

States have obligations to prevent genocide

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Attacks on hospitals leave patients exposed



The deliberate targeting by the Sri Lankan military of hospitals in the Sri Lankan government declared safe-zones, has left patients with no access to medical care at a time when they are at greater risk of injury due to the escalating conflict and the Sri Lankan state strategy of targeting the civilian population.

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NEWS

Long-term concentration camps for Tamils says Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA'S government last week unveiled plans to detain a large proportion of the Tamil civilian population of Vanni for at least three years in concentration camps which it calls 'welfare villages'.

Tamil political activists both in Sri Lanka and India reacted with outrage at the proposal that remind of concentration camps in World War 2 Germany and, in recent times, Bosnia. Alarmed human rights organisations also expressed their concern but in somewhat muted fashion considering nature of the proposal.

However, more interestingly there is no response at all from international powers that have been espousing liberal values and preaching human rights to Sri Lanka.

The government proposal calls for creating four villages, totalling nearly 1,000 acres, in the Vavuniya district and a fifth 100-acre camp in the neighbouring Mannar, to house approximately 250,000 displaced Tamils.

The villages would have 39,000 semi-permanent homes, 7,800 toilets and 780 septic tanks, as well as parks, post offices, banks, stores and about 390 community centers with televisions and radios, according to the plan.

All Tamils fleeing the fighting will be locked up in the centres and will have no choice on whether they stay in the camps. They will be screened for terrorist connections and then held under armed guard, with only those with relatives inside the camp allowed to come and go. Single youngsters will be confined to the camps.

"Of course, it will not be voluntary - we need to check everyone," Rajiva Wijesinha, the Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, said. "This is a situation where we're dealing with terrorists who infiltrate civilian populations. Security has to be paramount." He said that it was the only way to prevent LTTE attacks.

Wijesinha, added that the camps would be run by the government but the military would have "great involvement."

"There is a very clear security threat and we are not going to play games with the lives of our people," he said.

Wijesinha also accused Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and international aid agencies of bias

towards the LTTE and said, for that reason, the Government would limit aid groups' access to camps and allow journalists to visit only on government tours.

It remains unclear how long displaced Tamils will be forced to remain in the camps. The Sri Lankan government had originally planned to detain civilians there for three years but, following concern from humanitarian groups, said they hoped to resettle 80 per cent within a year.

A Tamil political analyst opined that Sri Lanka's was revised timeframes are to soothe the humanitarian groups and it will keep the Tamils locked up for at least three years as it originally planned or for longer period.

Tamil MPs outraged

Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil MPs expressed outrage and urged the international community not to fund the camps without direct oversight and independent media access.

"These are nothing but concentration camps," said Raman Senthil, an Indian Tamil MP. "Why should they be in camps? If they are citizens they should be rehabilitated straight away." Senthil told the Times newspaper.

Mano Ganeshan, a Sri Lankan Tamil MP, told the Times: "I don't want to say concentration camp yet, but they're already detention camps and military grilling stations. They should be run and monitored by the international community."

Suren Surendiran, of the British Tamils Forum, told the Times that the camps were "like the detention centres where the Jews were held in World War II".

HR groups concerned

Human Rights Watch called the camps "detention centres" and said that they violated UN guidelines on internally displaced people, which say they can only be detained or interned under exceptional circumstances. "The Sri Lankan Government has not demonstrated that such circumstances exist," said Charu Hogg, a Human Rights Watch spokeswoman.

Amnesty International said that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights obliged Sri Lanka to refrain from arbitrar-



The Sri Lankan government is planning to locate Tamils who leave the war zone in the Vanni in detention centres that human rights activists have charged are reminiscent of WWII concentration camps

ily depriving any person's right to liberty. "The Government wants international assistance but not international standards," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty's Sri Lanka expert.

Lone voices

There was no reaction from foreign government or political parties in Sri Lanka, except for few lone voices. Robert Evans, a Labour MEP who has visited Sri Lanka as chairman of the European Parliament Delegation on Relations with South Asia, said: "These are not welfare camps, they are prisoner-of-war cum concentration camps."

Former Foreign minister Mangala Samaraweera, a former close aide to President Mahinda Rajapakse, said it was part of a police to paint all Tamils, even moderate opponents of the Tamil Tigers, as potential terrorists and to silence all Tamil voices.

"It is amazing and terrible. A few months ago the government started registering all Tamils in Colombo on the grounds that they could be a security threat, but this could be exploited for other purposes like the Nazis in the 1930s. They're basically going to label the whole civilian Tamil population as potential terrorists, and as a result we are becoming a recruitment machine for the LTTE. Instead of winning hearts and minds of the Tamil people, we're pushing even the moderates into the arms of the LTTE by taking these horrendous steps," he told The Daily Telegraph.

Foreign funding

Professor Wijesinha told the Times that President Rajapaksa's office drafted the original proposal two weeks ago and circulated it to foreign embassies and aid agencies to raise funding.

One agency chief familiar with the plan said it would be very expensive.

Not only would the government and aid groups have to feed, clothe and house the residents,

but since most of the civilians are farmers, the economy would suffer as their fields lay fallow, reported Associated Press.

A second proposal called for the construction of 40 schools to hold an expected 86,171 students. That plan asked international donors to fund everything from a photocopying machine for each school to instruments for the school band, at a total cost of about \$14 million, Associated Press added.

Detention centres

The Government says that

Vanni Tamils face starvation

THE United Nations has warned hundreds of thousands of people, living in the war zone in the north-eastern Sri Lankan region of Vanni, are facing a food crisis.

The World Food Programme (WFP) says about 250,000 people there are totally dependent on international aid agencies who are unable to gain access to the area.

The Sri Lankan military has sealed off Vanni to the outside world. Aid agencies say they are unable to bring essential relief supplies to the people.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and many wounded in recent days and several Western countries have pressed the Sri Lankan government to declare a cease-fire to allow emergency relief to be provided to the people caught in the fighting and the injured civilians to be transported for treatment.

Amnesty International has also called on both sides to declare a humanitarian cease-fire to allow civilians out and to let food, water and medical supplies be delivered to those who can't leave.

"A quarter of a million people

32,000 civilians have fled the conflict zone in the past week and are being processed at 13 temporary camps.

If the current internment camps are any indication of what the 'welfare villages' will be like they would be nothing less than concentration camps where Tamils will be locked up for a very long time and harassed day in day out.

Amnesty describes the existing camps as "de facto detention centres" and accuses the army of taking hostages by allowing people to leave only if a relative stays behind.

are suffering without adequate food and shelter while shells rain down upon them. Most of those who have managed to escape the conflict have not received adequate hospital treatment," said Yolanda Foster, a researcher at the London-based rights group.

But the government has ruled out a cease-fire.

The World Food Program has said that the entire population of the Vanni is facing a food crisis. Some 250,000 people there are completely dependent on humanitarian aid, but WFP said it has not been able to get a supply convoy into the conflict zone since January 16.

"At present, the entire population of the Vanni is facing a food crisis due to continuous displacement, crop failure and recent floods," World Food Program spokeswoman, Emilia Casella said.

"Their livelihood is almost completely lost, exacerbating the food insecurity and their coping mechanisms have been exhausted. There is complete dependency on humanitarian and food assistance for their survival."

NEWS

In Sri Lanka, Tamil women suffer the worst of war

M. R. Narayan Swamy

IN one of the biggest hospitals in Sri Lanka's north, many women patients wonder why they survived the fighting between the Tamil Tigers and the military that killed so many of their friends.

A woman in her late 40s frequently breaks down as she lies on a bed in a hospital in Mannar, clutching her son of two-and-a-half years who has lost a leg. Her two other children are missing, residents in the region say.

She was among the large number of Tamils escaping from Kilinochchi, the former political hub of the Tamil Tigers, last month when a shell probably fired by the army exploded, ripping apart her son's leg below the knee.

Losing no time, she handed over her other two children, a six-month-old son and a daughter of seven years, to a friend as she tried to find help to save her bleeding and wailing son.

She managed to reach the hospital in Mannar, where she

remains warded. She has no idea where the other children are - and whether she will see them ever again.

She also has no news of her husband, who left their home long ago after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ordered him to serve their civilian militia.

Another patient at the hospital is a girl of 16 years who is left with only her upper torso. A resident of Mullaitivu district, both her legs came off in an aerial bombing seemingly targeted at the LTTE.

There is also a 22-year-old woman, seven months pregnant. Half her body got burnt when her house in Kilinochchi caught fire in aerial bombing. Her breasts are charred.

Remarkably, all these women are officially under detention at the hospital although some cannot even stir on their own. Since they came from areas the LTTE ruled for years, the doctors have been forbidden from discharging them.



Women are often unhappy survivors of the war in the Northeast as their brothers, fathers, husbands and sons are killed or disappear. They also face the ongoing trauma of rape as Sri Lankan soldiers have reportedly targeted women in who have fled the warzone, taking them from the detention camps.

Human suffering shows no signs of abating in Sri Lanka's bleeding war. Most of the pain is being borne by Tamil civilians, many of whom are destitute after repeatedly fleeing their homes.

As the Sri Lankan military remains poised to seize the last stretch of land held by the LTTE in Mullaitivu, civilians are fleeing from there in hundreds, desperate to get away from it all.

Medical personnel say that many of the patients in Mannar are traumatised after seeing scores of bodies along the road as they fled the fighting. Many bodies were torn apart.

Many of the injured, reports

say, simply bled to death because no help was available.

One woman told the doctor: 'It is worse than the tsunami. At that time many came to help us. Now there is nobody.'

Hospitals in the northern districts of Mannar and Vavuniya every day receive dozens of wounded civilians. The really critical cases are sent to Anuradhapura, at the edge of the war zone.

Most victims are children, women and elderly men. While the Vavuniya hospital has all kinds of patients, the ones at Mannar are mostly amputees - those without hands and legs.

Once out of the conflict zone,

and left with nothing but the clothes they are in, the injured are dependent on the military and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for survival.

There appears to be no precise count of how many have been wounded in aerial bombings and shelling. Tamils from outside have no access to army-seized Kilinochchi where hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Tamils from Mullaitivu have taken refuge.

Civilians who have not been injured are taken to detention centres in Mannar, Vavuniya and Jaffna to find out if they are indeed non-combatants or LTTE fighters in disguise.

40 civilians killed, 100 wounded daily

THE top health official in Vanni told an international news agency that at least 40 Tamil civilians are killed and another 100 are wounded by the ongoing military offensive by the Sri Lankan military.

Dr. Thurairajah Varatharajah, the government health officer for Mullaitheevu district, told Associated Press on Friday, February 13, that artillery shelling was routinely hitting civilian areas in the region and the makeshift hospital he was running out of a school in the coastal town of Puthumaththalan was overwhelmed by casualties.

