

# TAMIL GUARDIAN

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## The genocidal war is financed by the sale of Tamil assets

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A Sri Lankan soldier stands guard as Buddhist monks walk during a protest in Colombo on October 30, 2008, demonstrating against India's interference in the Sri Lankan government's military drive against the Tamil Tiger rebels. New Delhi has expressed concern over the 36-year-old conflict and the safety of Tamils. Sri Lankan Tamils share close cultural and religious links with the 55 million Tamils in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Legislators from Tamil Nadu had threatened to resign unless the Indian government took action to halt the military drive. *Photo Ishara S. KODIKARA/AFP/Getty Images*

## Tamil Nadu pressures New Delhi.

TAMIL NADU Assembly unanimously passed a resolution Wednesday, November 12, demanding "an immediate halt of military operations, reverting the Sri Lankan military to old positions and a commencement of political negotiations to find a solution to the Tamil problem."

The house of representatives also urged New Delhi to press for talks between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The resolution comes while the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa is in New Delhi on an official visit.

The resolution, which was supported by all legislators, was moved by Chief Minister Karunanidhi.

Pointing out that the LTTE had offered to effect a ceasefire, the resolution pressed upon the Indian Government to ask Colombo to agree to an immedi-

ate truce in order to alleviate the sufferings of the Eelam Tamils.

It called upon the Indian Government to undertake efforts to guarantee the right to life, property, livelihood, equality and to bring back normalcy to the Eelam Tamils.

At the end of the assembly

debate, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi said that the Indian Premier and Congress President Ms. Sonia Gandhi should consider that this is not only a demand of the Tamil Nadu Assembly, but also the will of 70 million Tamils of Tamil Nadu and the Tamils who live all over the world.



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## NEWS



For the past few months Sri Lankan troops have been trying to advance on three fronts in Vanni. Task Force 1, along the A-32 highway, towards Pooneryn, 57 Division towards Kilinochchi through Akkaraayan in south west of the city and towards Mullaitheevu through Naayaru in the south west region of Vanni. As per latest reports, Task Force 1 has managed to reach Thikkuvil on the A-32 highway and is approximately 7 kilometers away from reaching Pooneryn, which is seen as a strategic milestone as it enables Sri Lankan security forces to open a land route to Jaffna peninsula. The 57 Division in recent days has reached Akkaraayan junction following weeks of intense fighting surrounding the Akkaraayankulam bund. The 58 Division is at Kokkaavil located west of the A-9 highway and the newly inducted Task Force 3 is west of Maankulam. The LTTE continues to hold the A-9 highway from Omanthai to Kilinochchi and is offering stiff resistance to the Sri Lankan soldiers attempting to advance in multiple fronts.

## 80 Sri Lankan soldiers killed in the East in past few weeks

THE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have stepped up attacks against Sri Lankan security forces and paramilitary groups attached to them in the Eastern province, especially in Ampara district, killing at least 14 in November alone and another 65 during September and October and wounding 112 in the past few weeks.

The political wing of LTTE in Ampara district released a statement on Friday, October 24 claiming that 65 Sri Lankan soldiers, including 45 Special Task Force members, were killed and another 98 wounded in attacks carried out by LTTE in the district in the previous 75 days.

In the latest incident, on Friday November 7, an LTTE ambush unit opened fire at a Sri Lankan Special Task Force (STF) road patrol, killing 4 Sri Lankan military personnel including 3 STF commandos and causing injuries to three, including two

STF commandos in Ampara district.

The previous day, LTTE fighters clashed with the STF commandos for more than 30 minutes in Yala jungles in the border of Ampara district killing 3 STF troopers.

2 STF commandos sustained injuries in the clash, the Tigers said.

A day earlier, the army suffered the worst day of casualties in the East since a LTTE mine attack in September.

Ten STF commandos were killed Tuesday, November 5, night around 9:15 p.m., when the group of STF personnel were counter-ambushed by an elite commando unit of the Jayanthan brigade of the Tigers.

The counter-attack took place at Koappaaveli on Badulla Road. Two STF personnel sustained serious injuries in the attack, the Tigers said adding that there were no casualties on LTTE side, the

Tigers said in a news release issued to media from Batticaloa.

Few days earlier, on Tuesday October 28, LTTE fighters in Batticaloa district attacked a key paramilitary camp of the paramilitary group TMVP in the early hours of Tuesday, killing four operatives and capturing six gunmen from the camp, located at Chengkaladi, 13 km northwest of Batticaloa city, according to the Batticaloa Command of the LTTE.

Despite the LTTE claim of their attack on the TMVP within a few hours of the raid, the Pillayan faction of the TMVP blamed Karuna operatives for the attack. The Sri Lankan Police said that the Tigers were behind the raid that killed four operatives, Pushpan, Rajan, Mani Master and Ravi.

The Tiger commandos who were in control of the paramilitary camp seized eight assault rifles and ammunitions before destroying the installation.

## NEWS

# Fonseka says 80% of LTTE destroyed

SRI LANKAN Army Commander, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka claimed that '80 percent of the fighting ability' of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has been 'eliminated' and troops would soon re-open a main supply route between Colombo and northern Jaffna peninsula.

According to the Fonseka the military had killed thirteen thousand LTTE fighters in the past two-and-a-half years.

"Over 80 per cent of the war against the LTTE has been completed after regaining 80 per cent of the areas under them and killing over 13,000 of their cadres,"

Addressing the troops attached to the Gajaba Regiment at the regimental headquarters at Saliyapura in the north-central Anuradhapura district on Monday, November 3, Fonseka said that the advancing troops were now just seven kilometers away from the Kilaly lagoon, which links the northern Jaffna peninsula to the Wanni mainland along the western coast.

'On reaching the Jaffna's Kilaly lagoon, the entire western

part of Kilinochchi district would be sans terrorists, enabling the troops to re-open a main supply route to Jaffna shortly,' army chief told troopers.

'As the troops are now closing in on the Kilaly lagoon, depriving the terrorists of their western Pooneryn bastion, the troops have so far managed to eliminate 80 percent of the LTTE fighting ability after suppressing them. Thus the western sector of the A-9 highway would remain completely clear,' he added.

The army website reported Fonseka as further saying the 'capture of Mullaitheevu simultaneously mobilising many more battalions under four divisions would form a 50 km-long frontage to the east of the A-9 road, providing full security to the area afterwards'.

After capturing LTTE administered territory in western Vanni, for the past couple of months Sri Lankan forces have been trying to capturing LTTE's administrative capital of Kilinochchi and Pooneryn which will open a land route to Jaffna.



Velupillai Pirapaharan, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on Friday, October 31, conferred Awards of Valour for Tiger commandos who excelled in their performance in the LTTE operation against the Sri Lankan Forces Vanni Headquarters (Vanni SF HQ) and the Tamil Eelam Air Force pilots and operators who took part in consecutive and successful flight operations of attack against the targets in the South and the bases of the Sri Lankan armed forces. The LTTE's airmen who carried out five consecutive successful missions on Sri Lankan targets received the "Neelap Puli Viruthu". The Air Tiger pilots who had participated in three consecutive successful air attacks received the "Thamir Eela Maravar Viruthu". Kiddu artillery formation received special awards for their performance on the joint operation against the Sri Lankan Vanni SF HQ on September 09.

## LTTE stages air and sea raids as military continues its offensive in Vanni

AS the Sri Lankan military inducted a new fighting unit and

continued its offensive attacks in Vanni, the Liberation Tigers of

Tamil Eelam (LTTE) staged air and sea attacks on military targets

outside Vanni.

On Saturday November 1, Sea Tigers launched naval convoy and fought a fierce sea battle off the island's northern coast.

According to LTTE sources 20 Sea Tigers attack craft took part in the battle in the seas off Naakarkoayil in Vadamaradchi East Saturday morning from 5:15 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., sinking an SLN Dvora Fast Attack Craft (FAC) and a hovercraft.

Sea Tiger officials further said that SLN engaged 20 vessels in the clash, but was forced to withdraw after suffering casualties.

A water-jet vessel of the SLN sustained damage in the sea battle and was towed back to Kaangk-easanthurai (KKS) naval base.

The Tigers said their Sea Tiger commandos reached their base, after defeating the SLN.

Seven Black Sea Tigers laid down their lives in the operation, the Tigers said.

Eleven days earlier, the Sea Tigers attacked two Sri Lankan Navy supply ships in the same area sinking one and damaging the other.

### Air Attack

On Tuesday, October 28, an LTTE air craft carried out an attack on Thallaadi military base, the main artillery and Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL)

launchpad of the Sri Lanka Army in Mannaar dropping three bombs on the base, inflicting heavy damage.

An hour later, another LTTE air craft dropped two bombs on Kelanitissa power station and returned to base safely.

