

Our Holocaust

The struggle for Tamil liberation is entering a new phase.

The relentless massacres of Tamil civilians by the Sri Lanka state over the past few months had resulted in almost 7,000 deaths and twice that many seriously wounded by May 1. But the slaughter over last weekend is unparalleled in the brutality unleashed by the Sinhalese since independence; over two thousand Tamil lives were snuffed out in a hail of artillery shells. The makeshift hospital - blood-splattered room in a shattered house in the Mullaitivu enclave - has been blasted time and again, the accuracy of the Sri Lankan shells guaranteed by the GPS passed on by the ICRC.

All in plain sight of the international community. Even the Western states which have - along with China, Russia and India - stood solidly behind the Sinhala state for the past three years were shaken. As the edition goes to print, US President Barack Obama has also stated the oft-repeated urging of the Sinhala state to cease its "indiscriminate" shelling. We doubt Sri Lanka, secure that China and Russia will thwart any repercussions at the UN Security Council, will pay any heed this time either.

What the Western states, operating with theories of 'internal conflict' and 'terrorism', can't comprehend is why the Sinhala state insists on using heavy weapons on the civilians packed into a sliver of land. They also don't understand why Sri Lanka is blocking international assistance from reaching the 190,000 recently displaced people concentrated in militarized camps. The Tamil people, of course, understand: this is genocide.

For several years the Tamils have been appealing to the international community that there is a 'slow' genocide underway in Sri Lanka since independence. These arguments were dismissed - laughed off, actually - as hysteria or propaganda. Yet, quite apart from

the pogroms against Tamils up to 1983, in the period since a hundred thousand Tamils have died in massacres, indiscriminate shelling and bombing, by starvation amid government embargoes on the Tamil homeland. Since January, 'genocide' has not been some abstract concept. The world has witnessed it every single day since as first dozens, then scores, then hundreds of Tamils were killed and wounded. Even by Sri Lanka's horrific standards, the rate at which our people have been slaughtered is stunning.

What has also become clear is that the international community has knowingly and deliberately allowed this slaughter to proceed. The ideological fixation with 'fighting terrorism' and 'ending armed conflict' has meant that in the interests of destroying the Liberation Tigers, any number of Tamil civilians are expendable. Notice that even though it is the Sinhala state that is pounding the civilians, blocking food and medicine, repeatedly blasting the hospital, is the LTTE that has drawn the focus of the UN's condemnation?

Notice that even though the Sinhala state launched major offensive operations in April 2006 (displacing over 40,000 Tamil civilians in three days), ordered international NGOs and UN agencies out of Vanni in mid-2007, tore up the Norwegian-brokered Ceasefire Agreement in January 2008, and, even before this year's slaughter began, had killed several thousand people in LTTE-controlled areas and abducted and murdered or disappeared over 5,000 Tamils in its own controlled areas, it is the LTTE that international actors in all this time have cursed and blamed?

Notice that even though the LTTE called for ceasefire and peace talks in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and that all these calls were dismissed out of hand by Colombo, the interna-

tional community continued to look to the Sinhala state for a solution? The paradox of asking a state starving, bombing and disappearing a people to put forward political solution to meet the political aspirations of that people has completely escaped the international community.

There is only one solution for us now: the independent, sovereign state of Tamil Eelam. The rationale for that is etched out in the bloody sands of Mullaitivu. If the Tamils accept any thing short of independence, if we allow ourselves to be placed under Sinhala dominion as part of a 'solution', they will simply wipe us out at some point in the future. It is self-evident that the close scrutiny of the international community, the pleas and pointed warnings by powerful states and the disgust of the world has not impressed a Sinhala state, polity and people drunk with racism. Not one Sinhala political actor - not even the UNP, the darling of the liberal West - has condemned the slaughter. It is inescapable that whatever the international community does, the Sinhala state will continue to pose an existential threat to the Tamil people unless we are protected by our own borders and security forces.

The sixty-year old struggle for Tamil liberation is entering a new phase. On the one hand the Tamil nation, going through a Holocaust of its own, is no longer under any illusions about the Sinhala state and people. The international community will never be able to reason with or restrain them. On the other hand, contrary to Sinhala expectations, Tamil militancy will remain central to Sri Lanka's future. As the LTTE, which has transformed itself - yet again - for a new kind of war, bluntly put it last month: as long as the Tamils are oppressed, "Sri Lanka will never be able to live in peace".