The facility was badly understaffed since most of the doctors and nurses either fled the war zone or had stopped coming to work, and the makeshift hospital was running out of some essential antibiotics and anesthesia, he told AP by telephone. "We are facing in the hospital big problems on all sides. Not enough toilets, bad water supply, food is also a problem," he told AP.

The area around the hospital

was shelled Monday, killing 22 people, he added.

Varatharajah estimated that more than 100 wounded civilians were coming to the hospital every day, most of them with injuries from artillery shells. However, it was impossible to give exact statistics because his administrative staff stopped coming to work amid the violence, he said.

Whilst Varatharajah did not say who he believed was firing the shells, the Sri Lankan Defence Secretary recently justified attacking hospitals within LTTE controlled Vanni, labeling them as 'legitimate military targets'.

While relatives have stopped bringing the dead to the hospital - usually burying them where they were killed - many patients told Varatharajah of those who were killed in the attacks that injured them, reported AP.

"They will tell us, 'There were five dead bodies in that area, two in that area,'" he said, explaining how he reached his estimate of 40 killed a day.

SLA turns first 'safety zone' into killing field, proposes new zone

AFTER relentlessly firing artillery shells and mortars into an area it unilaterally declared as 'safety zone' and killing and maiming scores of civilians, the Sri Lankan military has disbanded it and declared another part of LTTE controlled Vanni as 'safety zone'.

The new 'safety zone' proposed by the Sri Lankan Army on February 2 is located between Chaalai and Mullaitheevu town along the coastal area.

Sri Lankan military spokesperson Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of driving civilians out of the first 'safety zone', announced by the Sri Lankan Army on January 21, and proposed the new zone on the coast, pledging not to attack it.

However, international agencies, health officials, local organisations have repeatedly blamed the targeted attacks by the Sri Lankan military on the original 'safety zone' for civilians leaving the area.

In the latest attack on the original zone, on Monday February 9, three days prior to it being disbanded, thousands of civilians fled in all directions from the 'safety zone' as mortar, artillery and Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL) rockets hit the entire area demarcated by the Colombo government as safe civilian refuge.

At least 36 civilians were killed and 76 wounded throughout the day in Vallipunam, Chuthanthirapuram and in Maaththalan.

The entire 100-houses-scheme located in Chuthanthirapuram was on fire following MBRL attack with shells that caused immediate fire, according to local sources.

Many had fled the 100-houses scheme already and the remaining stayed inside the bunkers throughout the barrage.

The settlement, initially set up for refugees from Mannaar, is located on Udaiyaarkaddu Chuthanthirapuram Road.

Several thousand people had already fled the safety zone further into LTTE controlled areas. But, not all as most of the casualties were reported on the roads on Sunday.

Six civilians were killed and 12 wounded when they were fleeing Chuthanthirapuram and Theavipuram.

Four dead bodies of civilians were taken to Chuthanthirapuram hospital.

At least 16 civilians were killed in Maaththalan and 49 were reportedly wounded.

Five members of a single family were among the victims, the reports said.

Seven civilians, including 3 children, were rushed to hospital with serious burn injuries following the artillery and MBRL barrage.

Three more civilians were killed in Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) attacks and 15 sustained injuries.

Casualty figures from 100-houses-scheme were not known.

NEWS

Sri Lanka in systematic genocide says LTTE, denies civilian killings

TamilNet

THE Tamil homeland is witnessing one of the worst human tragedies of the 21st century said the Political Division of the Liberation Tigers in a statement issued in Tamil on Wednesday, February 11.

More than one-thousand civilians have been killed and four-thousand are struggling to recover from the injuries amid continuous artillery barrage, air attacks and cluster bombing by the Sinhala state, the LTTE statement said.

The LTTE statement categorically denied the Sri Lankan claim that a Tiger human bomb had recently attacked civilians.

"We are a liberation movement. Our fighters and the people are engaged in the struggle with total dedication and sacrifice. We categorically deny the charges that we carried out the uncivilised act," the statement said adding that it was the Sri Lankan government that has used internationally banned cluster bombs to attack civilians.

Several hundreds of civilians have been killed and maimed by the Sri Lankan bombardments, it said. The Tiger statement urged the International Community to be aware of the false propaganda of the Sri Lankan state.

"The Sri Lankan military, after demarcating an area with pockets of land as safe zone and

creating an illusion of security in the minds of people, let loose a relentless campaign of bombardment on them. The resulting carnage was witnessed by the UN and ICRC representatives," the statement said.

"The Sinhala state has blocked access to media; communication links with outside world are cut off; International Non Governmental Organisations were ordered leave by Colombo; International human rights monitors are not allowed to visit our territory; Medical supplies are banned; Many civilians die every day; Even the ICRC representatives are forced to leave the area by the Sri Lankan state; People wander from place to place seeking refuge and are forced to lead a life worse than animals in the marsh and jungles of Vanni," the statement added.

All the countries of the world that condemn the ongoing humanitarian tragedy, should also come forward to exert pressure on the Sri Lankan state to immediately agree on a ceasefire and engage in negotiations to resolve the conflict, said the statement of the political division of the LTTE.

Meanwhile, categorically denying reports by the Sri Lankan military officials in Colombo that the Tigers had fired at the fleeing civilians in Vanni, Puthukkudi-



The ICRC has transferred patients out of the safe-zone by ship as the Sri Lankan government targets its own self-declared safe areas in the war zone, claiming they are legitimate targets

yiruppu Divisional Political Head of the LTTE, C. Ilamparithy told TamilNet the same day that Sri Lanka Army (SLA) commando teams had entered the 'safety zone' in Udaiyaarkaddu and Chuthanthirapuram and had opened fire killing civilians and causing injuries to many in their attempt to forcibly move the civilians into the hands of the SLA.

"Sri Lankan military machin-

ery, which has relentlessly killed and maimed thousands of civilians during the past four weeks, is now engaged in a propaganda drive to divert the mounting pressure on the Colombo government by the International Community," he charged. "Our political head has repeatedly urged the International Community to act to ensure the safety of the civilians, their access to humanitarian supplies

and medical care," said the former LTTE political head of the Jaffna district. "The 'safety zone' unilaterally announced by the Colombo government has been turned to a killing field by the Sri Lankan military," he said and called on the International Community to act fast to ensure "an internationally guaranteed and protected safety zone for Vanni civilians in the very place where they live."

'How many more boys have to die?'

Sri Lankan army's gains against Tamil Tigers too dearly bought, some soldiers' families say

Rick Westhead

The Star

IN a parking lot off the main street of this town in Sri Lanka's lush "coconut triangle," a recruiting drive is taking place.

Standing next to a red school bus emblazoned with military posters and with loudspeakers mounted in the windows, three army commandos chat with a group of young men who seem impressed by the soldiers' camouflage uniforms, special forces badges and high-cut leather boots.

Posters around this town a three-hour drive north of Colombo show pictures of local youths who have enlisted and ask residents to donate blood. Radio ads encourage people to "join the winning side."

It's understandable why the army has focused on Kuliya-pitiya. Smaller farming communities such as this one, where job prospects are scarce, have been especially fertile ground for Sri Lanka's military in its decades-long civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"It used to be that kids grew up wanting to be doctors and lawyers; now they want to join the army," said Chandana Bulathsinhala, who works for an opposition member of parliament here.

The recruitment has come at a cost. This area of 150,000 has buried 5,000 soldiers over the past few years, Bulathsinhala

said. In recent months, there have been as many as three funerals a week.

Sitting on a sagging mattress in her cramped clay-tiled roof home, a cat curled up next to her, Kusuma Gunawardana wiped away tears as she talked about her son.

Two weeks ago, the 24-year-old soldier disappeared near Elephant Pass, a key access point to the Jaffna peninsula in the north. The police came to tell Gunawardana her tall, thin boy had vanished in a fire fight against the Tigers.

"There's been nothing since then. No offers of help, nothing," she sobbed.

"I want to know what's happened to him. I want to end this feeling."

Steps from Gunawardana's front door, a poster pays tribute to Alimanka, a local commando who died during fighting in Jaffna. "Brother, you have not died. You bloom as a flower among us."

Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara

said 3,700 Sri Lankan soldiers have been killed since July 2006.

The families of fallen soldiers keep receiving their paycheques - Gunawardana still gets about \$220 a month - until a time when they would have reached age 55.

Families also get a lump-sum payment worth about \$820. That figure is doubled if the soldier was married, Nanayakkara said.

But it's small solace to Gunawardana. "This government is to blame as well," she said.

"How many more boys have to die? It would have been better to have him living and not go in the military, even if we had to go and beg."

The difference between Colombo and towns like Kuliya-pitiya is striking. In Sri Lanka's ocean-side capital, the war is celebrated.

Last weekend, at a cultural fair called Deyata Kirula, hundreds of thousands of spectators packed a fairground to see signs of Sri Lanka's progress.

The most popular exhibits were the military ones. Crowds crushed around a recently cap-

tured Tamil Tigers submarine. Children sat on anti-aircraft guns and next to grenade launchers as grinning parents snapped photos.

At one exhibit, a soldier showed a pair of Buddhist monks how to work an AK-47 rifle.

But for many families, the wounds will never heal.

On Jan. 9, 1997, Samantha Perera went missing during fighting in Jaffna. Three years later, the military declared him dead, though his body hasn't been recovered.

Nine years on, the family still can't put up his photo because his father can't take the pain.

"He cries at least two or three times a day, still," said Jayantha Perera, Samantha's younger brother. "He's not the same person."

Back in Kuliya-pitiya, 19-year-old Koolitha Mananayaka said goodbye to his friends, hours after enlisting. Just as the poster ordered, he was ready to go to war.

"My family at first wasn't impressed with my decision," he said. "But they have given a good verdict now."

NEWS

Over 1000 SLA dead, large weapons cache seized - LTTE

IN fighting that lasted five days, over 1000 Sri Lankan Army (SLA) soldiers were killed and an arms storage was seized by the Liberation Tigers, according to sources close to the LTTE.

The fierce fighting followed the pre-emptive strike launched by LTTE commandos on SLA offensive units that were preparing for an all out assault on Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK) on Sunday February 1.

Hundreds of SLA crack commandos were drawn into Mannakandal and Keappaapulavu 'boxes' and were cut off from their rear supplies during a pre-emptive strike by the Tiger forces, resulting in the loss of more than one thousand SLA soldiers.

An arms storage, which was full of weapons as the SLA was in full preparation to launch its 'final assault' on PTK was seized by the Tiger commandos engaged in the pre-emptive strike.

