering the LTTE's stronghold in Kilinochchi," the newspaper said.

"One of the tasks entrusted to them has been to monitor the movement of security forces and alert the LTTE. The LTTE also has issued instructions to its medical units to be strengthened to meet any medical needs in the coming weeks," the newspaper added.

THE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are busy expanding an airstrip Puthukuduirippu, Mullaithivu, the Sri Lankan defence ministry calimed.

The finished airstrip would be longer and wider than the one in Iranamadhu and will be capable of handling large aircrafts, defence sources said, citing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) video footage.

The expansion work has baffled Sri Lankan military top brass and local media is raising serious concerns, press reports said.

The Island newspaper in its editorial said: "An accelerated project the LTTE has launched to build a clandestine airstrip capable of taking heavy aircraft in Mullaithivu has raised many an eyebrow in defence circles. LTTE cadres are said to be carrying out construction work like beavers with the help of heavy machinery day and night, paying scant regard to their vulnerability to air strikes."

The newspaper questioned "Why are the Tigers in a mighty hurry to build such an airstrip at this juncture?"

The newspaper then went onto speculate reasons for the expansion of the airstrip and offered several possibilities.

The possibilities according to the paper are:

- LTTE building the airstrip to evacuate its leadership to a safe destination in the event of Mullaithivu falling to the Sri Lankan forces.

LTTE cadres are working day and night, paying scant regard to Sri Lankans

- LTTE preparing for an emergency consignment of military material to be delivered by a huge cargo carrier for the final battle in Kilinochchi.

- LTTE having in its possession larger planes than the ones it has unveiled and it is planning to take them out as the last resort for some unknown mission.

- The runway project being a ploy to distract the SLAF from other targets or to lure it into a

trap.

"These are mere surmises and even the defence experts are reportedly groping in the dark as to the real goal of the LTTE's project, which is proof that the outfit has not yet run out of its surprises for the military, in spite of a heavy beating it has suffered," the new paper editorial added.

In March last year the LTTE unveiled their air force with an attack on the Sri Lanka Air Force base complex adjacent to the Katunayake International Airport. Since then Tiger aircrafts have targeted military installations both in the north and the south of the country.

In October last year the LTTE, carried out their first air and land combined operation when the tiger aircrafts provided aerial support to LTTE commandos who stormed the Anuradhapura Air Force base and wiped out Sri Lankan airforce fleet based in the complex.

Since the unveiling of the Tiger aircraft, Sri Lanka has spent large sums of money upgrading its air defenses but, so far, failed to bring down the Tiger planes.

Why are the Tamil Tigers expanding their runways?

FEATURES

Sri Lankan officials are culpable in genocide of Tamils

Bruce Fein
Washington Times

BOSNIA has its Radovan Karadzic, Sudan has its Omar Bashir and the United States could have its Gotabhaya Rajapaksa. He is a United States citizen serving as Sri Lanka's Sinhala Buddhist defense secretary who may be complicit in an ongoing genocide against Sri Lanka's Tamils.

While Mr. Rajapaksa enjoys a presumption of innocence, the United States should be investigating to ensure it is as scrupulous in genocide enforcement as is expected of foreign governments.

Until Mr. Karadzic's recent capture by Serbia, the United States had imposed economic sanctions against the Serbian government for noncooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal. An additional earmark of United States abhorrence of genocide is the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) in the U.S. Justice Department. It is tasked to investigate individuals complicit in Nazi-sponsored acts of persecution who subsequently entered the United States by fraud. The guilty are denaturalized or deported.

The OSI would thus be well suited to lead a genocide investigation of the defense secretary. The United States criminal code prohibits the crime, wherever perpetrated, by a United States national, green-card holder or any other person found or brought into the country.

Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" featuring anti-Jewish diatribes previewed the Holocaust. The parallel political dynamic at work in Sri Lanka is the Buddhist Mahavamsa combined with Buddhist monk teachings that non-Buddhist Tamils must be exterminated to honor Buddha's vision of an ethnically pure Sri Lankan state. As recently as July 20, 2008, AFP news service quoted Mr. Rajapaksa's close colleague, Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka, as describing Sri Lanka as a "Sinhala nation" to the exclusion of Tamils. That exclusionary concept is reminiscent of Hitler's ambition to make Nazi Germany "judenfrei," or free of