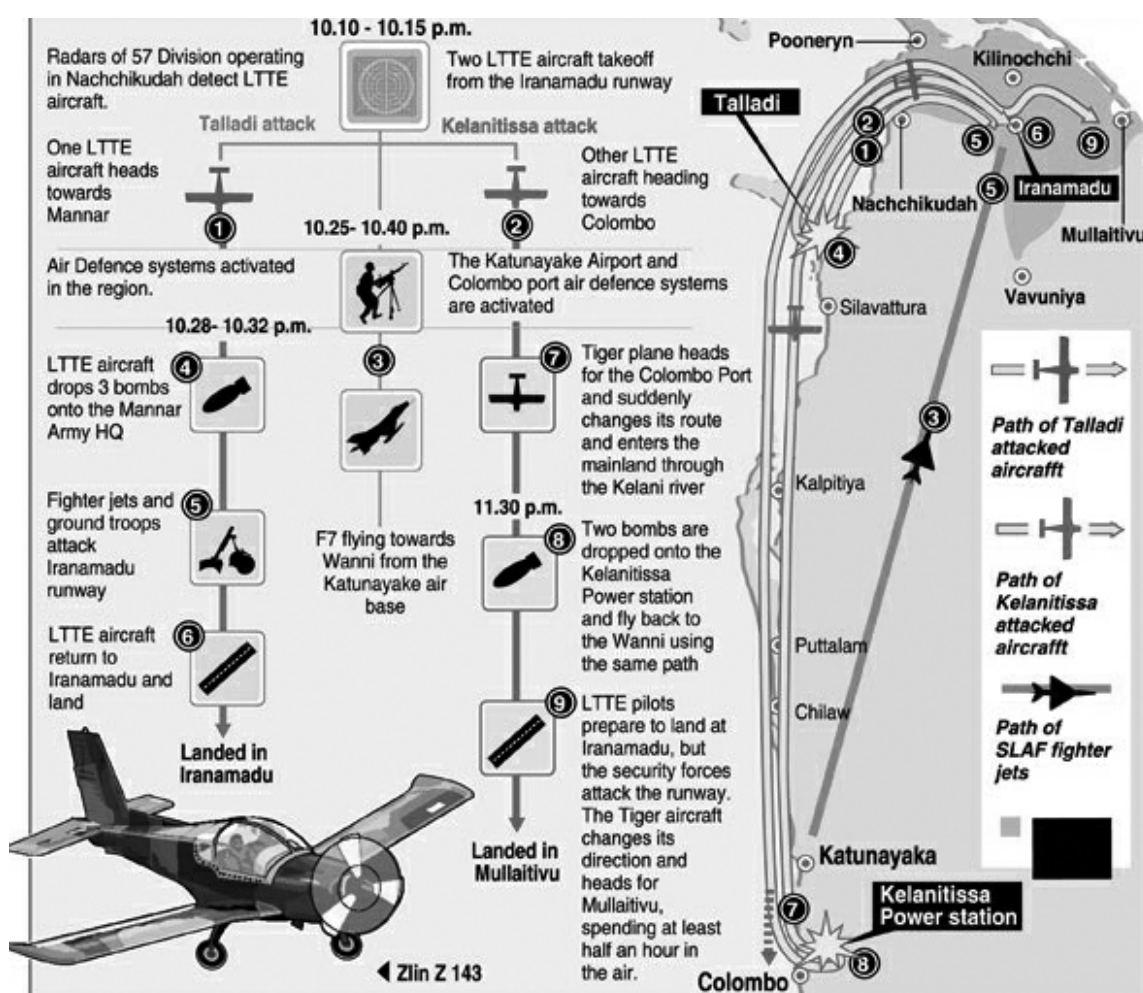
The air raid at the Kelanitissa power station in Colombo late on Tuesday started a fire and killed one person and wounded two, hospital officials said.

Two turbines and air coolers sustained damage according to the sources in Colombo.

An MI-24 attack helicopter gunship of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF), deployed in Vanni offensive, and a Bell helicopter used to transport the wounded soldiers from the battlefield, sustained damage in the bombing raid on the Sri Lankan garrison at Thallaadi in Mannaar, according to a reliable military source.

Sri Lankan military officials have claimed that there was no major damage caused by the Tiger air strike and said only one soldier had sustained injuries in the attack.

The raids on a Colombo power station and a northern military camp late on Tuesday are the eighth and ninth carried out by the "Air Tigers", known in the Tamil language as Vaanpuligal, since they shocked the world with their first attack in March 2007.



## HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

# Plight of persecuted Tamils worsens

**Dr John Whitehall**  
News Weekly

THE silence of Western media and government has emboldened the majority Sinhalese to embark on a renewed campaign to dispossess and kill the Tamil people.

The Tamil-controlled north-east of Sri Lanka thunders "day and night" under bombardment from the forces of the Sinhalese government in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo as they attempt to destroy Tamil autonomy.

Against this backdrop, "a great human tragedy" is also "exploding", according to Fr James Pathinathan of St Theresa's Church in Kilinochchi, the administrative capital of the de facto government of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

From the eye of the storm, Fr Pathinathan, who is also president of the local Justice and Peace Commission, reports that "deaths, injuries, displacements and attendant misery pervade the lives of innocent Tamil civilians... and the draconian economic embargo imposed slyly, has become a monstrous obstacle in giving relief and solace to the 170,000 persons recently displaced".

The Sri Lankan Government's economic embargo, involving the closure of roads and ports of access for food, medicines, and fuel for an already destitute population, has been compounded by its eviction of aid agencies from the north-east as it has increased the tempo of war in an apparent attempt to put a military end to Tamil aspirations for some kind of self-government.

War has broken out on various fronts in recent months, and the bombardment of Kilinochchi began a few days ago.

Government forces have driven Tamil civilians from their homes and farms, which, at least in the south, are in the process of being occupied by Sinhalese settlers.

This has extended a long process of violent colonisation, according to Tamil sources.

Over 200,000 people have been "displaced" in the east of the Tamil homelands in recent months, now to be joined by 170,000 in the north.

Hopes for Sinhala victory lie not only in their numerical advantage, but also in the sheer quantity of explosives at their disposal and their ability to launch them from long range or from the skies.

Meanwhile, the silence of Western media and governments embolden the Sinhalese to embark on their campaign of pillage, rape and destruction.

The Tamils' defensive actions are driven by desperation that their race is threatened by genocide.

The depth of commitment of these people to Tamil Eelam, or the Tamil Motherland, is vividly demonstrated by sheer numbers.

Some 17,000 or more young Tamil men and women have already sacrificed their lives in the struggle for national liberation.

It is easy to see how Tamils believe that the Sinhalese are bent on wiping them out.

In 1948, Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) gained independence from the British.

Not long after, in 1956, the Sri Lankan parliament passed a Sinhala Only Act.

This relegated Tamils to the status of second-class citizenry.

It also exposed them to the repeated violence that culminated in the disgraceful race riots in 1983 when Sinhala mobs guided by voting-lists set out to destroy Tamil homes and even antiquities such as the library in Jaffna.

Sinhalese forces themselves invaded Jaffna and subjected the local population to barbaric treatment.

Every day, Tamils in non-combat areas "disappeared", having been taken away in the backs of notorious white vans.

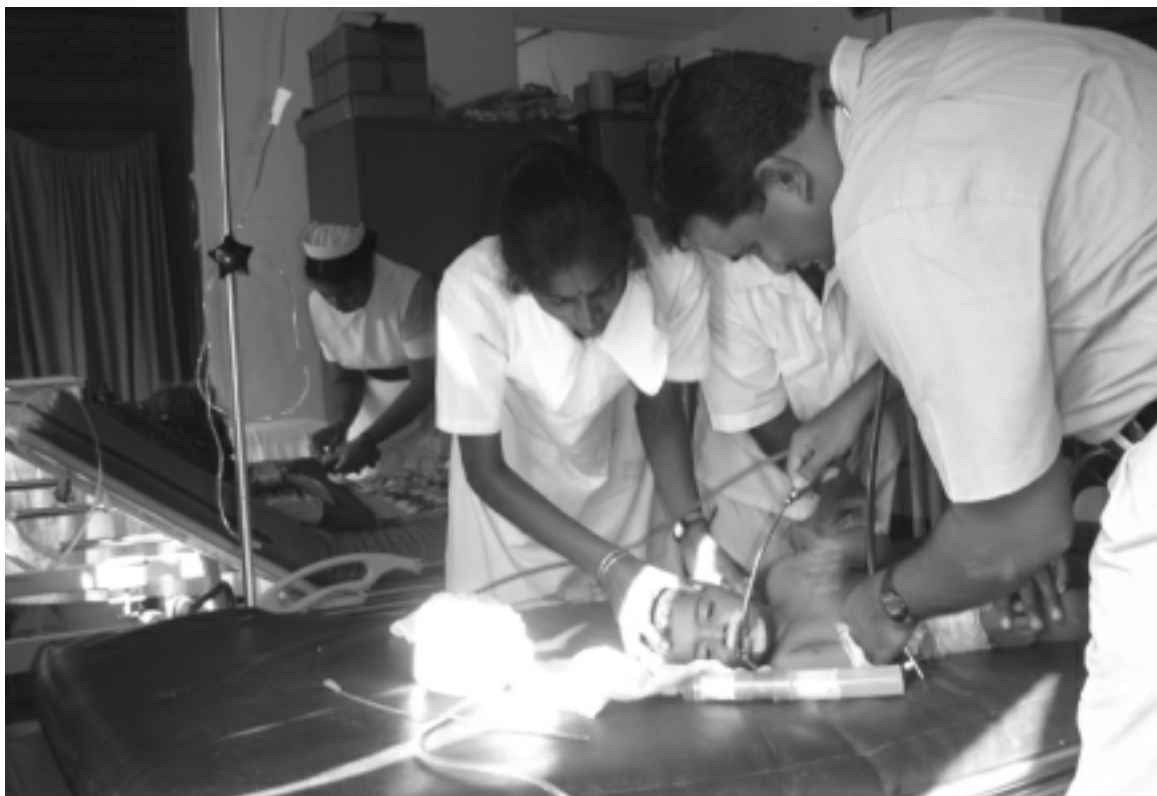
Underlying this conflict lies deep racist sentiment.

This antagonism is fuelled by fundamentalist Buddhist proclamations that ancient texts identify "foreign devils" who should be expelled.

As bombs have begun to fall on the town of Kilinochchi, causing the population to flee, Fr Pathinathan has declared that "the call of the hour is urgent" and pleads for "the people of goodwill all over the world" to "protect the people of Vanni [north-east Sri Lanka] who are threatened with death and destruction and dehumanisation".

But few people seem interested.

With the Tamil homelands cut off more effectively than Biafra in the Nigerian civil war, who wants to see pictures of starving children?



A child injured in an aerial attack by Sri Lankan Air Force jets being treated in Vanni.

## SLA blocks medicines, bombings continue

THE Sri Lankan military continues its contribution to the humanitarian disaster underway in the Vanni, not only through bombings and artillery shelling, but also by preventing urgently needed food and medicine from entering the region.

The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) at Oamanthai entry point turned supply lorries away last Thursday, for the third consecutive time, refusing entry for medical supplies and nutritious food (Thripasha) for children in the Mullaiththeevu Regional Director of Health office, TamilNet reported.