The sources further revealed that there were at least 20 mortars, thousands of shells, several hundreds of assault rifles, Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG), RPG launchers and a conservative estimate of one million rounds were among the arms and ammunitions seized by the Tigers. The Tigers had emptied the store of stockpiled arms and ammunitions by the time the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) bombed the location of its own arsenal.

Three battle tanks, two troop

carriers, a military bus and two tractors were fully destroyed in the first day of fighting alone.

Meanwhile, more than 100 SLA soldiers perished in a Black Tiger attack on Tuesday, February 3, in Keappaapulavu, according to Eela Naatham daily, the only newspaper printed in LTTE controlled territory.

The newspaper displayed photos of Black Tigers with the LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan.

The Black Tigers rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the SLA installation and the Tiger commandos stormed the 'box' and brought it under their control.

Reliable sources in Vavuniya, quoting informed Sri Lankan military officials, said an SLA Colonel who had refused to retreat with his soldiers and was insisting his rear command re-establish supply links to his stranded unit, was the target of the Black Tiger attack.

The sources in Vavuniya also quoted Sri Lankan military officials as saying that there have been a number of surprise attacks and ambushes by LTTE units operating deep inside the SLA occupied territory in recent weeks.

Around 20 supply vehicles of the SLA that attempted to link up were destroyed in the attack. The Tigers also seized heavy weapons and military hardware, the sources further said.



The LTTE has released news of its forces fighting back, contrary to Sri Lankan claims of a quick win

Sri Lankan confidence of victory not shared by world

WHILST Sri Lanka believes its forces are on the brink of wiping out the Liberation Tigers after 30 years of war, the world is not so convinced. Around the world, especially amongst the Tamil Diaspora there is questions about the LTTE's battle strategy of continuously pulling back, allowing the military to make grand claims.

In an opinion piece, The Calcutta Telegraph said that even the Rajapakse brothers were bewildered with the overwhelming success of the army in the battle field. "A much-enthused Gotabaya Rajapakse, the defence secretary and brother of the president, has even wondered aloud why no one had done this before," reported the Calcutta Telegraph.

The Nation newspaper published in Sri Lanka labelled the LTTE's performance in the war front as 'abysmal' and added that the war strategy of LTTE, who

were believed to be invincible has greatly upset the Tamil diaspora and the countries which espoused a federal solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem.

Whilst the LTTE has been on the back foot for sometime now, gradually losing territory, it has managed to withdraw without losing its military assets to the advancing army and has managed to keep its fighting capacity intact, Tamil analysts note.

Also, whilst Sri Lankan military claims to have driven the LTTE into the jungle, this not true as the territory currently held by the LTTE mainly comprises of built up towns and villages, and it is the military, laying siege to the LTTE, that is in jungles.

Some Tamil observers believe that the LTTE, like in the late nineties has ceded territory in order to stretch the Sri Lankan military by committing troops to

take over and hold large swathes of non-strategic land.

A Tamil observer, writing on his blog, commented that the Sri Lankan military expected the LTTE to take its last stand in Kilinochchi, considered to be its main bastion and administrative capital but was surprised when the LTTE fighters pulled out of the town suddenly.

The same story was repeated in Mullaitheevu town and Chalai, considered to be the location of the largest Sea Tiger base. In both places the LTTE fought fiercely to inflict maximum casualty on the military and then withdrew without leaving any major arsenal or assets. Army occupation of these two towns has resulted in two divisions, namely 59 and 55, being tied down, the blogger said. Stating the LTTE has taken its last stand in Puthukkudiyiruppu (PTK), the blogger explained that that both Chalai and Mullaitheevu are split in the middle by water inlets from the ocean. "These create ideal natural defence lines for the LTTE to try to make a stand against the Sri Lankan army," the blogger added.

While two divisions are sealed off on the coast, the remaining divisions are approaching from the South and West towards PTK.

The LTTE has allowed the Sri Lankan military to take position in the jungles, a terrain they are unused to, and is defending a built up area, according to the website. "While all military analysts expected the LTTE to make their stand in the jungle, they have done the exact opposite."

Whether this argument is true or not, the international community including the United States does not believe the Sri Lankan government's claim of outright victory soon. They anticipate a prolonged war.

Attacks on SLA in Amparai continue

SIXTEEN Sri Lankan troopers have been killed in Amparai district in the east in three separate incidents since the beginning of this month, according to the Liberation Tigers. On Saturday, February 14, a bomb explosion in Kanchikudichchaanaru killed more than 12 Special Task Force (STF) commandos including their officer. The troopers were at a site where preparations were being made to lay the foundation stone for a Buddhist Vihare. The STF launched a large scale search operation at the site of the explo-

sion, which was heard over a distance of many miles.

A day earlier, LTTE combatants killed a STF commando and seriously injured another in a direct confrontation in Lagugala. Few days earlier, on Monday, February 9, three STF commandos were killed and the tractor in which they were transporting military hardware from Ukanthai to Paanama, was destroyed. In January LTTE fighters killed 17 STF commandos and injured at least 5 in separate incidents across Amparai district.

MIA soldiers' parents request ICRC help

PARENTS of missing Sri Lankan soldiers this week urged the ICRC to approach the LTTE to check whether their sons were in Tiger custody as reports appeared in Colombo media of Sri Lanka Army (SLA) overrunning an LTTE detention camp in Visuvamadu area.

The association of missing soldiers parents, based in Kandy, has sent a letter to the ICRC in Colombo urging it to take up the issue with the LTTE as they feared 750 Sri Lankan soldiers were in LTTE custody.

"We wish to bring to your

notice that on the 3 of February 2009, the Sri Lankan army has run over a LTTE detention camp in Vishwamadu area," the letter to ICRC said.

"We strongly believe that this detention camp, had more than 750 Sri Lankan service personnel in detention until it was run over by the army. The photographs which are displayed in the Sri Lankan army website bear evidence of the same."

The association has urged the ICRC to take immediate action to secure the release of the release of the soldiers in LTTE custody.

EDITORIAL & OPINION

TAMIL GUARDIAN

TG NEWS, P.O.BOX. 2308, Watford, WD18 1LS, UK

editor@tamilguardian.com www.tamilguardian.com

Tel 0845 0949873

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2009 No. 392

The Will to Resist

Despite the massacres, the Tamils will not submit to Sinhala rule.

The Sri Lankan armed forces have massacred over two thousand Tamil civilians in Vanni during the past two months. This is not happening in secret, out of the world's gaze, but in plain sight. The horrific details of the Sri Lankan artillery bombardment and airstrikes are made available every day by a flood of data, pictures and footage. No Tamil can fail to be shaken by the murderous fanaticism of the Sinhala state and, especially, the complicit silence of the international community. The present is thus an important moment in Tamil national consciousness.

Whilst some Tamil voices, including this newspaper, have often questioned the sincerity of the international community when it comes to the security and well-being of the Tamil people, others have decried such 'nationalism' and, projecting themselves as 'moderates', sought to enlist international support towards Tamils' aspirations - in the form of federalism, say. We have consistently argued that it is not the demand for Tamil Eelam that is the problem in Sri Lanka, but institutionalized Sinhala violence and oppression. Therefore, no 'solution' would suffice unless it could guarantee our people protection from Sri Lanka's genocide.

Those 'moderates' who criticized the 'nationalists' for insisting on Eelam based their vision of a secure future for the Tamils on one claim: the preparedness, even commitment, of the international community to intervene on the Tamils behalf if Sinhala violence against our people resumed. Indeed, the United States even went so far as to offer this; for example in a 2003 interview to Reuters, US Ambassador Ashley Wills had this to say: "I've heard Tamils say that they may not like the LTTE's tactics but they need the Tigers to protect them. I think that's completely wrong. Now that the world is paying attention to Sri Lanka as never before, the international community will be watching closely to see that no one's rights get abused systematically."

Well, the present speaks for itself. The duplicity of the international community's 'support' for the peace process (which equates, for them, to disarming the LTTE) is underlined by their ongoing support for Sri Lanka's genocide. Throughout the Norwegian led 'peace process', the international community insisted repeatedly that the Tamils and the Tigers are separate. But their present actions reveal they do not really think so: it is in the interests

of breaking the LTTE's resistance to the Sinhala state's onslaught that the Tamils are being massacred.

For some time now, the end of the LTTE has been confidently predicted. The Sri Lanka Army commander boasted in January that the LTTE is no match for the 50,000 Sinhala troops advancing on Mullaitivu. Yet, the war grinds on - amid a near total blackout of the battlefield imposed by Colombo (save for the daily claims put forward by the Defence Ministry). Yet in the jungles and fields of Vanni, the Sri Lankan military is incurring casualties so heavy it dare not allow discussion amongst the Sinhalese. Between Feb 1 and Feb 4 a key SLA divisions was so badly mauled by an LTTE counter-attack that it has been pulled out of battle. Sri Lankan garrisons in other parts of the island are being thinned out - and police being drafted in - to sustain the war. In short, the Tigers are staging their signature ferocious resistance.

It is amid the Sinhala state's manifest inability to break the LTTE's will to resist that the Tamils of Vanni are being punished. Targeting the enemy population to demoralise their combatants is not new - that's why the US, for example, slaughtered the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The massacres in Vanni are the continuation of what Prof. Sankaran Krishna has termed "annihilatory violence" inflicted by the Sinhalese against the Tamils since independence. Yet the Tamils refuse to submit to Sinhala rule.

The key lesson for the Tamils today is the futility of relying on international support, on the basis of justice, human rights and such. The Tamil nation is making every effort to get Western states and other self-appointed trustees of liberal values to live up to their lofty ideals. These efforts are important for one reason; if - contrary to the claims of Tamil 'nationalists' - the international community is truly committed to these values (in the name of which they sought to deny and crush our justified demands for self-determination), then the Tamil people's agitation will elicit a principled response. If not, the Tamils can be certain that it is callous indifference, rather than ignorance, that guides international policy towards them. They will then, like other peoples who united behind the goal of independence, have to reflect on how, on their own, they can ensure Sri Lanka's genocide does not succeed.

International obligations towards the Tamil people

J T Janani

Tamil Guardian

THE Tamil case for genocide has been extensively discussed in a series of articles in this paper among others. We have shown structural similarities between the genocide of the Tamils and other historic genocides including the Nazi and Rwandan examples. For lack of space, we will not repeat our case here.

In this two part series we examine, firstly the continuing failure of the United States, and its diplomatic allies, the co-chairs of the Sri Lankan Peace Process and leading European governments to comply with their obligations to the Tamil people under the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide.

In the second part, we look at what 'Genocide Resisters' - particularly the Tamil Diaspora - can do to achieve compliance.