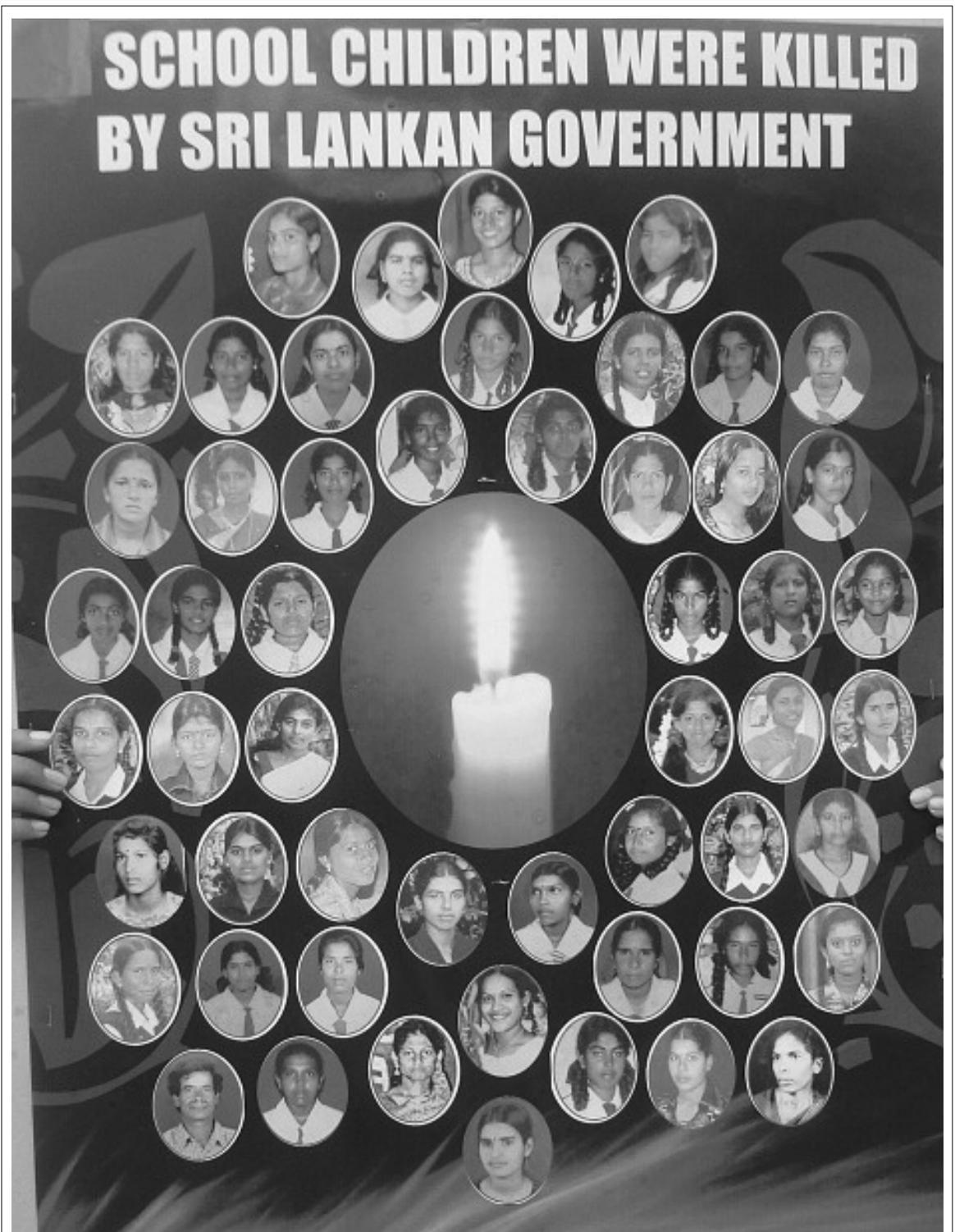
Jews. And just as Hitler's Waffen SS was pure Aryan, the Rajapaksa-Fonseka Sri Lankan armed forces are virtually pure Sinhala.

An investigation of Defense Secretary Rajapaksa would seem amply justified by the benchmarks of the Karadzic or Bashir indictment or arrest warrant. All three are potentially culpable under the time-honored doctrine of command responsibility. Generally speaking, it imposes criminal liability on government superiors who either knew or had reason to know of war crimes by subordinates and neglected to take reasonable measures to prevent or to punish the perpetrators.

Mr. Karadzic confronts a trial for, among other things, genocide of thousands of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. On July 14, 2008, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, applied for an arrest warrant against President Bashir. The application accused him of genocide by killing, raping and starving members of the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups.