One lorry with Thripasha was returned on 05 November and 06 November, and another lorry with medicines was refused entry on 23 October, 24 October and on 06 November.

One of the supply lorries was carrying medicines to cure malaria. Medicines for children, medications for high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and anti-biotic drugs were also in the supply lorry that was turned away by the SLA.

The consignment was allocated for the third quarter of 2008.

The supplies were not allowed to be taken beyond Oamanthai by the SLA since July, according to medial sources of the district.

While the normal practice is to get the Ministry of Defence (MoD) clearance to transport medicine beyond Oamanthai annually, in the recent times the SLA has demanded fresh clearance at Oamanthai on every single trip.

The medicines are urgently needed in hospitals of Mullaiththeevu district.

Meanwhile, a patient who needed to be transferred by ambu-

lance from Kilinochchi to Vavuniya died as the military denied permission for the vehicle to proceed.

The ambulance had sought SLA permission to proceed to Vavuniya along the SLA allowed road, through the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) located in Puthukkudiyiruppu, but the Vanni Sri Lankan Forces Head Quarters refused.

T. Gunaratnam, 51, who was suffering from a serious ailment died Saturday night in Tharmapuram hospital, Kilinochchi.

Civilians were also wounded in air raids around Kilinochchi.

Two Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) bombers attacked Kumarakurum, a suburb of Paranthan, last Sunday causing injuries to

*Continued on p14*

## LTTE condemns attacks on civilians

THE Political Wing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in a statement dated 30 October, condemned the Sri Lankan government for carrying out indiscriminate aerial bombardment and artillery barrage on civilians in Vanni.

"Today morning around 9.30am, Sri Lankan Air Force bombers entered the skies over Vallipunam in the Mullaithivu district and carried out extensive, indiscriminate bombing raids on the civilian housing scheme setup by the Caritas-HUDEC organization," the statement said.

"A school student was killed and six more civilians including a baby were injured. Children and teachers attending the two pre-schools and the Vallipunam Kanista High School ran in all direction in fear and sought protection in bunkers and under bushes," it said.

"Within few days of the Sri Lankan Government saying to the

Indian Government that it will not carry out attacks on civilians, it has carried out attacks on Paranthan and Vallipunam civilian areas," the statement noted.

The Sri Lankan army is also "continually carrying out discriminate artillery attacks on civilian settlements in Kilinochchi," it noted.

Adding that "many civilians were killed, and injured" and many homes "destroyed", the statement also cited the examples of Kariyasingam Pirahalathan, 43, and Selvarasa Satheswaran, 14, who were killed during bombing raids.

It also provided details of injured civilians, including Srinivasan Thimilarsan, 3 months, and Paramanathan Nivethini, a 17-year-old student.

"We strongly condemn the indiscriminate aerial and artillery attacks on civilians by the Sri Lankan military," the statement concluded.

## TAMILSELVAN

# Remembering Tamilselvan

On the first anniversary of Tamilselvan's funeral, the Tamil Guardian takes a look back at the editorial from last year, written on 7 November 2007.

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

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

The various reactions to the Sri Lankan military's assassina-

tion of Mr. Tamilselvan should serve as food for thought for anyone out there who still believes either that peace talks might end the bloodshed or, even more naively, that the international community will act to protect the Tamils against the rampages of the state. As President Rajapakse crowed in Parliament this week, he has secured the assistance of the international community to defeat the Tigers. As we have argued before, for all the noise about human rights (and much of that has dissipated now), the state actually wants for nothing. Ironically, the more the international community is convinced the LTTE can be defeated, the freer the hand the Sinhala state will have.

Let there be no mistake; irrespective of the extent of the casualties or suffering the Sinhala military inflicts on Tamil civilians, the international community will not restrain the state. Not, that is, until the military is checked on the battlefield by the LTTE's counter-violence. At that point, as in 2001, international peaceniks will rush back to help Tamils and Sinhalese solve 'their' problem. The insistence by some international actors, especially those who proudly proclaim their support and assistance for the Sinhala state, that 'there is no military solution' is duplicitous.

The solution must be political, we all know that. But it can be rammed down the Tamils' throats on the end of bayonet. Which is why several members of the international community advocating 'peace' in Sri Lanka have also banned the LTTE.

## When Sinhalese unite

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



effort to end their suffering, if only for a while. They have chased after the SLFP and UNP in turn, insisting, despite the evidence of their past suffering, that this time round it would be different.

In reality, for the Tamils, there is nothing to choose between the main Sinhala parties. This is because all of them are beholden to the sentiments of the majority of Sinhalese voters who, as is now starkly clear, bitterly oppose sharing of any power with the Tamils. The point was underscored this week by the reaction of the UNP - still the darlings, incidentally, of the 'peace through development' international community - to Mr. Tamilselvan's assassination. Firstly, the UNP hailed the killing as a 'great victory' for the (Sinhala) Air Force. It then went on to tacitly back Rajapakse's brutal war, saying there is 'no point' negotiating with the LTTE. Let us be clear; whenever the LTTE negotiates with the state, it is about the rights, powers and extent of self-rule that we, the Tamil people, are to have. The UNP, drunk with the same confi-

dence in Sinhala military victory that the SLFP regime is, believes, like the government, that there is no point in negotiating with an enemy who is about to be defeated. The optimism may be misplaced, but the UNP sees no reason to hide it.

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

## A time to struggle

Despite its bans on the LTTE, as the international community has openly acknowledged, every time the Tigers sit across the table from the Sinhala state, the inter-

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

## EDITORIAL

## TAMIL GUARDIAN

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## Changing Climate

## Global developments augur well for the Tamil liberation struggle

As international relations scholar Oliver Richmond pithily puts it, 'the problem of peace is that first war must be eradicated or managed'. In Sri Lanka, however, Western states have followed exactly the reverse logic: as President Chandrika Kumaratunga put it in the late nineties, the solution was a 'War for Peace'. This is the logic even today, several thousand lives later. The dynamics of the past three years have exposed the fundamental contradiction in Sri Lanka: 'multi-ethnic' means different things to the island's communities. To the Tamils it means that we are, like the Sinhalese, one of the island's founding races, and thus equal to them. To the Sinhalese, as Army commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka has explained, the island is Sinhala land and the others may remain, provided they know their subordinate place. The two visions simply can never be reconciled.

In the past three years, the West-led international community allowed the Sinhala lion a free hand to do what it willed to the Tamils. It was not just about destroying the 'terrorists' but, crucially, also of smashing the very foundations of Tamil political relevance in Sri Lanka. That is why the state's killing of Parliamentarians, journalists, aid workers, social workers, and so on has taken place without any real sanction and little criticism from the self-styled liberal states. That is also why hundreds of thousands more Tamils have been displaced, reduced to living under plastic sheeting or less in their own homeland. In short, the Western states have endorsed and assisted - sometimes tacitly, often directly - this Sinhala effort to disaggregate the Tamils as a viable political community and reduce them to a scattered, pulverised, exhausted collection of Tamil-speaking individuals.

Yet we have resisted this genocide. On the one hand the LTTE has staged its trademark ferocious armed resistance. The Sinhala Army has advanced and taken territory in the past two years. Indeed, vastly superior to the LTTE both numerically and in firepower, it has always been able to do so. But the LTTE, grounded in various ways in Tamil determination not to be humbled as a people, has always proved indomitable. It is during war that the LTTE went from a few dozen cadres to the standing army, navy and air force it presently is. It is also during this war that the Tamils have forged themselves into committed political nation. Despite the best efforts of the liberal West to ignore the LTTE and to speak for us, we've had no doubts about our nationhood and our rights. And now, as never before, the impossibility of a single 'Sri



Lankan' people has been laid clear.

No armed conflict is truly local and Sri Lanka's has been internationally connected from its outset. Thus, just as the international community has been important to the waging of war, it will be important to the creation of peace. During the Cold War, our nation's rights and interests were sacrificed by the West for its geopolitical interests. That powerful states will prioritise their interests over those of others will always be the case. However, in the past decade and a half, we have also been subject to another Western ideal of international order: global market economics and democracy. In other words, whatever those of us struggling in the developing world may actually say, our actual problem is deemed to be simply a lack of proper democracy and economic opportunity. The solution was thus to spread democracy and free markets, often violently. Even direct military action has been undertaken in this 21st century civilising project.

However, the events of the recent past have questioned this utopian vision. The global financial meltdown, the leftwing uprisings across Latin America, Sri Lanka's retreat into the Chinese sphere of influence, are all tremors of the same crisis. The most spectacular consequence has, of course, been the result of the US Presidential election this month. The competing economic visions set

out by President-elect Barack Obama and his Republican rival are not merely an internal matter: the neoliberal model rejected by US voters has underpinned the ruthless and violent Western project to impose a specific order on the rest of the world.

Our liberation struggle has also been mired in this project. The unqualified Western backing for the Sri Lankan state, the hostility to the LTTE, the refusal to listen to our pleas, are an integral part of this project. The Sinhala-dominated state, with its Sinhala army, and its majoritarian democracy has been excused, defended and praised. The Tamils, despite our obvious suffering, casualties and deprivation, have meanwhile been branded as terrorists and racists.

Only the regional hegemon, India, has taken seriously the powerful and contradictory logics at the heart of the island's conflict. But Delhi too subordinated the Tamils' well being to her own perceived geo-strategic interests. However, neither the West nor India has been able to pursue their visions of order: the Sinhala state will not sit placidly within them and neither will the Tamils accept Sinhala oppression. Whilst the liberation struggle intensifies, we must not lose sight of shifting global and regional dynamics. There is much to give us confidence: a more assertive India, a more reflective US, the 'return' of geopolitics are all signs of, as President-elect Obama has put it, 'change'.

## OPINION

# It's the Tamil Economy, Stupid

This is the second part of a 2 part series looking at the economic drivers behind the Sri Lankan state's genocide of the Tamils

J T Janani

Tamil Guardian

THE debate on economic competition between nations focuses centres on fair and unfair competition. It is unfair competition to protect local markets from foreign manufactured goods. But it is "fair competition" for governments to subsidise local industries that have "strategic significance": defence or nuclear energy for example.