An important milestone in 2008 was further NGO recognition of genocide by the Sinhala State ("the perpetrator") against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka ("the target group" of the genocide). In December 2008, the Genocide Prevention Project [www.preventorprotect.org] compiled a Mass Atrocity Crimes Watch List of 33 countries where mass atrocity crimes are ongoing or civilians are at risk of mass atrocities. Eight of these 33 are Tier 1 or Red Alert countries. Sri Lanka is currently one of these eight - along with the Congo and Sudan - where genocide was ongoing or where civilians face risk of genocide and mass atrocities.

The report of the Genocide Prevention Project said: "We identify eight situations of highest concern. These countries appeared on each of the five expert indices used as a basis for this report and received the highest composite score on our watch list." Sri Lanka was one of these eight situations. The Genocide Prevention Project is a watch-list of watch-lists. It is a composite of five expert opinions and therefore is more significant than the opinion of a single group such as Genocide Watch or Minority Rights Group International.

Nevertheless Genocide Watch also gives Sri Lanka the highest ranking - a ranking of 7 for genocide. According to Genocide Watch those countries at Stage 7 are currently at the mass killing

stage, meaning they have active genocides, recurring genocidal massacres, or ongoing politicides.

A third watchdog, The Genocide Intervention Network also tracks eight countries as "areas of concern," defined by ongoing systematic violence targeting civilians on a massive scale as of spring 2008. The list of Genocide Intervention Network overlaps with but is different from the red alert list of the Genocide Prevention Project. This list also includes Sri Lanka.

In March 2008, the Minority Rights Group (MRG) International produced a report "Peoples Under Threat" that identifies those peoples or groups that are most under threat of genocide, mass killing or other systematic violent repression in 2008.

Sri Lanka ranked as number eleven on the MRG list. The MRG report uses a country and not the ethnic group as its unit of ranking.

But in Sri Lanka the genocide is specifically against a single minority: the Tamils, whereas other ethnic groups such as the Sinhalese enjoy better conditions. This helped Sri Lanka's MRG rankings relative to say Pakistan - which has more minority groups. Nevertheless Sri Lanka, back in March 2008 had the 11th worst position in the world for mass killing and systematic violence according to MRG. (Cynics would argue the MRG tailors its methodology to suit: after all genocide is about the ethnic group itself so the country as unit approach is not meaningful.)

The 1948 UN Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide is possibly the single, most important international legislation for the Tamil people of Eelam.

Article 1 of the UN convention on genocide states: "The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

UN member states are bound by convention law to prevent and punish genocide: the wilful failure to prevent or punish the genocide of Tamils and any collusion in such genocide is unlawful.

Genocide is defined here to

OPINION



Diaspora Tamils need to compel their host countries to honour their obligations under the Genocide Convention

mean any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group and includes

(a) Killing members of the group;

(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

It is noteworthy that it is not only the acts that are important, but also the intent behind them.

UN Member nations have legal obligations to the Tamil people of Eelam arising from this convention. France ratified (i.e. was legally bound by) the convention in 1950, Germany in 1954, Canada in 1952. This means, that Germany, France, Italy, Canada, - to name just a few - were legally obliged to prevent and punish the genocide of Tamils in the series of pogroms in 1958, 1977 and 1983. Clearly they did not do so.

The United Kingdom ratified the convention in 1970 so it is obliged to act on genocides after 1970 - this would include the 1983 pogrom. It must be noted that the United States, which only ratified the convention in 1988 was not bound to act in the cases of any of the pogroms against the Tamils.

There is no doubt that the pogroms were genocidal. Genocide requires primarily intent and the intent of the killings could not have been otherwise. This was the conclusion the Times (of London), a generally pro-Sri Lanka publication, came to: "Genocide is a word that must be used with care; but how else is one to describe the impulse which guided the Sinhalese lynch-mobs this week." (Francis Wheen, London Times, 30 July 1983).

In 1983 the International Commission of Jurists investigated and found "The evidence points clearly to the conclusion that the violence of the Sinhala rioters on the Tamils amounted to acts of genocide." International

Commission of Jurists Review, December 1983.

But the International community - including the UK and Europe - chose not to honour its legal obligations towards the Tamil people - a choice they continue to make 25 years later in 2009.

The UN reacted in the same way in 1983 as they were to do 11 years later, in Rwanda in 1994: they dithered. Eventually, in August 1983, the UN passed an extremely mild resolution (Sub Commission Resolution 1983/16) calling for an investigation and expressing deep concern with 10 votes for and 8 against

Rwanda teaches us that this is to be expected: governments are reluctant to recognise genocide precisely because this may force them to act when they would prefer not to act.

US academic Samantha Power explained American behaviour in Rwanda: "Even after the reality of genocide in Rwanda had become irrefutable, when bodies were shown choking the Kagera River on the nightly news, the brute fact of the slaughter failed to influence U.S. policy except in a negative way. American officials, for a variety of reasons, shunned the use of what became known as 'the g-word.' They felt that using it would have obliged the United States to act, under the terms of the 1948 Genocide Convention"

She quotes a discussion paper by the office of the Secretary of defence: "Genocide Investigation: Language that calls for an international investigation of human rights abuses and possible violations of the genocide convention. Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday-Genocide finding could commit [the U.S. government] to actually 'do something.'"

11 years earlier, in July 1983 the International community's attitude towards the genocide of the Tamils had been no different: they were more concerned with building trade relations with a newly 'liberalised' Sri Lanka, than with meeting their obligations under the genocide convention.

As in 1983 in Colombo, so did they act in 1994 in Kigali. And now in 2009, history repeats itself in Sri Lanka.

The acts of the Sri Lankan State and its allies are clearly a continuum of genocide - they are a series of acts intended to bring about the ultimate physical destruction of the Tamil people.

As just one example, given, that the burning of the Library of Jaffna, was part of a systematic genocidal campaign, calculated to bring about the destruction of the Tamil people in whole or in part, by means of destroying their sense of identity, history and language.

The United Kingdom is obliged to punish it; as is almost all of Europe, Canada and Australia. The Tamil Diaspora may insist that they fulfil this obligation.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor general's indictment of President Al Bashir of Sudan is instructive - because almost all of the criteria cited apply equally to the Sri Lankan state's treatment of Tamils.

Firstly there is a focus on intent. The UN prosecutor said of the Sudanese President: "His motives were largely political. His alibi was a 'counterinsurgency.' His intent was genocide". These words apply equally to current Sri Lankan President Rajapakse - and indeed past presidents and prime ministers.

"For over 5 years, armed forces and the Militia/Janjaweed, on Al Bashir's orders, have attacked and destroyed villages. They then pursued the survivors in the desert. Those who reached the camps for the displaced people were subjected to conditions calculated to bring about their destruction."

"Al Bashir organized the destitution, insecurity and harassment of the survivors. He did not need bullets. He used other weapons: rapes, hunger, and fear. As efficient, but silent," said the Prosecutor.

Whereas 35,000 people have died directly in Sudan, over 100,000 Tamils have died in Eelam. Both Sudan and Eelam have in excess of a million refugees. In the recent fighting, a further 250,000 Tamil civilians, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of long term internal refugees, have been displaced by indiscriminate aerial and ground attacks by government forces.

The conditions imposed on Tamil refugees - the blockade of food and medicine, the deliberate killing of livestock that are essential sources of food, rape, lack of shelter, arbitrary detention and arrest, imprisoning fleeing refugees in military camps - are calculated to bring about their physical destruction.

In Sri Lanka, the recent deliberate bombing of civilian hospitals and the deliberate, continuous bombing and shelling of designated civilian safe havens, takes genocide to a different dimension from that of Sudan.

Of Sudan's Al Bashir, the ICC Prosecutor General said "He did not need to use bullets". But in Sri Lanka, cluster bombs are used against civilian refugees who are seeking safe haven from the war.

And medicine is denied the survivors.

Today's Sri Lankan actions are merely a shameless escalation of a structural genocide enacted over decades.

The closure of all transport (sea, road, rail) to the Jaffna peninsula now and pre-ceasefire, the embargo on food and medical items through the 1990s, the denial of Tsunami aid to the affected Tamils of the North East in 2005, were all acts designed to deprive the population of the essentials of life, including food and medicine, with the intent to create physical conditions calculated to destroy in whole or in part a people.

The systematic destruction of Tamil media (the witnesses) was a deliberate precursor to physical genocide - it was hence an act intended to bring about the physical destruction in whole or part of the Tamil people.

Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish holocaust scholar who invented the term explains:

"generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves".

Lemkin's definition is one of the most powerful for the Tamils - for Lemkin intimately understood the different varieties and specific methods of genocide.

By contrast, Ambassador Jurgen Weerth of Germany spoke out for the rights of journalists at the funeral of Lasantha Wickrematunge and while he mourns one (Sinhala) journalist, he continues to refuse to recognise the wholesale, systematic destruction of Tamil media as a component of genocide.

The destruction of other political, social cultural institutions, the killing of parliamentarians and aid workers is often a deliberate precursor to physical genocide.

Lemkin understood this well because the Nazis used similar methods in his country - deliberately targeting Polish Jewish academics and civil society leaders, for example, prior to the ghettoising and ultimate physical killing of the wider population of Polish Jews.

UN member states are legally obliged to prevent and punish these acts of genocide. Germany, Japan, Britain and the United States - to name some of the active players in the Colombo diplomatic scene and in the "internationally sponsored" peace process - have no special exemption from these obligations.

This means also that the UN member states are legally obliged to support organisations such as the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) - not to freeze their funds (collusion in genocide) but on the contrary to provide them with funds (prevention of genocide).

They may not gloat about the freezing of funds of the TRO as, for example, US Ambassador

Blake did in his New Years day 2009 interview with the Daily Mirror.

At the time of his remarks Ambassador Blake, among others, knew full well that the UN has been forced to withdraw from the Vanni, that INGOs such as Action Contre Le Faim have been intimidated into withdrawing from the country and that the TRO is one of the few aid remaining agencies to work effectively in the North. He is completely aware that aerial bombing of livestock is part of this strategy of destroying existing food supplies of the Vanni, while preventing aid from reaching the area. Blockading food and aid from a civilian population is an essential part of genocide.

But as with a number of other diplomats, Ambassador Blake continues to pretend that this is not an ethnic war, a genocide.

It is insufficient for French group Action Contre Le Faim to say it will seek to have the murder of the 17 Tamil aid workers tried as a war crime.

It is more than a "war crime", it genocide because of the strategic intent behind it - the aid workers were killed to intimidate aid organisations into quitting the area, and thus bring about conditions which would lead to the physical destruction of the internally displaced Tamil people.

In summary: the Tamils are subject to structural genocide by the Sinhala State. The UN member states have a legal obligation to prevent and punish genocide but have preferred to remain silent.