The prosecutor specially emphasized that President Bashir "denies victims [of genocide] access to the criminal justice system, while using the system against those who did not comply with his genocidal orders. [He] protects, promotes and provides impunity to his subordinates, in order to secure their willingness to continue committing crimes. He could authorize investigations of members of the armed and security forces, but the only officers investigated are those who refuse to participate in crimes." Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo concluded: "Al Bashir's motive was control of power. His pretext was a 'counterinsurgency.' His intent was genocide."

There is reason to believe that Gotabhaya Rajapaksa has been complicit in a Srebrenica-like genocide or worse against Sri Lanka's Tamils on the installment plan. Since entering office in November 2005, he has been wit-



TYO-UK held a memorial service on Monday August 25 for the dozens of Sencholai children, who were killed by the Sri Lankan military two years ago. The memorial service was held at the Ealing Amman Temple from 4pm until 8pm and was attended by nearly 50 people. The service started off with a two minute silence lead by Mr Rajamanoharan. Poems, dances and a caranatic musical were performed by local children in the memory of Sencholai. A speech was also read by Mr Jeyanthan Vijayanasan, who explained the background history of the Sencholai children and their tragic deaths. 55 people (51 schoolgirls and four staff) were killed and over 150 wounded on August 14 when four Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) Kfir jets dropped 16 bombs on the Sencholai children's home in Vallipunam on Paranthan-Mullaithivu road. Sri Lanka's government said it had bombed a Tamil Tiger training camp and killed "50-60 terrorists." But international ceasefire monitors who visited the site said they couldn't find "any evidence of military installations or weapons." UNICEF chief in Colombo JoAnna VanGerpen told AFP Tuesday: "As of this time, we don't have any evidence that they are LTTE cadres." "These were children from surrounding schools in the area who were brought there for a two-day training workshop on first aid," Ms. VanGerpen told AFP.

ness to the extrajudicial killings of more than 1,500 Tamils, torture, scores of kidnappings, countless arbitrary detentions and displacement of more than 250,000, a staggering percentage of Tamils who have not fled abroad seeking asylum. The Asian Human Rights Commission reported on Feb. 2, 2007: "A disappearance every five hours [in Sri Lanka] is a result of a deliberate removal of all legal safeguards against illegal detention, murder and illegal disposal of bodies."

The U.S. State Department's 2007 human rights report on Sri Lanka elaborated: "[T]he overwhelming majority of victims of human rights violations, such as

killings and disappearances, were young male Tamils. Credible reports cited unlawful killings by government agents, assassinations by unknown perpetrators, politically motivated killings and child soldier recruitment by paramilitary forces associated with the government, disappearances, [and] arbitrary arrests and detentions. ... By year's end, extrajudicial killings occurred in Jaffna on a daily basis and allegedly perpetrated by military intelligence units or associated paramilitaries."

There has not been a single prosecution for these crimes. Indeed, in the entire 60-year history of the Sinhala-Buddhist

dominated governments in Sri Lanka, no crime against a Tamil has ever been punished - a grisliness that apes Hitler's impunity for Nazi crimes against Jews.

The United States cannot credibly berate other countries over lax assistance in genocide prosecutions if does not meticulously enforce its own genocide prohibitions. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa deserves a presumption of innocence.

An investigation could exonerate him of criminality. But both direct and circumstantial evidence militate in favor of taking at hard look at what has been done and is being done to Sri Lanka's Tamils.

NEWS

Sri Lanka is no longer dependent on handouts - Rajapaksa

AMIDST a possible loss of a lucrative EU concession, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa snubbed west and said the country no longer dependent on western handouts.

While addressing a public meeting following the inauguration of an irrigation project in Polonnaruwa in the North Central Province, Rajapaksa proclaimed that the era of rulers who were dependent on the West was over with his regime in Sri Lanka.

The declaration comes as inflation and wage pressure cut into earnings in Sri Lanka's trademark industry garments to the point where fast-growing remittances could take over its top export earner status for the first time in two decades.

"When inflation is running at 26 per cent, the wages you earn domestically are not sufficient for people to survive. So a lot of people are giving up their local jobs and moving overseas. So there is a good prosperity for remittances," said Vajira Premawardhana, head of research at Lanka Orix Securities.

In an article on Sri Lanka's human rights record and its impact on the GSP plus, the Economist magazine: "Under a concession known as 'GSP Plus', awarded in 2005 to help Sri Lanka rebuild after the 2004 tsunami, Sri Lankan exporters enjoy preferential tariff treatment from the EU. As a result, the EU is Sri Lanka's biggest export market, accounting for annual sales of around \$1 billion; about half are covered by GSP Plus. But there is a problem with the rules of GSP Plus. Beneficiaries must comply with 27 international conventions, on environmental, labour and human rights standards. And on the last of these, Sri Lanka is struggling. The agreement expires at the end of 2008. Recent signs are that it will not be renewed."