Genocide is the ultimate form of unfair competition: as Black July 1983 illustrates. In fact, each stage of the slow genocide of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka has also been an economic project.

Having looked at how the Tamil industrial base was eliminated, the unequal impacts of the 'open' economy, the numbers which prove that reparation to Tamils is unaffordable and how the Sri Lankan state has breached its contract with Tamil taxpayers, the rest of this piece focuses on how the genocide by the Sri Lankan state is funded by Tamil assets and the impact of the new Tamil international economy on the relationship between the Tamils and the Sri Lankan state.

## Genocide funded by Tamil assets

The Sinhala State has not evidenced the faintest intention of restoring economic parity to the Tamil people on the island.

Following the 2004 tsunami, which hit the North Eastern Tamil homelands harder - because the tsunami waves came from the direction of the North and were more powerful when they hit the Tamil coast - the Sri Lankan government blocked the joint aid distribution mechanism it had agreed with the Liberation Tigers in order to ensure aid reached Tamil areas.

As Karen Parker of the IED has pointed out, there is no adequate explanation for blocking international aid from those who have already lost everything - other than the deliberate destruction of a people (genocide).

The genocidal war against the Tamil people is also financed by the distress sale of Tamil assets.

To cement international relations and finance the war, real estate in the formerly Tamil areas are being pawned off by the state.

For example, after the government "cleared" the East in a 2007 offensive against the LTTE, it entered into an agreement for India's National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to build a coal power plant on formerly

Tamil land, despite the protests of Tamil parliamentarians representing the Tamil refugees displaced from there.

The Sri Lankan State has also invited international oil firms to bid for oil drilling rights off the Northern coast of Mannar.

Every stage of this genocidal war is ultimately about money, not only in its fungible form, but also in the form of assets such as land, titanium and oil that can be transformed into money.

But even in this the Sri Lankan government is not original for financing genocide with money belonging to the victims is not such a new idea.

Consider Nazi legislation following Kristallnacht - the pogrom named after the vast number of broken windows.

The Nazis decided they could blame Kristallnacht on the Jews because it had been "sparked" by the assassination by a 17 year old Jewish teenager of a German embassy officer, Vom Rath, in Paris.

This would help them finance, for example, the cleaning up of the streets afterwards.

Accordingly, a "fine of 1 billion marks was levied for the slaying of Vom Rath, and 6 million marks paid by insurance companies for broken windows was to be given to the state coffers.

Similarly, Sri Lanka blamed the Tamils for the pogrom and as The Economist noted, the state benefited by taking over the damaged Tamil businesses.

This pattern of profiting from and financing genocide from the victims' own assets, has continued ever since.

## New Tamil international economy

Following 1983, the Tamil economic base has shifted globally to countries where it is safe. The Economist presciently noted this too, 25 years ago, in its article of the 20th of August on the 1983 pogroms: "Another key factor in Sri Lanka's recovery will be the brain-drain of Tamils. Thousands of Tamil professional people are said to have left the country since the violence began last month."

"One leading Tamil entrepreneur - and Sri Lanka's most successful entrepreneurs are Tamil - estimates that 90% of his fellow-industrialists are now contemplating emigration," the magazine noted.

In their host countries, Tamils



**Tamil entrepreneurs have been successful in the Diaspora after ethnic tensions and economic targeting made them leave Sri Lanka, and the government is now looking to tap into their wealth, even though the state has broken every contract it has made in the past with the Tamils.**

are among the most economically successful refugee groups. For example, 1 in every 50 doctor in the British National Health Service is Tamil, as are nurses and other medical workers.

This despite an estimated less than 1 in 400 of every British adult being Tamil.

## The Sinhala state hopes that, once again, it can benefit from Tamil prosperity.

**They hope the Diaspora will ignore previous breaches of contract and help finance the failing Sinhala State - including its present judiciary, police and army.**

As an indication of per capita Diaspora income, the average British doctor earns over £106,000 pounds (circa 200,000 USD) or about 4 times the national average.

## Sinhala State looks for Tamil investors

But the Sinhala government, NGOs and think-tanks have also noted the relative post-1983 prosperity of the Tamil Diaspora. And in it, they see a potential source of new income.

"The Tamil Diaspora is seen by the Sri Lankan state as an important actor in the ongoing war against the LTTE that needs to be checked," Jehan Perera writing for the Daily Mirror in Colombo explains.

"It is a fact that many, if not most, who left the country did so in circumstances that were extremely painful and bitter to them. They left for an uncertain future into alien cultures and societies, in which they would be an underclass for many years," he concedes.

"But due to the essentially egalitarian and merit-based nature of the Western societies to which they migrated, many of them and their children have finally prospered."

The Sinhala State hopes that, once again, they can benefit from Tamil prosperity.

They hope the Diaspora will ignore previous breaches of contract and help finance the failing Sinhala State - including its present judiciary, police and army.

In order for this to happen, the LTTE, their current rival for the Kavalar/government role, must first be destroyed.

Mr Perera, for example, explains that the Tamil Diaspora has not engaged with the Sinhala State because: "A large part of the reason has been the confidence of the Tamil diaspora that the LTTE's armed struggle for separation, which they support, will end in success."

"So long as this belief, and desire, continues there will be little incentive on the part of the Tamil diaspora to engage constructively with the Sri Lankan state. However, recent develop-

ments on the ground and in international politics suggest that the struggle for Tamil Eelam will not be successful"

Once the LTTE is destroyed, so the thinking goes, the Sinhala State has an opportunity to persuade the Tamil Diaspora to "engage with it" - by investing money of course.

In his article, Jehan Perera explains this line of thinking: "This means that if the Tamil diaspora wishes to come to the aid of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, they need to be prepared to engage constructively with the Sri Lankan state, and find ways to do so."

In short, the failing Sinhala State, having alienated all its Western donors on Human Rights grounds can turn to the families of the entrepreneurs and professionals who fled the 1983 pogroms to finance the "protection" of the "liberated" Tamil areas.

They can be persuaded to invest in the hopes of creating a "new Tamil economy" that can then be taxed by the Sinhala State and will finance its burgeoning army, parliamentary bureaucracy etc. As they did pre-1983.

Notwithstanding the Tamil Diaspora are tax-paying citizens in their new countries, they should also help the Sri Lankan State with its development objectives.

Because, so the Sinhala thinking goes, if the Tamil Diaspora want their internally displaced relatives not to starve, they won't have any other option.

Apparently, the Tamil cow keeps giving milk long after it has been sent to the slaughterhouse. Whoever said you can't have your cow and eat it?

## TAMIL NADU ERUPTS



## Kollywood fasts over Eelam Tamils' plight

ARTISTES and employees of the Tamil film industry observed hunger strikes in Chennai last week to show solidarity with the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Following the protest in Rameswaram in October and the human chain organised by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr Karunanidhi, the Film Artists' Association organised a token fast on November 2, followed by another fast by the Film Employees Association last Wednesday.

The fast by the Tamil film artistes on November 2 was packed with performance and punch lines. The actors demanded that the Tamil Nadu state and the Indian Union Government immediately find a peaceful and permanent solution to the Sri Lankan problem.

Radha Ravi extolled the stars for turning up in full even though many were not even in Tamil Nadu, busy with shooting schedules. He said Trisha, Nayanthara, Vikram and many others had to come a long way

to attend the fast.

Ajith, dressed in black, looked weary, and even bored. He sat with his head in his hands, often looking around vacantly.

Kamal Haasan was like a rock, betraying nothing. Rajinikanth was his easy self, smiling occasionally, even agreeing with some speakers visibly by nodding his head. Vijay looked partly interested, and sat very quietly, with his arms folded - which is typical for him in functions. Vikram was comfortable, and was seen in a cap.

Radha Ravi broke into a fiery speech about why holding a fast in Chennai was equally important and effective as one in Rameswaram. He also chided the government for rapping the Tamil cinema fraternity for what had been said over the Sri Lankan issue. His argument was: do we actors and cinema people not know politics? Was not MGR an actor? Is not Karunanidhi a scriptwriter? In other words, he was saying that the cinema fraternity

knows the complexity of the issue at hand and will not speak out irresponsibly or naively.

Rajinikanth struck an emotional chord when he shared his personal experience of interacting with Eelam Tamils and praised 'the music of their dialect'.

At the same time, he expressed concern over the fact that Eelam Tamils did not enjoy the rights they deserve in their land. "Did they enter the war on purpose? They demanded their rights through all kinds of peaceful methods, when nothing worked out, they were forced to take up arms," Rajinikanth said.

"Sri Lanka is spilling the blood of innocent women, children and the aged. It can never progress as the curses of the weak will destroy its very existence. The regime that could not put down the brave Tamils for over 25 years ought to know that dead Tamils' bodies are being sown and not buried. Immediate stoppage of the murders of the innocent

Tamils ... is the need of the hour," Rajnikant said in an emotional speech.

"The urgent need is to stop the war. The voice that we raise over here must be heard by Rajapaksa," the famous actor explained in his speech.

He directly addressed the Sri Lankan President and said: "Rajapaksa! What are the Tamils demanding? Equal status. It is in your best interests if you recognise their rights. You have the three armed forces: the army, the navy and the air force. But have you been able to wipe out all the Tamils who have been fighting for their rights? You have not been able to do this in the past two-years of the war, as in the past thirty years. You are unable to accept your defeat. Because, for you, it is a question of ego. Accept the truth and grant them equal rights."

On the same vein, the actor targeted the Sri Lankan nation and warned them in no uncertain terms:

"When poor and innocent people of suffer, a country will never improve. The people there are dying in large numbers for the past several years. Please understand that their dead bodies are not being buried, they are being planted into the land. Don't forget that these seeds will grow again tomorrow!"

The super star implored the Sri Lankan President to give the Tamils their rights and their traditional land because it was in the best interests of Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile Kamal Haasan said that it is the responsibility of the International Community to ensure that a ceasefire is implemented in Sri Lanka immediately.