Yet any collusion in genocide is a crime under international law and deliberate refusal to acknowledge genocide is itself collusion in genocide.

Historians such as Linda Melvern have considered that the US and British obstruction of timely UN recognition of genocide in Rwanda constituted collusion. The present government of Rwanda has accused France of collusion in the genocide of 1994.

It is extremely likely that almost all the Western embassies in Colombo, as well as the Indian Ambassador know that genocide is going on against Tamils in Sri Lanka. But they choose to deny it.

The Genocide Prevention Project points out that government silence on genocide is to be expected: "Countries experiencing rampant human rights abuses are known to government officials, country experts, and political scientists. Governments and international political institutions compile private "watch lists" of such countries. These official bodies, however, do not publicize their lists. Beyond the inherent difficulty of constructing a list, "naming names" creates economic and political risks, both for those labeled as perpetrators and for governments that bestow the labels."

In conclusion - not only is Tamil genocide ongoing, all governments know it but refuse to acknowledge it. This deliberate refusal goes to collusion.

It is left to the Tamil Diaspora and the people of Tamil Nadu to prevent collusion. We address this in part two of our series.

TAMIL DIASPORA UNITES IN DEFIANCE



LONDON, UK



COVENTRY, UK



GLOUCESTER, UK



BELGIUM



NETHERLANDS



TORONTO, CANADA



PARIS, FRANCE



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



ITALY



MALAYSIA



வோல்தம்ஸ்ரோ ஸ்ரீ கற்பக விநாயகர் ஆலயம்
WALTHAMSTOW SRI KATPAHA VINAYAGAR TEMPLE

மாசிமாத விசேட ஆராதனைகள்

15-02-2009 தூயிறு காலை 10 மணி காயத்ரி அம்மன் அபிஷேக ஆராதனை
20-02-2009 வெள்ளி காலை 08 மணி சர்வ சுகாதரீ
22-02-2009 தூயிறு மாலை 05 மணி பிற்தோஷ வற்பாடு - தொடர்ந்து நான்கு சாமங்கன் மஹாசீவராதரீ வற்பாடு
28-02-2009 சனி சகூர்த்த விழா காலை 10 மணி அபிஷேகம் சகஸ்ரநாம அர்ச்சனை மாலை 5.30 அபிஷேகம்
தொடர்ந்து நூலாயப் பூசை. கிரவு 8 மணி வசந்தமண்டபப் பூசை கணபதி சரணம் போற்றி வற்பாடு
08-03-2009 தூயிறு காலை 10 மணி காயத்ரி அம்மன் வற்பாடு மாலை 5.30 பிற்தோஷ வற்பாடு பிற்தோஷநாயகர் வீதீ உலா
09-03-2009 திங்கள் மாசிமகம் காலை 10 மணி நேடேசர் அபிஷேகம் குதர் பாராயணம், சீவன் அம்மன் அபிஷேகம் தருவித்புலா
10-03-2009 செவ்வாய் பூரண விழா காலை 10 மணி அம்மன் பைரவர் அபிஷேகம் மீனாட்சி அம்மன் சகஸ்ரநாம அர்ச்சனை
மாலை 8 மணி ஸ்ரீ சக்கர நவாபரண பூசை

ஆலயம் தொழுவது சாலவும் நன்று

2-4 Bedford Road, Walthamstow E17 4PX, Tel: 020 8527 3819, Charity No: 1092252

NEWS

'Go beyond marches Tamil Nadu'

Chivanadi
TamilNet

IF at all there is any positive impact of the unprecedented uprising and demonstrations, staged spontaneously by the masses of Tamil Nadu and the diaspora, it is the inward awakening of global Tamils to the forces of oppression and to the defiance of the oppressors, whether domestic or international.

A historic responsibility lies on the leaders of Tamil Nadu and on those who uphold the struggle of the oppressed, to channel the positive energy generated from the uprising to achieve its goals rather than allowing it to be carried away by the machinations of the oppressors.

The crises in Afghanistan and in the island of Sri Lanka may have originated for different reasons, and may have different attributes, but they are being made use of by powers for the same goal of economic and strategic interests. They are the north-south axis for brutally setting a cruel global order in the region of South Asia and 'strategic partners' are invited from within the region as well as from outside.

The national liberation struggle of Eelam Tamils, arising from irrefutable realities of incorrigible ethnic oppression and was denied of any space other than an armed struggle, became labeled and sabotaged by the above forces as it was seen as the only 'fighting spirit' and a stumbling block for their greed.

This happened despite favourable disposition of those who were spearheading the struggle towards every power of regional or global imperialism.

The ultimate aims of the powers now playing the Sinhala ultranationalist card and the repercussions are not going to stop with the island of Sri Lanka. Next in the frontline are the southern states of India that have shown remarkable development potentiality in recent times.

Drunk with delusions of victory, the Sinhala state is going to be actively engaged as an agent of destabilization of the region.

LTTE is merely a name. But, the resolute and unshakeable spirit behind it in fighting oppression is a larger phenomenon. It is not the time to lose the sight of the larger phenomenon in the arguments over its ways and means.

Rather than achieving space to evolve and shape the spirit behind the LTTE, silently or helplessly watching it being vanquished by those who don't righteously

deserve a victory and by those of the 'international community of global greedy', doesn't augur well for South Asia.

The immediate task of the leaders of Tamil Nadu is to grasp the spirit of the mandate given to them by the masses of Tamil Nadu in their uprising and finding ways of disseminating its larger message and its proper perspectives to the rest of India.

Tamil Nadu alone cannot tackle the impending phenomenon engulfing the region.

The peoples and leaders of the neighbouring states, beginning from Kerala, need briefings first, about the larger issues involved in the Eelam struggle that go beyond ethnonationalist competitions and interstate issues.

The national parties such as CPI and CPI (M) have a crucial role to play in this regard, is a comment heard from Tamil Nadu circles. The umbrella front formed recently to protect Eelam Tamils should rise up to the occasion in conceiving and undertaking structured moves, since the noble task they have embarked upon is overarching - finding ways leading to the protection of Eelam Tamils permanently.

The unfolding situation may demand a multifaceted expansion of its role. On a war footing it may perhaps ideal to invent ways of keeping the front above party politics but at the same time engaging the active function of all political parties.

The umbrella front may even have national as well as global councils and diplomatic corps of its own deployment to deal with the unfolding scenario which is in fact international.

It is soul satisfying to note that the real vanguard of a society at any time - students, lawyers and media of Tamil Nadu are showing unswerving solidarity with the aspirations of the oppressed Eelam Tamils.

But a section that needs to come to the forefront or perhaps needs to be mobilized is the English-using Tamil intellectuals, academics and professionals. One finds them everywhere, at the top echelons all over the world.

It is time for them to realize, through the evidence of what is happening to the Eelam Tamils, that doom for them and to their posterity are the designs of the system they toil for in India or abroad. A little time and initiative they could afford to the interests of their own people would make a



Tamil Nadu has been to go beyond demonstrations if the plight of the Eelam Tamils is to be eased

big difference.

The tendency in a section of the above group to dodge political and social responsibilities, citing the LTTE and for that sake, abetting reactionaries, is not a positive approach.

When nobody was there to

address the crux of the matter the LTTE did it, facing the entire world, armed with only its local genius. Since no solution is the solution Indo-international system is imposing on Eelam Tamils, the LTTE will continue the struggle in its own ways.

The genuine efforts of those who may not agree with the LTTE in the struggle against the oppression of Eelam Tamils need not interfere with each other and can be complimentary, if the aims are beneficial to the oppressed and not in anyway to the oppressors.

Congress, DMK protest in support of Tamils

THE ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) formed an umbrella organisation, the Sri Lankan Tamils Welfare and Liberty Forum, to campaign demanding a political solution to the crisis in Sri Lanka.

Following the launch of the forum on Saturday February 7, members of the forum took part in a rally. Addressing the meeting, state Finance Minister Ambazhagan said as of now there was no better option than pressing the Centre to intervene and stop the war and find a political solution to the problems of Sri Lankan Tamils.

"Sri Lanka cannot ignore the voice of India, a big neighbour, if the Centre makes consistent efforts," he said and explained that Chief Minister Karunanidhi was fully aware of the implications, which was why he was avoiding a confrontation, the Hindu newspaper reported.

Ambazhagan further said that the DMK was not interested in weakening the Congress-led UPA government in Delhi as there was no guarantee that the new regime would listen to the views of Karunanidhi and protect the interests of the Tamils, the paper said.

"We don't want to lose the government in Tamil Nadu and we are equally firm that the Congress government guided by

Sonia Gandhi should continue at the Centre," said the Hindu quoting Ambazhagan.

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president Thangabalu addressing the participants said that the Congress and the DMK were working together to find a durable political solution to the Sri Lankan Tamils problem, said the newspaper.

Dravidar Kazhagam leader K.Veeramani; Tamil Maanila Indian Union Muslim League leader K.M. Khader Mohideen; Jananayaka Munnetra Kazhagam leader Jagatrakshakan; and Gingee Ramachandran, MP, participated, according to the newspaper.

On Wednesday, February 11, the forum met again to chalk out a plan of action for bringing peace and ensuring the safety of Sri Lankan Tamils.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, PWD Minister Durai Murugan said that a sub-committee was formed to assist the forum, to prepare an action plan to end "human rights violations" in Sri Lanka, reported the Hindu.

Murugan further said the committee felt that the Centre should be asked to bring to the notice of the United Nations the "annihilation of Tamils" and the sub-committee members would meet Ambassadors and High Commi-

ssioners of various countries either in New Delhi or Chennai, said the newspaper.

A memorandum detailing "sufferings" of the Tamils would also be submitted to foreign diplomats and a drafting committee had been formed to prepare the memorandum to be submitted to the international bodies, Murugan added.

4th self burning

CONGRESS functionary Sirkali Ravichandran (47), a father of two, became the fourth Tamil Nadu Tamil to immolate himself to protest Indias inaction on the Eelam Tamils issue. The Congress worker told the police in his dying declaration that he was unhappy with his party's stand over the Eelam Tamils issue. The incident sparked off protests and counter protests, especially in Chennai.

Triggered off by Muthukumar, four people have already committed self-immolation in response to the plight of Eelam Tamils in the last few days in Tamil Nadu.

NEWS

Advani flays Congress over Tamils issue

BHARATHIYA Janata Party (BJP) prime ministerial candidate L K Advani accused the Congress-led UPA government of being "insensitive" towards the Sri Lankan Tamils' cause and dismissed the use of brutal force in resolving the grave issue.