"Since launching a fresh campaign against the LTTE in 2006, the government has been accused of complicity in the abduction or murder of hundreds of Tamil and Muslim men. It is at war with human-rights groups. It has refused to let the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights set up an office in Sri Lanka. A much

weaker alternative, a group of "eminent persons" from India, France, America and other countries, was sent to observe Sri Lanka's own investigations into six high-profile abuses. But the group disbanded itself in April, citing a "lack of political will" to uncover the truth," the Economist further added.

"A senior EU official familiar with Sri Lanka thinks it currently looks unlikely GSP Plus will be renewed. At a minimum, he suggested, the government would have to make real progress on a case in which 17 aid workers employed by a French NGO were killed in 2006, and another in which five high-school students were executed, allegedly by security forces, also in 2006. If the EU renewed the agreement without such progress, it might be challenged at the World Trade Organisation—as happened to an EU trade sop to Pakistan in 2004."

"According to an unpublished paper by economists at the University of Sussex, losing GSP+ would lead to a 4% cut in Sri Lanka's garment exports. Overall, it would cost 2% of GDP. MAS expects GSP+ to go. To offset the increased costs this would entail, the company is looking for ways to cut other costs, such as by buying fabric in East Asia, not Sri Lanka or India."

According to the Economist, 'this comes at a bad time for Sri Lanka and its garment-makers.'

"Annual inflation is close to 30%. The rupee has appreciated against the dollar, further hurting exporters. By one estimate, economic growth—which was 7.6% in 2006—will be 4.3% this year. As elsewhere, inflation is being driven by high food and energy prices. But in Sri Lanka, 25-year average annual inflation is 12%. Monetary policy has been too loose, in part to finance the war. Including the cost of resettling refugees, the war eats up around 30% of the government's budget. Yet it insists that its military campaign, which most Sri Lankans support, has little effect on inflation, which they do not. If it loses GSP Plus, it will be even harder for the government to argue that the war has no economic downside,' the magazine concluded.



Sri Lanka Def. Sec. Gotabaya (r, with tie), pictured here presenting new road construction equipment to the Army, has dismissed Western criticism of human rights abuses against Tamils. Photo DailyMirror

Germany slams Rajapakse government, praises Sinhala-Buddhist constitution

WHILE Germany said it has virtually washed its hands off solving the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict since its voice and advice has been ignored by the government, it also praised the Sri Lankan constitution as something that should be 'applauded'.

"A country should have a give-and-take policy when ruling. Each community should be given preference, instead of supporting one community," said German Ambassador Jürgen Weerth, addressing a forum organised by the Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sri Lanka.

"We have two disagreements with the incumbent government. The first is, we cannot believe in a military solution for a political

problem. Secondly, we do not compromise in the field of human rights," the Ambassador added.

Weerth further said that Sri Lanka should establish the rule of law and eliminate human rights violations in the country.

However, the German Ambassador also praised the Sri Lankan constitution, which favours the Sinhala majority by clipping any real possibility of power sharing with other ethnicities on the island.

"Sri Lanka's Constitution should be applauded. It has covered all the major and minor sections - but those rules have not been implemented. Sri Lanka is one of those democracies that the international community has great

respect for, but today we see that it has failed to meet those expectations," he added.

Tamil analysts pointed out the comments by the Ambassador shows a lack of understanding of the root cause of the Tamil national question and the ethnic conflict.

Linking trade increases, foreign investments and development aid with human rights and the war, the ambassador said the current conditions in Sri Lanka are not conducive for Germany, and a majority of the 'international community,' to work with Sri Lanka.

"The moment you offer an

Continued on p15

SL Premier blasts West

SRI Lanka's Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake lashed out western states for questioning Sri Lanka's human rights records despite their own human rights violations.

Addressing the Regional conference of Parliamentarians and National authorities in Asia, Wickremanayake accused the USA and the UK of practising terrorism.

"It was terrorism when the British used gas to kill hundreds of Kurdish people in their wars in West Asia or in the Middle East early last century.

"The arch imperialist Churchill justified it saying that

'It is all right to kill niggers'. That was the white man's attitude, a lack of feeling for people of a different colour that accompanied the dropping of atomic bombs which massacred hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the World War II and those were weapons of mass destruction.

"It was terrorism when they dropped an atom bomb in Hiroshima Nagasaki killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese. Those were weapons of mass destruction. That was terrorism."