"It is the entire sane world's responsibility to end the mass slaughter of innocent Tamils (in Sri Lanka). Freedom fighters of every nation are always referred to as terrorists till they succeed in their cause," he said.

"When the very existence of an entire race turns into an unanswer-

able question, usually extremism and violence are its by unavoidable repartees," Kamal Haasan said, apparently alluding to the LTTE.

He also said that if the issue was one that really hurt deeply, then emotions would invariably flow.

"This meeting is taking place so that we express our feelings; we have been asked to keep away from inflammatory speeches. This is a world that takes offence when an apparent fact is mentioned," the charismatic actor said.

"In a society that does not guarantee fundamental rights, it is natural for radicalism to take root. When the nation attains independence, the so-called terrorists will be the martyrs and freedom fighters. Only time can be a judge. A peaceful solution should have come to Sri Lanka, but because of its absence, people have been forced to take up arms. Tamils all over the world have united for the sake of the Eelam Tamils," he said.

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## Tamil Nadu shuts down for traders' bandh on Eelam Tamils issue

SHOPS and commercial establishments in Tamil Nadu shut down and the state's roads wore a deserted look as a result of the traders' bandh (shut down) Friday on the Eelam Tamils issue. According to reports in the Indian media, the bandh was total all over the state as over 25 lakh traders, owing allegiance to 5,500 trade unions, took part in the peaceful agitation to show their solidarity with the Eelam Tamils.

All political parties in Tamil Nadu had extended their support to this bandh which took place from six in the morning to six in the evening in Tamil Nadu and Puduchery (Puthuchchery). The shutdown of the private sector has drawn more participation than the government organised human-chain, observers said.

The organisers of the shut-down said the state-wide success of the bandh, even in rural areas, reflected that sentiments among Tamil Nadu public for Eelam Tamils running high, independent of state orchestration.

T. Vellaian, President of the Tamil Nadu Traders Union that called for the bandh, demanded an immediate halt to the genocide of Tamils in the war-ravaged island.

The bandh had a two point agenda: to condemn the Sri Lankan military's genocide on Tamils, and to express solidarity with the Eelam Tamils who had lost their livelihood in the island.

The bandh call had a rousing reception from traders of all strata of society: roadside tea-shops



and grocery stores never opened, so did some of the largest cloth stores and hotels.

Asia's largest perishable goods market at Koyambedu in Chennai, which has roughly about 2500 wholesale shops, was completely shut down from 12 mid-night Friday. Consequently, about half a million fruit/vegetable shops which get their supplies from here, were also shut down. This market employs about 10,000 workers and 500 drivers.

The traders' bandh affected all cities in Tamil Nadu. The public was affected because it was

impossible to locate any store that had not downed its shutters. It was difficult to even buy a packet of milk, because the distribution was wrapped up by six in the morning.

Scheduled to be held originally on 17 October, the bandh was postponed to 31 October on account of the decision taken at the All Party Meeting organized by the Government of Tamil Nadu. Over 5,500 trade unions had come together to organize this bandh - they had distributed pamphlets highlighting the sufferings of the Eelam Tamils to all

affiliated traders.

Moreover, traders from other Indian states, who run some of the most successful businesses in Chennai also extended their support to the bandh and cooperated by not operating Friday.

Mr. Vellaian was arrested by the Tamil Nadu Police for alleged 'enforcement' of the boycott following 'politically motivated complaints', the organisers said and added that they promptly secured his release.

News papers and television channels in India labelled this bandh a hundred percent success.

## NEWS

# 'Give way to Tamil Eelam and avoid Sinhala blackmailing for ever'

TamilNet

A SINHALA-DOMINATED Sri Lanka is not in India's interests, writes T S Gopi Rethinaraj, a Singapore National University scholar, in the November 2008 issue of Pragati, the Indian National Interest Review. A unified Sri Lanka under Sinhalese domination will be deeply inimical to India's interests. Colombo will permanently exploit India in the absence of a buffer that an Independent Tamil Eelam could provide, he wrote.

Pragati is published by The Indian National Interest-an independent community of individuals committed to increasing public awareness and education on strategic affairs, economic policy and governance.

In an article titled "Don't abandon the Tiger: A Sinhala-dominated Sri Lanka is not in India's interests", Rethinaraj writes "India has reached an impasse because of its stated policy to safeguard the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and unwillingness to recognise LTTE's standing in the conflict. Unless India overcomes this fixation, the Sinhalese dispensation will continue to exploit New Delhi and pursue its agenda without inhibitions."

Further, detailing the benefits of an independent Tamil Eelam to Indian Security interests Rethinaraj writes "A unified Sri Lanka under Sinhalese domination will be deeply inimical to Indian security and strategic interests. Presence of two states in India's southern frontiers will act as a powerful deterrent to both successor states from pursuing policies that are prejudicial to the Indian Navy's predominance in the region."

Full text of the article follows:

IN THE April 2008 issue of Pragati this writer had argued that the survival of the Tamil Tigers is India's insurance policy against Sri Lanka swinging over to interests of powers that might seek to contain India in the Indian Ocean region. Now that the ethnic conflict has resurfaced as a factor in Tamil Nadu politics, India can ill afford to be seen as actively colluding with the Sinhalese to subjugate the ethnic Tamils. While the recent competitive jostling among political parties over the issue is largely due to fragile electoral alliances in the state, there is also growing public sympathy for Sri Lankan Tamils due to the grave humanitarian crisis generated by the military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

India has reached an impasse because of its stated policy to safeguard the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and unwillingness to

recognise LTTE's standing in the conflict. Unless India overcomes this fixation, the Sinhalese dispensation will continue to exploit New Delhi and pursue its agenda without inhibitions. India should also recognise that the Sinhalese majority is yet to show any inclination to moderate its racist vision for Sri Lanka's future. Frequent reminders by Colombo's ruling elite that the ethnic minority will have to accept the country as Sinhalese land only confirms that the ongoing war is not really about defeating the LTTE, but part of larger strategy to Sinhalicise the entire island. Sri Lankan government efforts to alter the demographic character of traditional Tamil areas by settling Sinhalese peasants and creating high security zones are mainly to weaken the Tamil resolve.

Since the LTTE remains the only roadblock to this Sinhalese agenda, its military defeat will ultimately result in the political, social, and psychological subjugation of Tamils living in the North, East and other parts of the island. The Sri Lankan state has mostly achieved this objective in areas not under LTTE control. This is the reason why this writer had argued earlier that ethnic Tamils in the island and India will lose leverage with Colombo once the LTTE is militarily defeated. However, the LTTE leadership should also realise that the Sri Lankan Tamils have the best opportunity to secure an honourable settlement when they are still militarily relevant and explore alternative ways to quickly resolve the ethnic conflict.

While the LTTE's violent methods-forced recruitment, employment of child soldiers, and unrelenting militancy-are repugnant, their largely ethical conduct in the civil war has gone almost unnoticed. The LTTE has been mostly fighting a defensive war restricting their combat within what they perceive as traditional Tamil areas, and their guerrilla attacks have mostly targeted military bases and security forces. This is in contrast to almost all other militant/terrorist organisations in the world which mainly target civilian infrastructure and inflict massive civilian casualties.

Ironically it is the Sri Lankan state that has been deploying its firepower and aerial bombing capabilities over civilian areas in the north, resulting in massive civilian casualties and damages to residences, hospitals, and other civilian infrastructure. Unlike its antagonists, the LTTE has rarely been accused or found guilty of rape and other crimes against women and children during com-



Tamil people's suffering are disregarded in the name geopolitical strategy.

bat. The conduct of the Sri Lankan state reveals that the ongoing military campaign has an almost genocidal streak, with the deliberate targeting of civilian areas mainly aimed to deter civilians from supporting the LTTE.

Within India, especially after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, there has been a carefully orchestrated portrayal of the LTTE as the source of all troubles on the island. While the LTTE's role in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi deserves the strongest condemnation, that singular episode alone cannot be the basis for India's Sri Lanka policy or for condemning Sri Lankan Tamils to eternal suffering. Suggestions that the emergence of an independent Tamil Eelam will hurt Indian security interests are disputable, because its ethnic and political ties to India through Tamil Nadu will be much stronger than that of the Sinhalese dominated state. However, given a chance, most Sri Lankan Tamils will be happy to live under a greater Tamil Nadu-comprising traditional Tamil areas in the North and East of the island-as Indian citizens. But India failed to explore that option to integrate the North and East with Tamil Nadu when several opportunities presented that outcome before 1987.

The historical baggage-some of which dates pre-Christian times-also continues to remain a major impediment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The

British failure to present a partition plan to accommodate the political aspirations of the Sinhalese and Tamils allowed earlier historical grievances to fester. Since Sinhalese-Tamil social relations never assumed violent proportions like the Hindu-Muslim problem in pre-1947 India, the problem could have been easily sorted if the Sinhalese majority had been reasonable in their approach toward the ethnic minority. Until 1956 all ethnic groups at least shared a common identity and future as Ceylonese. The Sinhala Only Act and failure of Colombo's ruling elite to produce a multiethnic national identity and vision for Sri Lanka deepened the social divide and paved way for separatism.

Competitive pandering to Sinhalese-Buddhist extremism by political parties gradually resulted in the constitutional alienation, linguistic disenfranchisement, and denial of education and economic opportunities of Tamils. Failure of conventional political methods to address these grievances and various state-led anti-Tamil pogroms eventually led the Tamil youth (from which the LTTE would emerge as the pre-eminent force) to wage an armed struggle for political separation.

The racism and blatant government discrimination against Tamils in jobs, education, and economic opportunities that produced the original conflict are still intact. Hence attempts to

equate Sri Lanka's ethnic problem with various insurgencies faced by India are not only incorrect but an unfair characterisation of the Indian state. India represents very different social and political values and every conceivable religious, ethnic, and linguistic group in India enjoys constitutional equality and protection.