Addressing hundreds of Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) members and pro-Eelam activists who began a daylong fast under the leadership of MDMK General Secretary Vaiko at New Delhi on Friday, February 13, Advani said the focus of the entire nation at this moment should be towards "ending the sufferings of the innocent" Tamil civilians in neighbouring Sri Lanka.

"I am sorry to say that those in office in New Delhi are insensitive towards the Sri Lankan Tamils' cause," Advani told the protesters from Tamil Nadu.

Supporting the Tamils' cause, Advani said that the BJP wanted the issue to be resolved through negotiated political settlement and not by 'brutal use of force'.

Advani condemned the bomb-

ings on hospitals in Sri Lanka and urged the Lankan government to resolve the ethnic conflict by "devolving powers" to the areas where Tamils constitute a major population.

Addressing the protesters, Vaiko accused Congress of being a key supporter of the war and said: "Instead of asking the Sri Lankan government to stop the war, India has made itself part of the war by providing military aid to the (President Mahinda) Rajapaksa administration."

The MDMK leader further said he would soon submit to the Centre a memorandum signed by various leaders who took part in today's fast demanding India's intervention for a ceasefire in Sri Lanka. Activists, including Vaiko, fasted to express sympathy for Tamils being killed and wounded by Sri Lankan security forces in the bloody war.

Vaiko ended his fast after BJP leader Yashwant Sinha offered him some juice. CPI leaders A. B. Bardhan and D. Raja, FB leader Debendra Biswas, AIADMK MPs Maitreyan, Malaisamy,



BJP leader L K Advani accused India of insensitivity towards Eelam Tamils when he addressed a token one-day fast by MDMK members and pro-Eelam activists in Delhi

PMK MPs M. Ramadass, E. Pon-nusamy, Dhanraj and A. K. Murthy also participated in the fast.

BJP president Rajnath Singh who met Vaiko earlier on the day also demanded that India intervene and halt the killings of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka and said only a political solution will bring an end to the ethnic conflict in the island nation.

"The plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka is miserable and an immediate intervention from India is needed to halt the killings of Tamil civilians," BJP president Rajnath Singh said.

Reiterating party leader Advani's position that that military power alone cannot solve the problem, the BJP leader urged the Sri Lankan Government to produce a new solution to the long dragging ethnic conflict.

Citing Sri Lanka's claims that LTTE's military power has been destroyed, Singh said the war between LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army is reaching a decisive end and its "far reaching impact" will be felt in India. "[W]hile the power of LTTE is decisively coming to an end, the Sri Lankan government must create a new envi-

ronment far from military struggle. A new solution to three decade old ethnic problem needs to be presented by the Sri Lankan government," Singh said.

However in the same media briefing where he called for 'new' solution, Singh also called for the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement, rejected by the Tamils, to be revived.

"The 1987 historic accord signed between then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Jayawardhane should be brought forward or revived to bring about a political solution to the problem," he said.

India changes language with measured ambiguity

INDIA has changed its stand on Sri Lanka, no longer insisting that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) lay down arms as a pre-condition for negotiations with the Sri Lankan government for a political settlement.

The subtle change in India's stand was reflected in President Pratibha Patil's address to Parliament in New Delhi on Thursday, February 11.

The Indian President, in her address to the joint sitting of Indian Parliament, declared that India continued to support a negotiated political settlement in Sri Lanka within the framework of an undivided Sri Lanka acceptable to all the communities, including the Tamil community.

Ms. Patil urged Colombo and the Tigers to return to negotiating table, seen as another change of stance. Addressing the members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, Ms. Pratibha Devisingh Patil said: "We are concerned at the plight of civilians internally displaced in Sri Lanka on account of escalation of the military conflict. We continue to support a negotiated political settlement in Sri Lanka within the framework

of an undivided Sri Lanka acceptable to all the communities, including the Tamil community. I would appeal to the Government of Sri Lanka and to the LTTE to return to the negotiating table. This can be achieved if, simultaneously, the Government of Sri Lanka suspends its military operations and the LTTE declares its willingness to lay down arms and to begin talks with the government."

The address of the President of India in the joint session of the Parliament is a declared official position of the Government of India.

Even though the relevant part of the declaration began saying "we continue to support," the nuances of Indian position have changed significantly.

Instead of silently allowing the continuation of war, the GoI has asked the Parties to return to the negotiating table.

India has also taken a position that the LTTE is a partner in the negotiations.

GoI now requests both parties to act simultaneously: Colombo to suspend military operations and the Tigers to declare its willingness to lay down arms, which

allows room for both parties to actually end the war only after reaching a mutually accepted position in the political negotiations.

Laying down arms is specifically understood as surrender in the usage of English language (The Concise Oxford Dictionary). But, "declare its willingness" provides space for conditional engagement.

The statement 'within the framework of an undivided Sri Lanka acceptable to all communities, including the Tamil community,' is ambiguous and could mean acceptance coming from the Tamil people is a precondition for an undivided Sri Lanka.

However, in the wake of Colombo's rejection of the British attempt to appoint a Special Envoy to Sri Lanka to help seek a political solution, it remains to be seen how Colombo will respond to the changed nuances in the stance of the Indian government.

PTI reported members of PMK and MDMK, wearing black shirts, rose at one point during her 80-minute long speech and shouted: 'Your Highness, please stop the war in Sri Lanka'.

Congress feels the heat in parliament

THE Congress led UPA government came under severe criticism from inside and outside of the Parliament, for its continued support for Sri Lanka's war and for being indifferent to suffering of Tamils in the neighbouring island.

Cutting across party lines, members in both Houses of Parliament voiced serious concern on Friday, February 13, over the spiralling death toll of Tamil civilians and India's inaction. Raising the issue in Rajya Sabha, BJP leader S Thirunavukkarasar said the Sri Lankan army was killing innocent Tamils in that country and India was helping the Sri Lankan government.

Accusing the Indian government of inaction, Thirunavukkarasar added nothing was being done to alleviate the suffering of people. He urged the government to take up the matter in the United Nations and work for ensuring a ceasefire. He also demanded that the Indian Government should not help the Sri Lankan government and stop military aid.

D. Raja of CPI said a genocide was going on in the island nation and described the situation there as very disturbing. Charging that India was providing radar

expertise and naval cover to the Sri Lankan army thereby giving it a tactical edge in the ongoing strife, he demanded that the government reconsider the existing policy. Accusing the UPA government of failing to safeguard the lives of Tamils in Sri Lanka, Raja said: "India cannot treat this as an internal problem of Sri Lanka."

V. Maitreyan of AIADMK assured the government of his party's support in whatever it did to stop the war. Sharing their concern, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V Narayansamy said, "The President of India made it very clear about the Indian Government's policy on Sri Lanka". Raising the issue in Lok Sabha during zero hour, BJP member Santosh Gangwar said the government should take appropriate steps for the safety of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

PMK leader Ramadoss said that it was a clear case of genocide of the Tamil population.

Taking strong exception to the argument of the Indian Government, Ramadoss said "Tamilians issue in Sri Lanka is an Indian issue. We should not keep silent by saying that it is an internal matter of Sri Lanka."

NEWS

Sri Lanka rejects British envoy

SRI LANKA reacted with fury over Britain's appointment of a special envoy to the country, labelling the appointment as 'tantamount to an intrusion into Sri Lanka's internal affairs' and warning of 'major repercussions' for relations with Britain.

Sri Lanka's reaction followed Downing Street's announcement of former defence secretary Des Browne as Britain's special envoy to Sri Lanka to focus on "the immediate humanitarian situation in northern Sri Lanka and the government of Sri Lanka's work to set out a political solution to bring about a lasting end to the conflict".

"As special envoy, he will work closely with the Sri Lankan government, leaders from all communities in Sri Lanka, international agencies and the wider international community," a statement released by Downing Street on Thursday, February 12, said.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama reacted to the British move by calling it "a disrespectful intrusion" and vented his fury saying Des Browne's appointment wouldn't be accepted by Colombo.

"It is tantamount to an intrusion into Sri Lanka's internal affairs and is disrespectful to the country's statehood," the minister said, warning "there could be major repercussions" for relations with the UK.

An embarrassed British Foreign Office however fought off objections from Sri Lanka stating that the appointment of Des Browne wasn't made unilaterally and insisted discussions with the Sri Lankan were ongoing.

"The Foreign Secretary (David Miliband) spoke this morning to the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

"He explained the reasons the United Kingdom was proposing a special envoy and that this was not a unilateral decision."

But the Sri Lankan foreign minister Rohitha Bogollagama rejected claims of ongoing discussions saying "There is no further discussion with London on the matter."

Des Browne's new job has also brought criticism from the political opposition in Britain,



Des Browne (l) was appointed Special Envoy to Sri Lanka by the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown but Sri Lanka called it interference and warned of 'major repercussions'

reported the BBC.

Speaking for the Conservatives, Liam Fox, said it was a further example of Gordon Brown's incompetence as prime minister.

"Having presided over calamitous damage to our economy," said Mr Fox told the BBC, "he is now making a complete mess of relations with friendly countries overseas."

overseas."

The Liberal Democrats criticised Gordon Brown for not taking tougher action on Sri Lanka, by seeking a ceasefire in through diplomatic channels at the United Nations, reported the BBC.

The stand-off comes amid mounting tension between Sri Lanka and the international com-

munity over the impact of the government's war against the LTTE.

Anxious to win its decades-long conflict against the LTTE in the northeast of the country, the Sri Lankan state has brushed aside concerns over the humanitarian impact of its escalating battles.

LTTE welcomes British Special Envoy

THE LIBERATION Tigers welcomed the appointment of Des Browne as Special Envoy to Sri Lanka by the British Prime Minister on Thursday, February 12. In a letter addressed to Des Browne, LTTE's Head of International Diplomatic Relations S. Pathmanathan said the British government had a moral responsibility to intervene to stop the genocide being committed by the Government of Sri Lanka on Tamil civilians in the island of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE remained committed to a peaceful solution to the conflict and honoured the

February 2002 peace pact, the letter addressed to Browne further added.

Britain named a special envoy to Sri Lanka to help bring about a political solution to the island's long-running conflict and to ease hardships to Tamil civilians trapped in the Vanni war zone.

Pathmanathan, a senior leader of the LTTE is working abroad with required mandate from the LTTE leadership to represent the movement in any future peace initiatives and to function as the primary point of contact for engaging with the international community.

UN avoids ceasefire calls

AFTER not taking up the violence in Sri Lanka in Security Council briefings and avoiding calls for a ceasefire in Sri Lanka, the United Nations on called for a halt to 'indiscriminate fighting'.

"We are outraged by the unnecessary loss of hundreds of lives and the continued suffering of innocent people inside the LTTE-controlled areas," Ron Redmond a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, said on Tuesday February 10.