Wickremanayake further said that America accused Saddam Hussein of Iraq of possessing

chemical weapons, who was later to be hanged despite the testimony of their own inspectors that there were no such weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

"These are the people who are now questioning our human rights records at a time we are fighting against the world's most ruthless terrorist outfit," he said.

Wickremanayake told the conference which focused on implementation of the International Chemical Weapons Convention that as far as the Government was aware there are no chemical weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction in Sri Lanka.

FEATURES

Rajapakse administration says election win is endorsement of war

SRI Lanka's ruling party won two provincial councils in an election marred by violence and intimidation of opposition candidates and supporters and declared the victory as an endorsement of the President military campaign.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) won 56.3 percent of council seats in North Central province and 55.3 percent in Sabaragamuwa province, two of nine on the Indian Ocean island.

Ruling alliance won the elections in Sabaragamuwa with a majority of more than 125,000 votes against the UNP, which secured 40.53% of the votes. In North Central Province, the UNP 37.64%, 100,000 less than the UPFA.

JVP received 19,068 (2.23%) of the votes in Sabaragamuwa Province and 26,738 (4.90%) in the North Central Province.

The UPFA secured 23 out of the 42 seats in Sabaragamuwa province and took 18 out of the 31 North Central seats, taking control of both councils.

More than 68 percent of the 2.1 million registered voters cast their ballots on what observers said was a relatively peaceful day compared to the days building up to the elections.

Endorsement for war

Rajapakse suggested that the vote was a sign of public confidence in his government's military drive.

"The strength and morale that our heroic troops will receive from this victory in their battles to finally end bloody terrorism from our country is immeasurable," Rajapakse said in a statement after the result was announced.

Media and Information Minister Anura Priyadarsana Yapa told Reuters the victory was "a clear endorsement to move forward. This is also endorsement of the decision taken by the president and the government to eradicate terrorism from the country."

However main opposition party, the United National Party, dismissed any link between the poll and the military campaign.

"There is no connection between the war and the provincial elections," said Tissa Attanayake, the general secretary of the United National Party.

"These results do not reflect the real franchise as there was violence and intimidation."

Elections marred by violence

Sri Lankan election monitors reported assaults, threats and the seizure of polling cards Saturday, as voting concluded for two



provincial councils.

"The expectations of violence were fortunately not met," the independent Centre for Monitoring Election Violence said in a statement.

The independent Center for Monitoring Election Violence said in a statement that there were at least 27 incidents that can affect the results for the elections for North Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces.

The group did not say who was responsible for the violations but said it would release a full statement later.

Another election monitoring body, Campaign for Free and Fair Election (CAFFE) charged that the Police continued to disregard the election laws and said an increase in the level of violence too could be witnessed.

Addressing a press conference its Spokesman Keerthi Tennakoon said the political parties had clearly pointed out that they would violate and retaliate if the situation needed at the Provincial Council elections.

"They (Police) have clearly

left out the cutouts of UPFA candidates in Sabaragamuwa Province while completely removing the other political party cutouts" alleged Tennakoon. He also alleged the Police was biased and might continue to disregard election laws.

Meanwhile Nimalka Fernando of the CAFFE alleged "Minister Mahindananda Aluthgamage had said at a rally that they would definitely win and if they don't they would make sure to cut the money that flows in to the provincial councils".

CAFFE spokesman said the plantation youths in the Sabaragamuwa Province had been deprived of the right to cast their vote as they had not received their polling cards.

He also added that people in Deraniyagala, Rakwana and Balangoda have not received their temporary identity cards.

About 265 cases of election violence had been registered in two days, of which 194 cases were directly related to election violence, Tennakoon said. Meanwhile, 17 cases had been

registered where the police failed to do their duty in the face of election violence he added.

The spokesman stressed the police were inefficient and indifferent to the plight of the people, completely oblivious to the blatant corruption that was in plain sight.

In his words; "they stood by and watched".

Rajapaksa's party in North Central province aligned with the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Puligal (TMVP), a grouping of LTTE defectors accused by rights groups of abductions and extrajudicial killings, as it did in elections in the island's war-ravaged east in May.

At that poll, election monitors and opposition party accused the TMVP of violence, which it denied.

However, Sri Lankan Election Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake decalred the Provincial Council Election to be free and fair.

In a statement issued following the elections, Dissanayake stressed that there were only few

incidents reported regarding election violations. In his statement Commissioner thanked all the parties who have supported to hold the election successfully.