Thus viewing Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict through the prism of Indian federalism is misleading. India has always been keen in ending the ethnic conflict by actively engaging with the Sinhalese, and has consistently advocated a federal solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. This, according to New Delhi's assessment, would meet the aspirations of all ethnic groups in the island. While the federal political structure has worked remarkably well in the context of India, where coexistence of several ethnic/linguistic states acts as buffer to any chauvinism from the Hindi heartland, it is unlikely to work in Sri Lanka where there are only two main ethnic groups. But Colombo is not even prepared to offer Tamils the Indian-type solution, which would still preserve their political dominance in Sri Lanka. The failure to take into account this deep Sinhalese-Tamil divide explains the stagnation in India's Sri Lanka policy.

Colombo has always keenly followed political undercurrents

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## OPINION

# 13th Amendment: arousing a zombie

Chivanadi  
TamilNet

THE Indian government may be bereft of all guts to do anything in Sri Lanka. But at least it can render a great service by not talking about the 13th amendment as a basis to resolve the crisis. What is more dangerous than India abetting a war against Eelam Tamils by providing arms, armed personnel and intelligence to Colombo is the political sabotage of thrusting the rotten 13th amendment upon the struggling people to muffle their voice. India should rather acknowledge the decades-old Tamil voice for self-determination as a nation, to base exploration of fresh models, writes Opinion Columnist.

The fact that India, especially its Congress government was instrumental to the enactment of the 13th Amendment in the constitution of Sri Lanka doesn't mean that India should adamantly stick to it even after seeing its failure for two decades. Individuals may care for false prestige, but not a great nation like India.

The provincial council solution facilitated by the 13th amendment in 1987, failed at the outset primarily due to its incompatibility in concept and structure to match the acuteness of the ethnic divide in Sri Lanka, than due to the opposition to it by the LTTE.

This should have become clear without any iota of doubt to India at that time itself as the Indian sponsored Chief Minister Varatharaja Perumal himself became so frustrated of the working of the solution despite the presence of the IPKF, that he decided to declare an independent Tamil country on the day he quit. He must have received tacit assent from India to take that step, but well, there was a Janata government in power in Delhi at that time which was able to see the realities.

A fundamental, conceptual conspiracy in the 13th amendment was that it provided devolution for eight provincial councils when the question was between two ethnicities. Thus the amendment was designed to nullify the importance of regional identity by equating those who wanted it and those who never asked for it. A reputed Sinhala scholar recently pointed out at a workshop in Oslo how the model failed to arouse

enthusiasm in the Sinhala provinces.

The 13th amendment was far too short in addressing the basic requirements of Tamils: recognition of their ethnic identity as a nation of self-determination which was essential for their emotional security in the context of the inherent nature of Sinhala nationalism in Sri Lanka, physical security in the context of ethnically charged and inflated armed forces of the state, integrity of land in the background of state sponsored encroachments which started even before independence and structural provisions to implement development in all sectors in the way and extent they wish without hindrance.

The advocates of the 13th amendment argue that all basic Tamil aspirations could be found in it in an implied sense. But it was a folly or perhaps a deliberate sabotage that India and Sri Lanka thought of stuffing and stressing a unitary constitution with a phenomenon that needs at least a confederation-constitution to handle.

Eelam Tamils have to be ever thankful to Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Chief Justice Mr. Sarath Silva, for aptly demonstrating to India the void of 13th Amendment by a court ruling dividing the Northern and Eastern Provinces united by the 13th Amendment.

It would have convinced even a child how so simple it is to deny the Tamils their geographical integrity. But however explicit the Sri Lankan President and Chief Justice were, they failed to convince the Indian government and some sections in Tamil Nadu for they still harp on the 13th Amendment.

When a political effort fails it is statesmanship to find improved remedies. But, what happened in the case of Eelam Tamils was the leadership in India and Sri Lanka decided on a retrogressive tactic to penalize the already suffering people by going back to zero.

Mahinda was talking of Panchayat system (local government) solution, started an aggressive war abetted by India and the West, divided North and East, truncated the 13th amendment, terrorized the Tamil population and effectively used the JVP and JHU to resist to any meaningful solution.



**President Mahinda Rajapakke at a All Party Representative Committee (APRC) meeting. The APRC chairman and Science and Technology Minister Prof. Tissa Vitarana on Tuesday, November 4 announced that the final document of the APRC power devolution proposals will only be ready when the present military campaign concludes.**

As the saying goes in Tamil, it was a tactic of making people say 'let there be no alms but hold the dog' (Pichchai vea'ndaam, naayaip pidi), so that they would agree to anything the Establishment concedes. This is a typical bureaucratic approach for we don't have statesmen anymore in our region. They are all executives and bureaucrats of a larger system. If that says 'terrorism' all of them will endorse it blindfold.

It is time that the Tamils of Eelam and Tamil Nadu should tell India and the International community clearly and loudly what they have in their mind and what they want, without mincing words. It is not a matter confined only to the LTTE. Even those Tamil groups now in the Mahinda camp will need the security of an irrefutable constitutional platform for all their dealings. Otherwise they will be liquidated once their services are not required.

Other than the intertwining of Eelam Tamil nationalism with the LTTE, implicated in Rajiv assassination, and an opinion that Congress and its officials are biased due to their earlier failure in Sri Lanka arising from Tamil resistance, there are many other facts or myths circulate about India's attitude and fears towards Eelam Tamil self-determination.

'Eelam may create inspirations in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere in India. Therefore, what the maximum the Eelam Tamils can get should be less than what the Indian states have.'

'Sri Lanka may seek the help of 'others' who will threaten Indian security.'

'Turmoil and security threat possible due to a backlash of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka in the event of recognizing Tamil rights.'

Often many western diplomats have hinted that it is India

that is an obstacle for Eelam Tamils getting anything politically substantial.

There is a view that as events in Sri Lanka move in a way not acceptable to them, India and her strategic partners will allow only further chaos and will think of only incomplete solutions in order to facilitate space for their interests. The attitude is 'if you don't listen to us, go to hell; let's grab what's possible'.

Some political analysts also have cited a line of thinking that the easiest way for India is to allow the elimination of top LTTE leaders so that the crisis would die and no need to care what happens to the Tamils, as they can't black-mail like the Sinhalese.

Well, now there is a situation that if India doesn't see to it that Eelam Tamils get their autonomy or independence, she may face

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## '13th Amendment powerless, youth may go for war again'

POWERS devolved under the 13th amendment to provincial council are being taken away by the central government by issuing gazette notifications and circulars. The provincial council has no power to transfer even a police constable, lamented M. L. A. M. Hisbullah, a Minister in the Eastern Provincial Council in an exclusive interview to the weekly edition of the leading Tamil daily Virakesari published from Colombo.

Hisbullah further said according to 13th amendment powers have been devolved to the provincial council on various subjects, Irrigation, Agriculture, and Land and so on. The power to appoint a Deputy Inspector General of Police is also devolved to the PC but only in writing and not in force. Powers devolved to the PC have been withdrawn step by step

by the central government.

"Sinhalese are in majority in other provincial councils in the south. There Sinhalese are ruling them. The central government is also in the hands of Sinhalese community. Hence there is no problem who is ruling whom. But the situation in the North and East is different. Powers should be given to Tamil speaking people in the North and East, especially to Tamil people. In failing to do so more problems would crop up. Full powers should be devolved to eastern province. Only this would bring peace. The Chief Minister and I had talks with President Mahinda Rajapakse and his senior advisor Basil Rajapakse on the devolution of powers to east provincial council. But I feel that it a difficult task to get powers to EPC. However we have been taking all efforts in this

regard, said Hisbullah

Hisbullah, once a lieutenant of the late Muslim leader Mr. A.H.M.Ashraff, founder of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), later crossed over to the government side and held cabinet rank ministerial portfolio. He was elected to the newly formed East Provincial Council (EPC) in the ticket of ruling United Peoples Freedom Alliance on the promise that he would be the Chief Minister of the EPC. But in a political twist he was not given the CM post. Now he holds the second rank in the provincial cabinet led by Chief Minister Sivanethurai Chandrakanthan alias Pillayan.

Hisbullah added that youths could be forced again to take up arms if the Eastern Provincial Council loses its authority on all subjects that are allocated to it under the 13th Amendment.

## NEWS

# Sri Lanka rejects ceasefire call: tells LTTE 'surrender or be destroyed'

SRI LANKA'S government rejected the latest a truce offer by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) out of hand demanding they surrender or be destroyed by the ongoing military offensive.

In parliament, Agriculture Minister Maithripala Sirisena repeated President Mahinda Rajapaksa's stance, which has been in place since the government scrapped a 2002 ceasefire in January 2008.

"The government will not go for a ceasefire with the LTTE. We will not have any form of discussion with the LTTE. We have already told them to lay down arms and there is no change in our stand," Sirisena told the parliament on Monday, November 10.

The government stand was in response to a statement released by the LTTE political head, B Nadesan, at the weekend stating "there is no hesitation on our side to reiterate our position that we have always wanted a ceasefire."

Nadesan noted that it was the government that unilaterally abrogated the previous ceasefire and claimed that the LTTE was only fighting a "defensive war" thrust upon it by the government.

Nadesan statement was, in turn, a response to calls from Tamil Nadu political leaders for India to intervene and bring in place an immediate cessation of hostilities in the neighbouring island.

Since the beginning of October Tamil Nadu has witnessed mass protests by political parties, students, lawyers, traders, and cinema artists and technicians in support of Eelam Tamils, demanding the Indian central government put a hold to the genocide of Tamils at the hand of Sri Lanka.

As the protests gained momentum and widespread support poured in from the people of Tamil Nadu, the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader and chief minister of Tamil Nadu convened a All Party Meeting on Tuesday October 14.

The political parties that attended the meeting passed a resolution demanding the Indian government to withdraw military support for Sri Lanka and request

Sri Lanka to announce a ceasefire to enable affected civilians to receive humanitarian assistance.

The parties also announced that if the Congress led coalition government in New Delhi failed to intervene to stop the genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka within 14 days, the 40 Tamil Nadu members of parliament will resign en masse.

As the fourteen days deadline neared, Sri Lanka sent Basil Rajapakse, younger brother and special advisor to the President Mahinda Rajapakse to New Delhi to meet India's External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee.