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NEWS

Food shortage in war zone critical

THE Sri Lankan government was deliberately carrying out a "horrendous act of genocide" by denying food and humanitarian access to the civilian population, charged Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) Political Head B. Nadesan on Sunday 3 May.

Mr. Nadesan pointed out the imminent danger of starvation escalating exponentially.

Meanwhile, health officials in Vanni report that several children faint from hunger within the so-called safety zone every day.

Deliberate denial of food by Colombo, especially milk powder for children, have caused severe malnutrition and starvation as local media reported at least 9 starvation deaths in recent days, TamilNet reported.

The LTTE was always fully prepared to extend its support to ensure humanitarian supplies and international humanitarian access to the civilian population, Mr. Nadesan told TamilNet. He further said that the LTTE political division was engaged in saving lives of civilians who were suffering from hunger and starvation.

Government officials responsible for food distribution, when contacted by TamilNet, said they only received 60 MT food supplies after 02 April. 2,475 MT supplies are needed for a month for 165,000 civilians according to

World Food Programme (WFP) specifications, they said.

The ICRC has responded that it was waiting for Colombo's cooperation in bringing in supply ship. Even the ship that was ready with 1500 MT supplies was diverted to Jaffna, they said.

Meanwhile, the Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) reported that while the need of food for the estimated 165,000 people is roughly 2500 MT a month, ships brought only 60 MT for the whole of April, and the 1100 MT announced by the Sri Lanka Government to be loaded in Trincomalee in ships, never materialized.

The World Food Program is limited by Sri Lanka to send a quantity of food barely sufficient to keep alive 50,000 people, a number the government is willing to admit as the numbers in the Safe Zone, said Lawrence Christy, head of the TRO field office in the 'Safe Zone'.

"TRO is continuing the gruel provision activity at Mullivaikal too. 17 centres are functioning for fulfilling this essential task. From morning 10 to evening 4 they provide gruel to hungry people. People - young and old line up with jugs under hot sun and drink that rice gruel. The ingredients of the rice gruel are rice, water, salt and milk," he said.



Civilians in the war zone are starving as the Sri Lankan government severely limits the food allowed in

'Drop food now if the concern is humanitarian'

"If the Colombo government is starving us, the world should know who is keeping us hostages. If the world's concern is 'purely humanitarian' it should act this very minute to give us our means to keep the body and soul together", is the voice of the civilian victims of Colombo's starvation weapon, reported TamilNet, quoting hospital sources in Vanni. Even the meagre food stock of the hospital staff depleted they said.

UN humanitarian chief, John Holmes, acknowledging the situation, said the food supply was barely enough only for a day.

But five days later, no more food shipments to Vanni was the decision in Colombo.

"When Colombo breaches its own international pledge on the use of heavy weapons against its own civilians, the world watches it. Now when it deliberately starves its own civilians to death, then also the world watches," a political commentator in Colombo told TamilNet, adding that the loss of credibility of UN is going to be irreparable.

The Mahinda Rajapaksa government calculatedly maintains a very low figure of the civilians in

the 'no-fire' zone in order not to send enough food. Colombo's figures in the past were supported by India, but both were discredited later. While Colombo maintains a figure of 15 to 20 thousand civilians, reliable reports from Vanni put it to more than 120,000. Even some international agencies and media are not doing justice in harping on a figure of around 50,000. Colombo prevents international agencies from finding out the truth.

Recently, the UN decided not to penalize Sri Lanka for what it is doing.

'Sri Lanka is a democratically elected government fighting a terrorist organization' is a view maintained by Britain and France.

However humanitarian it could be, it is an internal matter of Sri Lanka, not to be discussed officially in the UN Security Council is the stand of China, sitting on UN action. The core responsibility now falls on US, said political observers.

Meanwhile, health officials in the Vanni appealed that if there is any meaning for the word humanitarian, the minimum humanitarian act right now is to drop food to

the civilians of Vanni without wasting a minute, as an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe caused by Sri Lankan government enforced starvation engulfs the civilians of Vanni.