No Vote

Meanwhile nearly 10,000 Up-Country Tamils who are eligible to vote were deprived from voting on Saturday at Ratnapura and Kegalle districts in Sabaragamuwa provincial council elections as they did not have National Identity Cards (NIC), a senior Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) member told media in Colombo.

The CWC has lodged protest with the Sri Lankan Election Commissioner Dayananda Dissanayake.

Many of the Up-Country Tamils had applied for the NICs several months ago.

Also, a large number of Indian origin Tamils had applied for their NICs through a mobile service arranged by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) in July.

On Election Day when the

Continued on p15

NEWS

TAF hits harbour

AIRCRAFT belonging to the Tamil Eelam Air Force (TAF) launched an airstrike against a major naval base in eastern port city of Trincomalee on Tuesday August 26, according to the Sri Lanka Navy. Heavy explosions rocked the Trincomalee Harbour around 9:00 p.m. and again at midnight.

The Sri Lanka Navy confirmed that at least one LTTE aircraft had dropped bombs, but refused to comment on the casualty details. Eleven Sri Lankan soldiers were admitted to Trincomalee hospital according to press reports.

Sri Lankan forces surrounding the Sri Lanka Navy headquarters along Trincomalee harbour continuously fired towards the sky for about half an hour following the attack, locals said.

The locals confirmed hearing heavy explosions inside the harbour and the naval base followed by the sight of vehicles rushing to the hospital. Some residents said they heard an explosion from the Trincomalee harbour after an object moved over the harbour by air. Thereafter Sri Lankan forces started firing towards the sky targeting the object, they said.

Photo shows LTTE pilots returning home after a previous air raid.



The war rhetoric and the numbers game...

Continued from p18

'Clever tricks'

Karuna himself warned last week that Pirapaharan may have some clever tricks up his sleeve. He told a news briefing in Welikanda - while out campaigning - that the LTTE would use northern civilians as blatant human shields, and use chemical weapons to try to halt the army's advances. He also took the 'credit' for the LTTE's military operations to rout the Jayasikuru campaign, and the operations to capture Elephant Pass and Kilinochchi from the army. Without him, says the Colonel, the Tigers are past their heyday.

The Sunday Leader earlier cited a research paper published by the British Medical Journal, which warned that due to errors inherent in normal casualty reporting methods, the death toll from Sri Lanka's war may be higher than 300,000 - opposed to the earlier estimate of 60 to 70 thousand.

With the government's own figures, nearly 16,000 people - of whom just fewer than 2,000 were civilians - have been killed in the past two years of conflict. This year alone over 600 security forces personnel have laid down their lives, in 'return' for the mili-

tary claiming to have killed some 6,300 LTTE cadres in the same period.

The month of July has been the bloodiest yet, with the government claiming to have iced 1,017 tigers for the loss of 106 soldiers' lives. These figures were revealed by the Prime Minister to parliament, before the entire government took off on election campaigning work. The most worrying part of the Prime Minister's statement was that he said 622 - six times the number killed - soldiers were 'injured' in battle. This is not a military that counts a scratch on the arm or a broken toe as an injury. A lot of these soldiers, aged 18 and up, have been hurt so badly that their lives have been effectively shattered.

The stats

Also, if the government claims that nearly 12,000 Tigers have been killed between 2006 to date, surely at least a similar number must also have been maimed?

The Prime Minister's numbers for those killed last month however did not tally with our own records of news releases from the Defence Ministry.

The Ministry doles out the odd news story of a soldier who "laid his life for the motherland" or "made the supreme sacrifice"

every so often, scattered amongst the banner headlines of all the hundreds of tigers it is killing every week. The total number of soldiers admitted killed by the military itself in the month of July was just 55, almost half the 106 that Ratnasiri Wickremanayake claims were killed.

False Propaganda?

Similarly, the military's reports only allow that 299 soldiers were injured in the month of July, despite the Prime Minister's figure being double this. Although these figures cannot be verified, time and time again they are found to be untrue and reek of fabrication. The intention is obvious and there in lies the rub.

Rather than fight the war on a strategic basis to corner the Tigers what the government is doing all too obviously is dish out false propaganda simply to achieve political ends as opposed to real military successes. Thus while claiming on a daily basis that only one or two soldiers are killed as opposed to dozens of Tigers in their propaganda handouts, the government is conditioning the minds of the people on a daily basis the war is nearing end at very little human cost to the military.

Then comes the monthly

statement of the Prime Minister at the emergency debate giving lie to the government's own daily propaganda by stating over 100 soldiers were killed for the month with over 600 injured if July is taken as an example. That figure of course does not spell out the number of missing in action or deserters. What does this mean in real terms? In July alone for example there were over 725 soldiers either killed or injured in battle. Simply put that is an average of 23 soldiers are killed or injured every day.