According to reports, Rajapakse assured India that Tamils' needs would be met and India had used the talks to convey "its concern at the humanitarian situation" in northern Sri Lanka and had "emphasised the need for unhindered essential relief supplies."

Following his meeting with Basil Rajapakse, Pranab Mukherjee made an unscheduled visit to Tamil Nadu for a meeting with Tamil Nadu chief minister Karunanidhi in Chennai.

According to media reports the DMK chief had assured Mukherjee that he would not precipitate a crisis for the ruling coalition in New Delhi.

After the meeting, asked about the resignation threat, Karunanidhi said Mukherjee had requested him to postpone any decision in this regard as it would lead to a lot of complications. "I will certainly not create problems for the Centre," the chief minister said.

Mukherjee in return assured that any material aid provided by Tamil Nadu would be sent to the Tamils in Vanni.

However, the key DMK demand - that India ensure a ceasefire - remained unfulfilled and many political parties were dismayed by Karunanidhi backing down on the issue without the central government meeting any of the demands in the resolution or even securing any concrete promise to do so.

Political parties and organisations across the spectrum assailed External Affairs Minister Pranab



Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi.

Mukherjee and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi for allegedly using the plight of the suffering Tamil minority in Sri Lanka for political ends.

Senior BJP leader Ila Ganesan said separately: "The threat of the resignation of MPs from parliament was a mere drama aimed at diverting attention of the masses from the urgent issues in Tamil Nadu like the electricity shortage, law and order problems and rising prices. None expected the resignations to be handed over on Oct 29 to the speaker. The suffering Sri Lankan Tamil minority has only served the narrow political ends of the DMK and the Congress."

In addition, the public protests demanding immediate cession of hostilities continued across Tamil Nadu with a state wide shut down and fast by cinema stars, cinema technicians and television artists.

On Friday, November 7, Karunanidhi released a statement

again calling for cessation of hostilities, but this time from both the warring sides in the island country - the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

"A permanent ceasefire is needed to ensure lasting peace for which a cessation of hostilities from both the sides is an inevitable need. Once the fighting ends, India and other third party mediators can ensure that the Tamil minority in the island is accorded adequate rights to exist honourably," Karunanidhi said in a statement.

Following Karunanidhi's statement, on Saturday, November 8, Communist Party of India (CPI) Tamil Nadu, D. Pandian made public call for the Eelam Tamils' political leadership to clarify the Tamil stand on the issue of ceasefire.

In his statement, Pandian said that the people of Tamil Nadu state and India were being led to a state of confusion by the calls that

demanding both the warring parties in Sri Lanka to announce a ceasefire.

Consensus of the people of Tamil Nadu is that the Sri Lankan government should immediately stop the war. However, when questions were raised by certain sections, there is a need for clarification, Pandian added.

Head of LTTE political wing responded to this call on Sunday, November 9.

Following Nadesan's clarification both CPI and DMK urged the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to call on Sri Lanka to stop the war.

Karunanidhi, in a statement released on Monday, November 10 said: "Pursuant to the steps initiated by the (central government) since then (and) after Saturday's offer of a ceasefire by (LTTE political head) Nadesan, India has an urgent need to get the Sri

*Continued on p14*

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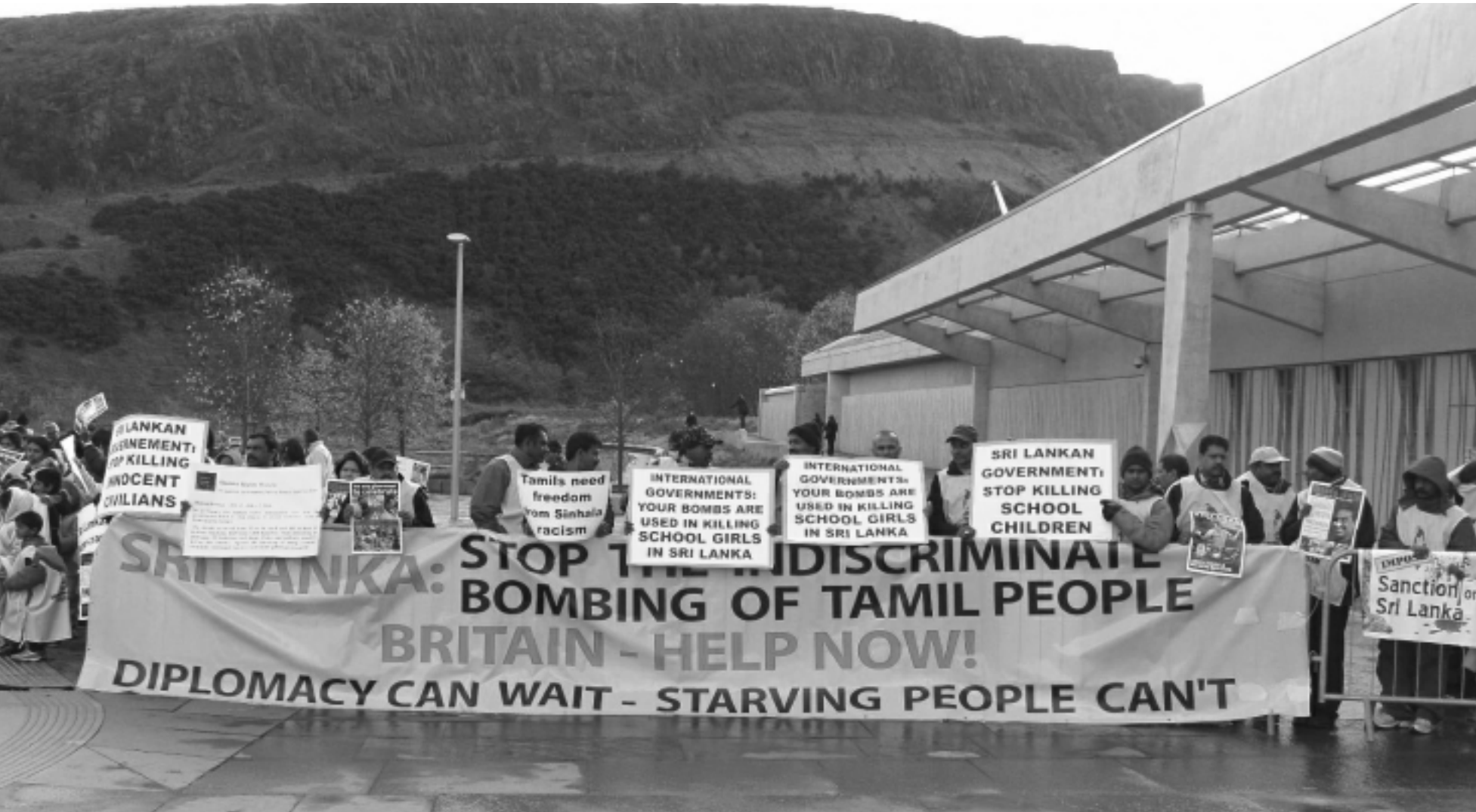
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(Above) Tamils gathered in a peaceful protest on 30 October 2008 in front of the local parliamentary building in Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, to remind local politicians of the fate of Tamil civilians in the Vanni. (Below left) Tamils in Milton Keynes, England, also gathered in a local area to in a peaceful and silent protest express their frustrations at having their voices suppressed by the lack of coverage of the humanitarian disaster befalling their families and friends in the north and east of Sri Lanka.



More than two hundred Australian Tamils held a vigil in Perth, Western Australia on November 7 in front of the electorate office of Minister for Foreign Affairs Stephen Smith, to create awareness among the Australian public and inform the Australian government about the plight of the displaced people in Vanni. This is the fourth in a series of protest vigils, being organised by the Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations (AFTA). As Mr. Smith's office was briefed in advance about the vigil, an AFTA delegation was invited by the Minister's office at the beginning of the vigil to have a meeting with the Minister's Senior Advisor Mr David Hatt. During the meeting the delegation was informed that the Minister was away from the electorate, but had been following the situation in the North East very closely, and that the Minister was well aware and concerned on the plight of Tamil displaced. At the end of this meeting when Mr. Hatt stepped out of the office to meet the Tamils participating in the vigil, he was garlanded and welcomed by the Vice Chair of AFTA. Mr Hatt brought with him a special message from the Minister to the participants of the vigil and read it out. In return AFTA vice Chair handed in a submission from AFTA to the Minister.

## NEWS

# 'Give way to Tamil Eelam...

*Continued from p10*

in India and within Tamil Nadu and benefits from the prevailing chaos. It has not only been successful in driving a wedge between the concerns of Tamil Nadu politics and the central government, but has also carefully cultivated certain Indian bureaucrats and journalists whose views on the ethnic conflict are compatible to the Sinhalese project. Historically too the Sinhalese have cleverly played one Indian kingdom against another to have an edge over the Tamil Hindu Jaffna kingdom. India's succumbing to this contemporary schem-

ing is, in the long run, deeply inimical to its interests and security.

Unless India makes a course correction, some political parties are likely to exploit the situation to revive the long-forgotten separatist propaganda in Tamil Nadu. While the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government was more sensitive and remained equidistant from the two warring groups, the current United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government has been providing significant military assistance to the Sri Lankan government. This policy is inadvertently contributing to the Tamil subjugation project of the current Sri Lankan government.

India must not allow its long term interests to be corroded due to the machinations of the Sinhalese regime and its Indian supporters. It should intervene as it did in East Pakistan if Colombo does not show any sincerity and returns to its old ways.

Indeed, a strong case could be made that an independent Tamil Eelam will not only be in India's interests but permanently avoid exploitation by the Sinhalese. A unified Sri Lanka under Sinhalese domination will be deeply inimical to Indian security and strategic interests.

Presence of two states in India's southern frontiers will act as a powerful deterrent to both

successor states from pursuing policies that are prejudicial to the Indian Navy's predominance in the region.