"The US government and the world should realise that the situation culminating in the most inhuman act of Colombo calculatedly inflicting starvation death on civilians is ultimately a consequence of the lopsided application of a US policy, and the US has every responsibility to reme-

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NEWS

Bombing kills thousands in single night

RESCUE workers within the Mullaitheevu Safety Zone have counted more than 1200 bodies after the large scale slaughter over the night of Saturday 9 May and Sunday 10 May morning by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) with the use of cluster ammunition, multi-barrel rocket launchers and cannons.

The workers fear that there may be additional bodies yet to be uncovered, and the numbers killed will likely rise.

The United States said last Monday it was deeply concerned about an "unacceptably high" level of civilian casualties in Sri Lanka and called on both the government and the Tamil Tigers to prevent civilian deaths.

Meanwhile, the United Nations condemned the civilian "bloodbath" in Sri Lanka.

"We're deeply concerned. We think that there's an unacceptably high level of civilian casualties," US State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told a news briefing, reacting to reports that hundreds of civilians had died on Sunday and Monday in an assault by the Sri Lankan government on the war zone.

"We've repeatedly urged the Tamil Tigers to lay down its arms and allow the civilians to leave," Kelly said.

"The government of Sri Lanka should abide by its April 27th statement that combat operations have concluded and security forces should end the use of heavy weapons which of course could cause civilian casualties."

"The large scale killing of civilians, including the death of over 100 children, over the week-end shows that the bloodbath scenario has become a reality," Gordon Weiss, the UN spokesman in Colombo, told AFP.

The Sri Lankan government blamed the Liberation Tigers, saying that they were bombing the civilian population in the war zone.

It said doctor, V. Shanmugarajah, who has been sending out most of the reports of the dead and injured, has been either indoctrinated or intimidated by the Tigers.

However, UN officials said that the doctor's testimony had been reliable in the past and that their information also indicated that there had been a massive artillery raid on Saturday and Sunday on the "no-fire zone" where the civilians are sheltering, reported the Times newspaper.

Channel 4 Asia correspondent Nick Patten-Walsh, who was deported from Sri Lanka, said that the government's claim of the

Tamils Tigers killing their own was 'hard to believe'.

Stating that two weeks ago the Sri Lanka Army had claimed the Tamil Tigers had 2 artillery pieces left, before claiming there was no use of heavy weapons in the area, "today they claim the Tamil Tigers are shelling themselves," he said.

Indiscriminate barrage of shelling by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) on the 'safety zone' is believed to have slaughtered more than 2,000 civilians including a large number of women and children.

Every kind of lethal weapon such as the internationally banned cluster shells and shells fired from Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers and Cannons were used turning the so-called safety zone into a killing field, reported TamilNet, quoting local sources.

Rescue workers said several hundreds were very seriously injured, and the critical shortage of medicine at the makeshift hospital in Mullivaaykkaal will lead to many more deaths.

Meanwhile, Mullivaaykkaal Hospital staff said, until 3:00 p.m. the number of bodies brought to the hospital was 378, injured totalled 1122.

The staffers added that 106 of the dead, and 251 of the injured were children.

The entire family of a devoted nursing officer, Gracian Tharmarasa, has been wiped out in the shelling, reports said.

Dead bodies were found in bunkers and inside the tarpaulin tents, workers there told TamilNet.

The casualties and the seriously injured include many elderly, women and children.

The bombing which subsided until noon Sunday increased after 12:00 noon when Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) fighter jets carried out two bombing raids at 12:45 p.m. Sunday, reports from inside the safety zone said.

Rescue workers said the counting of the dead is continuing and the actual number killed in the worst-ever man inflicted carnage by Sri Lanka state will not be known for a few days.

The makeshift hospital which is now running in junior school in Mullivaaykkaal is struggling beyond words to cope with the situation, medical sources said.

"This is the first time in history where the International Community and the UN have politically experimented such a mass killing of civilians in a single day by giving an almost open consent to a government," described a human rights professional in



Thousands die daily as the Sri Lankan government continues its aerial and artillery bombardment

Colombo upon hearing the news.

The large scale slaughter is believed to be a result of India prodding Colombo to finish the war before the change of government, political circles in Colombo told TamilNet.

Sri Lankan leaders have refused all international calls for a ceasefire, despite reports from the UN last month saying up to 6,500 civilians may have been killed and 14,000 wounded in fighting since January.