Now the purpose of highlighting this fact is not to demoralise the soldiers because they know the ground realities being in the frontlines but to impress upon the government not to fight the war through the news media to achieve narrow political ends since the truth will out and it will not do the government's credibility any good via the very people they are trying to convince.

Amusing Trends

Thus, over the seven months that we have been recording the Defence Ministry reports, it has been easy to spot certain amusing trends. The number of soldiers announced killed in any report is almost certainly couched towards the end of a story, and it is gener-

ally zero, one or two. The number of LTTE cadres killed however, often follows a different pattern. Often the number of Tigers reported killed would match the day of the month or the article's ID number on the Defence Ministry web site.

Propaganda war

Thus the Ministry is winning its war, but a propaganda war. Around Colombo the Presidential Secretariat has gotten in on the act by replacing the contents of nearly every single Colombo Municipal Council hoarding to advertise President Rajapakse and his Nelum Mal logo.

The government has set yet another target for capturing Kilinochchi, Pirapaharan's headquarters. It is well known that as the military advances, the Tigers will have nowhere to run, as the army is in place north of Elephant Pass along the Muhamalai - Nagarkovil defence line. Thus, as the President promised, once "every inch" of land has been captured, the government would be hard pressed to explain themselves should the senior LTTE leadership manage to escape and disappear, as did Bin Laden in Afghanistan, or 900 Tigers who simply 'vanished' from a 'surrounded' Thoppigala last year.

DIASPORA

Rapping with patriotism - MC SAI

Caroline Francis
Tamil Guardian

WHEN you think of Rap, who pops into your head first? 2Pac, Jay-z or T.I.? They are all great, but I am asking you about Tamil Rappers. You might come up with Sujeeth G of course, but guys I think it is about time you engrave this young fella into your head - MC SAI!

At the tender age of 16 makes him one of the youngest Tamil Rappers in Europe at the moment and he already dropped his first LP. I was lucky enough to go and meet him and see what he's all about.

Sitting in front of this handsome tall boy, who is cracking jokes, you wonder if what he raps on his LP is what he truly wrote himself.

Because when you listen carefully to his tracks on his first LP, you'll be mesmerised by his maturity.

Issues he discusses on the tracks are not what is normally expected for a usual 16 year old to talk about.

MC SAI - real name is Sairuban Ramakrishnan - was born on 22 June, 1991 in Jaffna. He lived there till the age of three and then lived in Germany for four years before moving to England in 1999.

His rap career started off with changing lyrics of already released cinema tracks.

This skill enabled MC SAI to make his own patriotic tracks.

MC SAI is one of the few artists who started rapping in order to tell the story of his home country to the teenagers of Europe, who are unaware of the suffering back home.

"I wanted to tell the story back home with a political message behind it, but the only way teenagers would understand and

listen to it better, would be to simplify it in a rap song," he says.

"I am trying to get the message across as well as telling people how I feel about these issues. Although my songs are mainly aimed at youths, I do know a lot of parents and even grandparents listen to my LP."

It was a performance at a Tamil Youth Organisation event that introduced him to his friend Santhors, who helped him release his LP.

"I have tried dancing, beat boxing and acting and so much more. At a TYO programme I got introduced to Santhors and it all kicked off from there. He invited me to come round to his studio and we laid down some tracks and the rest is history," says MC SAI.

One of my curiosities was why the majority of his LP is in Tamil and not in English, especially because it is aimed at youth. His reply simply is that he personally thinks Tamil Rap sounds amazing and that he can express himself better in Tamil.

"I write my own lyrics because whatever I rap comes from my heart and mind. I guess my writing skills I got I get from my father, who writes a lot of poems," he says.

MC SAI adds that if he is talking about the issues back home, he might as well do it in Tamil.

When he started off, he never thought in a million years that his community would be so supportive.

He thought he might get some fans within the younger generation of Tamils, but he has adults playing his tracks and even as ringtones on their phones, he says.

"My ambition for the future would be to break into Kolly-



16-year-old rapper MC SAI is a part of a generation expressing their patriotic sentiment in new ways

wood (as the Tamil cinema industry is known) before turning 18!" says the young man, setting himself a solid goal.

Some might argue that his lyrics are too political and controversial, but as always this young bright young man has an answer to everything.

"You need to respect someone else's opinion. At the end of the day I don't care what people think. Love me or hate me."