"We are calling on both the

government and the LTTE to halt indiscriminate fighting" near civilians said Redmond.

Earlier, during a media briefing when Inner City Press asked why United Nations General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon, had not called for a ceasefire in the south Asian island he responded by saying Sri Lanka is not on the agenda of the Security Council, and therefore he cannot call for a ceasefire.

However, this month's Security Council president Yukio Takasu dismissed Ban Ki-Moon's

argument, stating "the Secretary General has very important responsibility granted in the Charter, he can draw the attention of the international community to any issue that matters to peace and security."

In his lengthy response to Inner City Press, Ban Ki-Moon also said that "respect for the sovereignty of member states is another principle" he makes his decisions by, clearly indicating that Sri Lanka not being in the agenda is not the real reason for UN not calling for a ceasefire.

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NEWS

Beginning of a new terror in Sri Lanka

Chirosree Basu

The Telegraph - Calcutta

SHORTLY after Sri Lanka's 61st independence day celebrations on February 4 and his rousing speech on the occasion, President Mahinda Rajapakse was photographed intently watching a snake-charmer at an exhibition in Colombo. In the north-east of the country, his men in battle fatigues are doing the work of the snake-charmer, but with a minor difference. Their deadly opponents are not being incarcerated, but are being systematically obliterated from the face of the earth. And the success of the army in that job has been so overwhelming that the Rajapakses cannot but watch with bewilderment. A much-enthused Gotabaya Rajapakse, the defence secretary and brother of the president, has even wondered aloud why no one had done this before - "crush them with numbers".

It is not as if the idea hadn't occurred to leaders of previous dispensations. In fact, it was the persistent lure of watching the majority (Sinhala) swamp the minority (Tamils) that has pushed Sri Lankan politics onto a rather tragic path. The numbers game may be the cause of the war in Sri Lanka, but not the reason its government is winning it now. The acquired ability of the army to best the fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam at their own game of guerrilla warfare and the ruthless bombardments from the sky that make no distinction between Tiger hideouts and schools and hospitals are the two main reasons behind the success of the Rajapakse government's military operation. The numerical advantage Gotabaya talks about remains undiminished. In the days ahead, it can be expected to play itself out in much the same fashion as it did during the days of the Bandaranaiques, J.R. Jayewardene and even Chandrika Kumaratunga, when jointly-agreed pacts were dumped to respect the majority sentiment. But before that happens, there is a minor play to be staged with the much-lauded concept of devolution of powers to the war-ravaged parts in the north and the east - an assurance for which India has fallen hook, line and sinker.

Ever since the Rajapakse government's all-out effort to exterminate the Tigers became apparent and started to be questioned because of its severity, it has held out the carrot of devolution to ward off unsolicited interventions from outside the country. An all party representative committee,

minus representation from major Tamil parties as also the Opposition, was hurriedly constituted in 2006 before the military offensive started. In its interim proposal, the APRC suggested full implementation of the 13th amendment to the constitution (which followed the India-Lanka accord of 1987). This meant "maximum and effective devolution" of powers to the north and east.

Two years later, when the nation seems to be teetering on the brink of a major breakthrough, the APRC is still in no hurry to finalize its proposals, and can only think of offering the provincial councils "a little more power" than originally planned. Without fiscal and police powers, this amounts to hardly anything.

The opponents of the Sri Lankan military forces in the Northeast of the country are not being incarcerated, but are rather being systematically obliterated from the face of the earth

For the president, however, this is no worry. In his scheme of things, devolution comes last, that is, only after demilitarization, democratization and development (in that order). As he puts it, "It is useless to give them devolution when they are not ready to accept it or you can't implement it." Meanwhile, the basic criterion of the devolution, that was the merging of the northern and eastern provincial councils, has been done away with following their de-merger on the basis of a supreme court verdict in 2006. The government has made no appeals to the court or tried to work around the problem. For it, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna-instigated demerger removes a major worry over the threat that a merged province would have posed to the country's unitary structure in case the conjoined province became restive.

So far as the administration is concerned, the problem with the Eastern council has been neatly resolved. Following the provin-



The 'end of the war' will only spell the start of a new terror in Sri Lanka as a police state emerges

cial council elections last year, amidst widespread allegations of foul play, the Tamil Makkal Viduthala Puligal, a breakaway Tiger faction, has been put in power. The armed TMVP militia ensures that the writ of the central government runs here. The greatly thankful, newly appointed chief minister, Pillayan, can only hope that the government relents and grants him enough powers "to implement policies that [they] would like to for the benefit of the people" since even basic development projects are carried out by the central government.

But then the challenge had been different in a multi-ethnic Eastern province that has a substantial Muslim presence. It is quite another for a mono-ethnic, mono-lingual province like the Northern. The threat perception from it is so severe that a major campaign is already under way to create awareness of this security threat and force the government to consider each district in it as a distinct unit of administration, and hence of devolution, instead of considering the province as a whole. The fervent hope is that the crumbs of office will effectively forestall the power-hungry leaders (and Tamils can be no exception to the rule) from throwing in their lot with the Tigers again.

Threat perception. There it goes again. It is because of the threat perception that the newly liberated, and democratized Eastern province continues to be under siege. There are "mini-fortresses with earth embankments, look-out towers made of old railway sleepers and ammunition boxes, and roll after roll of razor wire".

The Northern province, given its compromised status, could look even worse when it is repopulated. With the original inhabitants killed in the crossfire or tucked away in high-security camps, where they will be sifted from suspected Tigers by the State's ingenious methods, the threat could be minimized by

bringing in settlers. And there are seemingly credible reports already that the process has started.

Another threat perception that NGOs are in cahoots with the Tigers had made the government hound them out of the country. That attitude is not going to change in a hurry. This means that the millions displaced by the war

The ruthless bombardments from the sky that makes no distinction between Tiger hideouts and schools and hospitals is a main reason behind the success of the government's military operation

will continue to be at the mercy of the Sinhala-majority government. This is probably what Rajapakse has in mind when he repeatedly assures the world that he will "personally" take care of the rehabilitation of the internally-displaced population.

For the Tamil population elsewhere, especially in the capital, which will be more vulnerable to LTTE suicide attacks than ever before, the burden of proving innocence will be heavier. But this burden of proof will no longer be shouldered by Tamils alone. This is probably where the most enviable victory for Sri Lanka will turn into its worst defeat. As the country turns into a police State to quell the threat perception, each citizen will become suspect in the eyes of the administration and of his neighbour unless he can prove his nationalist credentials. The foremost criterion is to show support for the government's war efforts. Already, the cloud of mistrust and suspicion is darkening the horizon in the urban space. The min-

istry of defence has reportedly asked all citizens to register online, and people no longer feel confident to talk freely on the mobile in public. The vicious killings of mediapersons, the attacks on the media, the threat of being "chased out" are evidence of the shrunken tolerance for balanced, independent opinion. Gotabaya Rajapakse has warned that the war strategy will change after the Tigers are decimated, and "intelligence" will become a crucial part of this. Another reign of terror, State-sponsored quite obviously, is in the making.

Two factors will determine how extensively this terror is perpetrated - international pressure and pressure from within Sri Lanka. The last will depend on how effectively the Opposition, that is the United National Party under Ranil Wickremesinghe, shapes up its pro-freedom, pro-rights and anti-corruption agenda. But if its campaign for the forthcoming elections in the Central provinces and Wayamba is any indication, it is clearly stumped by the war propaganda. A proactive judiciary could be Sri Lanka's saviour if it could push through the establishment of the constitutional council. The council, in which the Opposition will also sit, and which will have powers to regulate appointments in the police, judiciary and government, could curb police excesses and corruption.

As for foreign powers, it is unlikely that India will manage to have a lever in the internal reorganization of Sri Lanka now that it has shown its hand. Too much meddling may be counter-productive as it will antagonize the ultra-nationalist Sinhala parties. What it can do is pledge assistance in relief efforts and hope it will be accepted. The Co-Chairs of Sri Lanka's donors, the United States of America, the European Union, Japan and Norway, too, could concentrate on the post-war rehabilitation without sending out confusing signals by insisting on amnesty for all Tigers.

NEWS

Genocide in Sri Lanka

Bruce Fein
Boston Globe

THE of media reporting of the grim conflict in Sri Lanka has captured popular imagination, but has overlooked the grisly Sinhalese Buddhist genocide of innocent Hindu or Christian Tamil civilians by a US dual citizen and US green card holder. The two should be investigated and prosecuted in the United States.

Acting on behalf of Tamils Against Genocide, I recently delivered to US Attorney General Eric H. Holder a three-volume, 1,000 page model 12-count genocide indictment against Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Sarath Fonseka charging violations of the Genocide Accountability Act of 2007. Derived from affidavits, court documents, and contemporaneous media reporting, the indictment chronicles a grisly 61-year tale of Sinhalese Buddhists attempting to make Sri Lanka "Tamil free."

Rajapaksa and Fonseka assumed their current offices in December 2005. They exercise command responsibility over Sri Lanka's mono-ethnic Sinhalese security forces. On their watch, they have attempted to physically destroy Tamils in whole or in substantial part through more than 3,800 extrajudicial killings or disappearances; the infliction of serious bodily injury on tens of thousands; the creation of punishing conditions of life, including starvation, withholding medicines and hospital care, humanitarian aid embargoes, bombing and artillery shelling of schools, hospitals, churches, temples; and the displacements of more than 1.3 million civilians into camps, which were then bombed and shelled. This degree of mayhem inflicted on the Tamil civilian population because of ethnicity or religion ranks with the atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo that occasioned genocide indictments against Serbs by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

During the past month, a virtual reenactment of the Bosnian Srebrenica genocide of more than 7,000 Muslims has unfolded. Sri Lanka's armed forces employed indiscriminate bombing and shelling to herd 350,000 Tamil civilians into a government-prescribed "safety zone," a euphemism for Tamil killing fields. There, more than 1,000 have been slaughtered and more than 2,500 have been injured by continued bombing and shelling.

As a preliminary to the horror, roads and medical aid were blocked, and humanitarian workers and all media were expelled. During a BBC radio interview on

Feb. 2, Rajapaksa declared that outside the "safety zone" nothing should "exist." Accordingly, a hospital has been repeatedly bombed, killing scores of patients. Rajapaksa further proclaimed that in Sri Lanka, any person not involved in fighting the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is a terrorist.

The United States assailed and sanctioned Serbia for noncooperation in apprehending genocide defendants Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, and Ratko Mladic. The United States should be no less scrupulous in prosecuting suspected genocide by its own citizens or permanent residents. Further, under Article 5 of the Genocide Convention of 1948, ratified by the United States Senate in 1986, the United States is obligated to provide "effective penalties" for genocide. That imposes an obligation on signatory parties to investigate and to prosecute credible charges - a benchmark that has been satisfied by TAG's 1,000-page model 12-count indictment of Rajapaksa and Fonseka.