India would do well to remember how it lost all leverage with China by meekly accepting the latter's invasion of Tibet. India's appeasement policies in response to developments in Tibet in the 1950s not only paved way for Tibet's invasion, but emboldened China to lay claim over vast tracts of India's territory. Of course India doesn't have any border to settle with Sri Lanka, but it occupies its soft underbelly and a strategic position in the Indian Ocean. Colombo will permanently continue to exploit India in the

absence of a buffer that an independent Tamil Eelam could provide.

Already, India has been shamefully remiss in failing to take the Sri Lankan navy to task over the issue of frequent killings of Indian fishermen.

The fact that Sri Lankan navy could kill a few hundred Indian fishermen with impunity is a sign of the future behaviour of the Sinhalese state once it secures a military victory over LTTE and impose a solution on ethnic Tamils on its terms. Once the Sri Lankan state achieves that objective, India will be, according to a popular Sinhalese refrain, "discarded like curry leaves."

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## Rejects... SLA blocks ...

*Continued from p12*

Lankan regime (realise) the inevitable responsibility to translate these into action (through the declaration of a ceasefire)."

Veteran CPI leader Pandian urged the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to act swiftly to end the war in Sri Lanka.

Noting that the LTTE has responded positively for the public call from the CPI to spell out their stand in unambiguous terms to the call for ceasefire and urged Manmohan Singh to use his good offices to impress upon Mr. Rajapakse to stop the war and agree for a ceasefire.

Pandian further said: As Indians, we feel, that the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict should be resolved amicably or else, the negative impact on India will have long term repercussions.

*Continued from p4*

five civilians, including a 2-year-old boy.

The day was turned into another disastrous day for the child, Manoharan Vithuran, as the family was preparing to observe the 31st day rituals for their mother, Mrs. Manoharan, who was killed in the SLAF bombardment on the same locality, 30 days ago.

He was rushed to the Kiino-chchi hospital functioning in Tharmapuram and admitted at the Intensive Care Unit, according to TamilNet correspondent who visited the bombed site and the hos-

pital.

72-year-old mother of two, Sellathurai Kamalambal, 63-year-old mother of two, Sivarasa Gowri, both from Kumarapuram, 54-year-old father of four, Nagalingam Sivarasa, from Paranthan 5th canal and a 12-year-old boy Sriskanth Tharangan from Kumarapuram were the other civilians who sustained injuries in the SLAF attack.

Nine houses were completely destroyed in the attack. Murugan temple at Kumarapuram, several other houses and a shop were damaged in the Sri Lankan air strike.

## Arousing a zombie...

*Continued from p11*

worse security threats.

The people's awakening in Tamil Nadu is a serious matter. It is difficult to predict the form it may take. Besides, the behaviour of India in respect to Eelam Tamils will seriously erode the credibility of Indian establishment with its ethnicities, minorities and subalterns. They will not look at it as a lesson. Rather they will look at it as a challenge. While the Sinhalese continue with their blackmailing, the Eelam Tamils also will try to seek other avenues. Military defeat of the LTTE is not the end of the Tamil struggle.

Not that the Indian leaders don't know that it was actually the Sinhalese polity and the average Sinhalese mentality that didn't cooperate from the very beginning with India's geopolitical and security concerns. Had there been an understanding and regional perception, they wouldn't have contributed to the ethnic crisis attracting all hawks to poke their noses. Rather the Sinhalese leadership chose to exploit the Indian concerns for blackmailing India and to achieve their chauvinistic goals in Sri Lanka, which has

now reached the stage of systematic genocide.

The exclusive Sinhalese polity will not stop until the Tamil identity is completely subordinated. The perception it has given to its people is that this is settling scores with a two and a half millennia old enemy. There is no immediate likelihood that the Sinhalese perception will change for pluralistic accommodation.

A concrete structural arrangement not less than a confederation, if not a separate country, can only prevent catastrophe in the island. That too will need international supervision and separation of the warring parties for some time, considering the deep divide the prolonged war has created. In extreme situations facilitation of demographic movement also may be needed.

If India can take a bold stand on this it won't be difficult to convince its 'strategic partners'. A noble mission will only enhance India's prestige inside and outside and no more blackmailing.

Whether the present government at Delhi may be able to carry out such a venture or not, at least it should not seal the fate of Eelam Tamils by instigating the zombie of 13th Amendment.

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## TAMIL NADU

# Kollywood fasts over Eelam Tamils ...

*Continued from p9*

He also said that the response and protests to the struggles of Tamils must not be seen as a regional one and that he would raise his voice wherever people were in trouble.

"People in Tamil Nadu who have so much of infighting should realize this," he added at the end of his soul-stirring speech.

Desiya Murpokku Dravidar Kazhagam (DMDK) Chief and actor Vijayakanth remarked in his speech that people of Tamil Nadu had the right to criticize both the State and the Union Governments.

"Rajapaksa is staging a major drama. The State and the Union Governments should question him. He bombs the innocent civilians and he has never showed any humanitarian concern," Vijayakanth said.

South Indian Film Artists Association President Sarath Kumar, who also heads All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi (AISMK), called for a permanent solution to the ethnic strife in the island nation.

Vijay was welcomed with rousing applause. He stated that the struggling Tamils of Sri Lanka had now been for years without the basic necessities of life. He made a call to all his fans and people who cared about their struggling brothers to send petitions to the Prime Minister of India demanding a solution to the issue.

Ajith called for lasting peace on the island nation even as he used the opportunity to condemn critics who had spread rumours of his unwillingness to participate in the fast.

Parthipan posed the question how the funds being collected in Tamil Nadu are going to reach the Tamils caught up in Sri Lankan offensive and urged all concerned to ensure independent channelling of the funds and also enable monitoring and feedback by engaging a team from various sectors, including a member on behalf of the South Indian Film Artists Association.

Vivek acknowledged that the Eelam Tamil Diaspora was responsible for arranging live performances abroad for actors and actresses from the Tamil film industry.

"In every grain of rice that we eat, the contribution of the Eelam Tamils is there. So, we have a moral duty to voice for their rights and concerns," he said.

Many of the actors who spoke at the event also focused on the history of Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka, saying that the Tamils were natives of the island and justified the Tamil demand for equal status.

One of the actors also said it Eelam was not an offspring of Tamil Nadu to describe Eelam Tamils' relationship with Tamil Nadu as of an umbilical cord. Quite opposite, Eelam and Tamil



Nadu shared a common womb and were thus siblings, he said.

Mayilsamy named Thileepan, who fasted unto death in Jaffna in 1987, as one of three personalities who had greatest impact on Tamils, the other two being Mother Theresa and M. G. Ramachandran (MGR).

Actor and Director Manivannan in his address said Mahatma Gandhi conceived non-violence agitation as a form of struggle against apartheid in his early ages in South Africa.

"Gandhism, which originated in South Africa, and brought independence to India, attained its symbolism in Jaffna," where Thileepan sacrificed his life in his fast-unto-death campaign demanding justice from India in 1987, he said.

Several actors expressed solidarity with the Tamils who have been uprooted due to the Sri Lankan offensive and forced into jungles amid shelling, bombardment and life-threatening snakebites.

Donations poured in throughout the day to a relief fund for Eelam Tamils.

Rajinikanth contributed 10 lakhs to the relief fund, and Kamal Haasan shelled out another 5 lakhs.

Within an eight-hour span of the fast, over 45 lakh rupees was collected for the Eezham Tamils Relief Fund by the South Indian Film Artists Association headed by Sarath Kumar and Ratharavi.

Other famous actors who enthusiastically participated in the fast were: Sathyaraj, Vijayakumar, Vikram, Prakashraj, Surya, Prabhu, Dhanush, Karthi, Karthik, Arjun, Vadivel, Jeyam Ravi, Silambarasan, Napoleon, Goundamani, S.V. Sekhar, Jeevan, Prasanth; and actresses Mano-

rama, Kushboo, Radhika Sarathkumar, Sripriya, Nayanthara, Trisha, Sneha, Keerthi Chawla and others.

Meanwhile hundreds participated at the Film Employees Federation of South India (FEFSI) ten hour fast on November 8 to lend their voice against the atrocities carried out on Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The fasters demanded an immediate ceasefire in Sri Lanka and protested against the killing of Tamil civilians there.

"This hunger strike is to show our feeling of solidarity for the affected community in Sri Lanka. The Central government should intervene and try and save the Tamils there," said S. Vijayan, President, FEFSI.

Noted director Bharathirajaa said if the Indian government wanted, it could stop the war in Sri Lanka. Any delay in handling the issue would only in the wiping out of Tamils in Sri Lanka, he said.

"We should invite the international community to look into the issue," said Sarathkumar, actor and founder of the Akila India Samathuva Makkal Katchi. While raising the issue one should be cautious and should not deviate from the objective of stopping the war in Sri Lanka, The Hindu quoted him as saying.

T. Rajendar, director and actor, said as a Tamilian he would voice his concern for the Tamils suffering in Sri Lanka.

The Indian government was fully responsible for the war in Sri Lanka, charged R.K. Selvamani, director. All the political parties in the State should join hands and submit a memorandum to the central government in this regard, he said.

In the forthcoming elections,

political parties that were not supporting the Tamil Eelam cause would be defeated, said Man-sooralikhan, actor and director.

The FEFSI passed resolutions, including one urging the Tamil Nadu State and the central Indian government to intervene and take steps to order a ceasefire in Sri Lanka.

The escalating war in Sri Lanka has roiled Indian politics and prompted heated diplomatic exchanges between the neighbouring countries.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party has demanded a ceasefire between the

Sri Lankan government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The DMK had earlier threatened to pull out from the Central coalition in protest against the Sri Lankan government's intensifying offensive against the LTTE.

Withdrawal of support by DMK could have forced a vote of confidence in Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's government, ahead of elections due in 2009.

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has ruled out any Indian involvement in solving the conflict, which the government says must be solved through dialogue.

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United States President-Elect Barack Obama and his family arrive on stage for his election night victory rally at Grant Park on November 4, 2008 in Chicago, Illinois. Americans emphatically elected Obama as their first black president in a transformational election which will reshape US politics and the US role on the world stage. EMMANUEL DUNAND/AFP/Getty Images

  
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