He also addressed the issue of Hip Hop v. the society, where Rap is seen as a bad influence by some people.

MC SAI sees this not as a hindrance, but wants to take this opportunity to change Tamil Rap.

"All Tamil Rappers trying to do what American Rappers are doing, but it's fake. They are rapping about things that are not really happening to them."

There have been media claims that street violence is caused by music videos and especially rap, which often portrays such violence. But MC SAI says it's not reality and that it all depends on everyone's own interpretation.

"Gangs exist to get respect and protect themselves and what

is going on in the music videos are not always the absolute reality. Misinterpretation is happening everywhere. You can't help it or stop it."

For those interested in seeing and hearing more from MC SAI, he will be playing at the 'Best of Europe' concert in December, where many Tamil artists from around Europe will showcase their talents

For now readers can check out MC SAI's myspace page, where you can listen to his songs:

http://www.myspace.com/oru_soldier



NWTYO and UKTSU took part in a friendly sports challenge over cricket, football and netball on August 17, with NWTYO winning both the netball and football whilst losing in the cricket. The event was attended by many members from both organisations with both boys and girls given a chance to participate in each sport. A supportive crowd cheered both teams on, making it by and large an enjoyable day for everyone involved. Due to its success, the event will in all likelihood become an annual occasion.

NEWS

Germany slams Rajapakse...

Continued from p11

inclusive solution to your people, then we will be prepared to again work with every Sri Lankan. This view is shared by a majority of the international community," he said.

Germany is generally seen as most vocal, out of all the EU countries, on matters relating to Human Rights in Sri Lanka.

In February, German Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul said unless Sri Lanka's hardline government abandons its militarist path, the EU should impose sanctions.

At the time she also announced that Germany would freeze new development cooperation projects with Sri Lanka and, because of the deteriorating security situation, was withdrawing half their development personnel from the island as well as closing the German Development Bank

in Sri Lanka.

The German Ambassador accepted that double standards applied when dealing with different countries, based on the importance of the country.

"Yes, we apply double standards. It has to do with the role Sri Lanka is playing, or the role of Russia or the role of China.

"If Sri Lanka were to disappear from our economic map it can be easily replaced. If Russia were to disappear from our economic map, the lights would go out in Germany, because we get electricity from Russia. So your position is not so strong," Weerth added.

He further said that at present German development aid is channelled to countries that make the grade in terms of the German yardstick. "We, Germans have decided to concentrate our support on those countries whose governments and political, corporate and community leaders are

clearly focussed on their country's welfare and building a better future for all citizens," he said.

The Ambassador pointed out that foreign investment in-flows in to Sri Lanka were discouraged by security concerns, corruption and poor infrastructure.

Commenting on the GSP+ extension for Sri Lanka, the ambassador dropped the human rights stand and repeated the standard statement from the European Commission.

"The GSP+ is not a political tool, it is a technical operation. The government needs to ratify and implement 27 international conventions," he said.

It is generally believed that the EU will not hold Sri Lanka's human rights record against its decision to renew the GSP+.

In May the EU Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Julian Wilson said "The EU wants Sri Lanka to receive GSP+ again for the coming three years."

UPFA poll victory endorses war...

Continued from p12

voters submitted the counterfoil at the polling station, they were turned away.

Most of the applicants' NICs were being held at the Divisional Secretary's Office in their respective electorates. Some of the NICs which were handed over to Village Officials (GS officials) were not distributed to the applicants.

The voters affected were from Panawatte, Lavent, Kelaniya, Halgolla, Nagasthenna, Edrapola and Yatidariya estates in the Yatiyantota electorate and Kesel-

watta, Noori, Maliboda, Sapumal Kanda and Maha Oya in the Deraniyagala electorate and also Morralioya, Jesterfor, Hatamata and Ruwanwella estates in the Ruwanwella electorate.

More elections

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse dismissed rumors that he would call a snap parliamentary election in the country, his office said. Addressing a gathering, the president said his government has a public mandate to continue the present parliament until 2010 and as such there is no need

to go for a parliamentary election ahead of the schedule.

Speculation was rife that Rajapakse may opt to hold a snap parliamentary poll after his party's victory in the two provincial council elections.

Earlier the main opposition party had challenged the ruling party to hold general elections. Tissa Attanayake told media that "we are ready for a general election at any time."

The Sri Lankan government responded by saying if the UNP wants a general election, they are ready to hold it within the next three months.

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Deadly streets: a bullet lying on a Jaffna street is nothing out of ordinary. Hundreds of people have been murdered by the Sri Lankan military in the northern peninsula.



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