The predictable defense of counter-terrorism will not wash. Not a single Tamil victim identified in the model indictment was involved in the war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The lame excuse of defeating terrorism was advanced by Sudanese President Omar Bashir to a genocide arrest warrant over Darfur issued by chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo of the International Criminal Court. The chief prosecutor retorted that although Bashir's pretense was counterterrorism, his intent was genocide.

The State Department lists Sri Lanka as an investigatory target in the Office of War Crimes. The New York-based Genocide Prevention Project last December labeled Sri Lanka as a country of "highest concern." President Barack Obama has made the case for military intervention in Sudan or elsewhere to stop genocide. All the more justification for the United States to open an investigation of the voluminous and credible 12 counts of genocide against a United States citizen and permanent resident alien assembled by Tamils Against Genocide.

A genocide indictment would probably deter Rajapaksa and Fonseka from their ongoing atrocities against Tamil civilians. There is no time to tarry.

Bruce Fein is counsel for Tamils Against Genocide and former associate deputy attorney general under President Reagan.



The Sri Lanka Army and Air Force have increasingly deployed incendiary bombs in several forms in recent attacks on Vanni civilians. A petroleum-derived liquid mixture was found to have been used in SLAF bombardments, with the same kind of bomb also used in artillery and mortar barrages, in addition to artillery-fired flying fireballs that ignite the bombed target. In recent air attacks, SLAF bombers have either deployed cluster bombs or fire-bombs. Several litres of a thicker variant of petrol-like liquid is dropped together with the bombs causing immediate fire on the target. Eyewitnesses who have survived from the attacks also report that they experienced severe breathing problems during the attack, which indicates that the bombs release a large amount of carbon monoxide, deoxygenating the air. The SLA has deployed same kind of bombs in Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher and artillery barrage. Photographs of victims killed in several localities - in Udaiyaarkaddu, Chuthanthirapuram, Theavipuram, Vallipunam, Iranaippaalai and Puthukkudiyiruppu - document the level of burn injuries caused to the victims.

Disunited in Diversity

Abbey Naidoo
The Post

RECENTLY, there was much fanfare over the Republic Day celebrations of India and reports and protests on the ongoing atrocities in Sri Lanka. Writers sang the praises of India, referred to Gandhi, and with the pride to India becoming a super power.

Modern India is really a hotch-potch of different kingdoms, principalities, princely states, often with very little in common. Like Sri Lanka, the British welded these disparate entities into one state under one flag. In keeping with the dream of being superpower, India is now quickly learning how to throw its weight around and support a genocidal cause that flies in the face of its stated claim to human rights, its pioneering of non-violence; in short its boast of unity in diversity is little more than just that.

In the Sri Lankan genocide currently underway, India has revealed a duplicitous and murderous collaboration with the genocidal regime in power in Colombo. Not only deaf to the pleas and cries of its own Tamil population to intervene in this murderous onslaught, it actively assists the regime in the supply of military hardware, the training of

strike-aircraft pilots, the supply of military expertise, and the provision of military advisors on the ground. With an almost unprecedented black out of news by Colombo, and a rather surprisingly tolerant acceptance of this restriction by international media, it would come as no surprise if India's role is discovered to be more than what has been outlined.

The close cultural and ancestral heritage shared by the Sri Lankan Tamils with the Tamil population of India is of no consequence to India. In fact, it appears as if the Indian government is encouraging Colombo to wipe out the Tamils; media reports indicate that aid has been promised by this budding superpower to Sri Lanka to rebuild the North the dust has been settled (read after its devastation), and, by implication, the wiping out of Tamils.

Recently, the Foreign Affairs Minister, one Mr Pranab Muckerjee, on an unscheduled visit to Colombo, stated with much aplomb that a military victory should precede a political solution. His visit appeared designed to reassure Colombo that it could do as it pleased, and came immediately after widespread protests in Tamil Nadu, and pressure on New Delhi. Perhaps, he was reaffirming Delhi's ethnic alliance with the Sinhalese and Delhi's contempt

for Tamils. Incidentally, the Sri Lankans, who follow a perverted form of Buddhism, are reported to regard the Tamils, original inhabitants of India, as sub-humans.

Sadly, though, a country forever boasting it gave the world Gandhi, bears little resemblance in its deeds to the vision of the great humanist. This modern India is intent on playing a dangerous in the South, and, by its alliance with murderous regime in Colombo, might come to rue its role in the ethnic cleaning. Perhaps India, following a certain other superpower in whose camp (and clutches) it is now firmly in, has adopted that declining superpower's overriding motto: might is right.

The shelling of safe areas, the genocide massacre of the elderly, innocent women, and children, then wanton murder of Tamil youths simply because they are Tamils, is akin to war crimes on a par with the worst of Nazism, and perhaps, when these atrocities are ended, a more just world will bring to book all responsible for ethnic cleansing, as well as others, including India, who have overtly and/or covertly supported this annihilation of the Tamil people.

Therefore, the celebrations are somewhat out of place - India is a house divided!!!!

Abbey Naidoo is a Durban-based attorney

NEWS

British Tamils Football League 2008/2009
Table & Top Scores

Premier Division

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Mahajana	16	13	1	2	56	10	46	40
2	Santos	15	11	2	2	49	27	22	35
3	West-3	14	10	2	2	50	15	35	32
4	Watch Me	15	7	3	3	33	29	4	24
5	wembley	14	6	5	3	27	26	1	23
6	kingston Boys	13	4	3	6	28	16	12	15
7	Sunrise	16	4	3	9	36	49	-13	15
8	Surbiton	15	3	3	9	13	25	-12	12
9	Olimpics	13	1	2	10	8	49	-41	5
10	Blues	15	1	2	12	16	65	-49	5

	Players	Team	Top Scores
1	Sean	Mahajana	16
2	Chrishanthan	Santos	14
3	Senthuran	Sunrise	13
4	Similan	Mahajana	10
5	Luxman	Santos	9
6	Ahilan	Surbiton	7
7	Roshan-B	Santos	7
8	Prathip	watchme	7
9	Vinoth	Wembley	6
10	nisanthan	Mahajana	6
11	prasanna	west-3	6

Division One

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1	Srimurugan	12	10	-	2	33	13	20	30
2	E 17 F.C	12	9	1	2	46	21	25	28
3	MTSSC	12	6	1	5	33	37	-4	19
4	Harrow Boys	12	4	1	7	16	17	-1	13
5	11 Stars F.C	12	5	1	6	27	35	-8	13
6	Young rise	12	4	1	7	24	35	-11	13
7	Valvai Blues	12	3	1	8	21	34	-13	10

	Players	Team	Top Scores
1	Mohamed	MTSSC	20
2	Danu	E-17	10
3	Thanu	11 Stars F.C	12
4	Tee	E-17	8
5	Jenu	Srimurugan	6
6	Keeth	Harrow Boys	5
7	Sanjie	Srimurugan	5
8	Sela	Young Rise	4
9	Arujuna	MTSSC	4
10	Naz	Young Rise	4
11	Milson	Harrow Boys	4

Friends protect Sri Lanka at international level

WHILE world powers look apparently condemning Colombo for its culture of impunity allowing armed forces and other elements to commit human rights violations, some among the very powers are engaged covertly in ensuring international impunity to Colombo's war crimes by dodging discussion on Sri Lanka in the apex international security system.

During the closed-door meetings of the UN Security Council this week, when Mexico moved for briefing on Sri Lankan situation, Russia reportedly blocked it saying it was not in the agenda.

Indian interests being looked after in the UN Security Council by Russia is a long convention.

Even as official reports put the daily civilian death count at 40 a day in the conflict zone, at UN, Russia's Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said "we believe the Security Council must stick to items on its agenda," and added there are "other fora" for information about the fighting in Sri Lanka.

When the British Representat-

ive to the UN was asked why Sri Lanka was not in the deliberations, while Sudan was in, the answer was that the situation was entirely different in Sri Lanka where "proscribed" Tamil Tigers were long "blighting" the government and that has to be brought to an end.

"What the UN-UK position is on that? Why hasn't it been raised in the Security Council", asked an Inner City Press reporter.

"Well, the situation in Sri Lanka is entirely different. We do have concerns about the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka. We have urged the government of Sri Lanka to have everything in count to bring an end to the hostilities so that humanitarian relief can be extended to the civilians.. (a word not audible)."

"The Tamil Tigers are a proscribed organisation and the government of Sri Lanka has long been blighted by the activities of the Tamil Tigers. We want these to be brought to an end. And we want the people of the affected areas in Sri Lanka to be able to

have full access to the humanitarian relief", replied the British ambassador to the UN.

The British position of sidelining the gravity of current genocidal situation faced by Tamil civilians as an internal affair, not needed to be brought to the attention of UN has caused serious concerns in Tamil circles.

"In fact, barring the tone, mannerism and choice of words, the British ambassador to UN says exactly the same thing what Colombo's Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse said to BBC on Tuesday that the war in Sri Lanka is only between 'terrorists' and the people who fight against terrorists", he added.

The Colombo government's open contempt and ridicule to international concerns about the human rights situation in the island as demonstrated in the Tuesday's interview of Rajapakse to BBC is widely seen as arising from the international impunity enjoyed by it, thanks to the British government and many others.

US imposes sanctions on Tamil charity

THE United States Treasury imposed sanctions on a Tamil foundation in Maryland, accusing it of being part of a support network for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

In recent weeks thousands of American Tamils have participated in protests across the United States denouncing the killing of Tamil civilians by Sri Lankan forces and demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Tamil political observers see the US government's move as being aimed at frightening the Tamil Diaspora and curbing their political activities.

The sanctions against the Tamil Foundation, which Treasury said was a front for the Sri Lanka-based Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, allows the U.S. government to freeze assets the foundation may have in the United States and prohibits U.S. banks and consumers from conducting business deals with it.

"The LTTE, like other terrorist groups, has relied on so-called charities to raise funds and advance its violent aims," said Adam Szubin, director of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The head of the Tamil Foundation is also president of the Tamils Rehabilitation Organization in the United States, which was named in 2007 as a terrorist support group under a White House executive order.

Over the course of many years, the Tamil Foundation and TRO have co-mingled funds and carried out coordinated financial actions, Treasury said. Additional information links the Tamil Foundation to the TRO through a matching gift program, the department said.

In the US, TRO has raised funds for the LTTE through a network of individual representatives the organisation is the preferred means for sending funds from the US to the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the department claimed.

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