Human rights and conflict

prevention groups on Monday urged Japan, which is Sri Lanka's largest aid donor, to "shoulder its responsibilities" and confront the worsening humanitarian crisis in the country.

The appeal was made in a joint letter to Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso from the heads of Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, Amnesty International and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

"We believe that Japan, a

powerful player on the humanitarian stage and the largest international donor to Sri Lanka, has an important role to play in saving countless civilian lives," the agencies said.

"It is time for Japan to show that it is prepared to shoulder its responsibilities."

"If the world continues to look away from the suffering of civilians in Sri Lanka, as it has largely done until now, it will be a failure of historic proportions," the letter said.

LTTE calls for urgent international intervention

REFUTING the Sri Lankan propaganda that artillery and shelling against the Tamil civilians was carried out by the Tigers, Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the LTTE's head of international relations on Monday urged the governments of the world to prevail upon the Sri Lankan Government to prevent it from causing a collective tragedy.

"The recent developments in Vanni are very disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention on the part of Sri Lanka and its partners in this war to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty," Mr. Pathmanathan said in a statement issued Monday.

"The artillery fire and fierce mortar shelling by the Sri Lankan Army on the nights of 9th and 10th of May 2009 were one of the bloodiest episodes of the war so far, killing more than 2,000 of

innocent Tamils including children, women and the elderly. This is a deliberate massacre of Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan armed forces," said a statement from Mr. Pathmanathan.

"LTTE categorically rejects any allegations by the Sri Lankan Government and its military that the artillery and shelling was carried out by us," he said.

"It is an indisputable fact that the LTTE has waged this three decade long struggle for the liberation of the Tamil people from all oppressions by the racist Sinhalese regime. We will never ever turn on the very people for whose liberation we have laid close to 20,000 of our own fighters."

"It is not an overstatement to associate the treatment of Tamils with the criminalized Nazi record of collective atrocity. The recent developments in Vanni are very disturbing because they express so vividly a deliberate intention

on the part of Sri Lanka and its partners in this war to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty," he said.

"We are convinced that this pattern of conduct is a holocaust-in-the making and appeal to the governments of the world and to international public opinion to prevail upon the Sri Lankan Government so as to prevent these current genocidal tendencies from culminating in a collective tragedy," he noted.

"The most brutal episode of this 'collective tragedy' is what we have seen in the last two days."

"We call upon the International Community and the UN Security Council 'as a matter of urgency' to take all measures capable of genuinely preventing any further massacres of the innocent Tamil civilian population," he said on behalf of the LTTE.

NEWS

Sri Lanka committing 'war crimes' with hospital attacks

A NEW York based rights group has accused the Sri Lankan military of repeatedly attacking hospitals in the northern Vanni region in their attempt to wipe out the Liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a statement on Friday, May 8, that Sri Lankan armed forces "have repeatedly struck hospitals in the northern Vanni region in indiscriminate artillery and aerial attacks", warning that commanders responsible for such attacks may be prosecuted for war crimes.

"While doctors and nurses struggle to save lives in overcrowded and underequipped facilities, Sri Lankan army attacks have hit one hospital after another," said Brad Adams, Asia director at HRW.

"Repeated Sri Lankan artillery attacks striking known hospitals is evidence of war crimes," said Adams.

"The government cannot hide behind LTTE atrocities to justify their own unlawful acts."

HRW again called for the situation in Sri Lanka to be urgently taken up by a formal meeting of the UN Security Council and by a special session of the UN Human Rights Council.

One of the deadliest took place on Saturday, May 2, when artillery shells struck Mullivaaykkaal hospital in the government-declared "No Fire Zone," killing 68 persons and wounding 87.

Two artillery shells fired by the SLA hit the hospital at Mullivaaykkaal around 9:00 a.m. killing 23 and maiming 34 and later several shells were fired at 10:30 a.m., killing 41 and maiming 53.

The attack took place, after the Sri Lankan military was provided with the exact coordinates of the hospital premises three days back through the ICRC, and as Sri Lanka Air Force Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) was monitoring the hospital area.

The massacre is calculated to coerce the civilians said a rescue worker citing leaflets air dropped the previous day with Mahinda Rajapakse's message asking civilians to come to the SLA side.

A female volunteer doctor was killed on the spot. Three medical staff sustained injuries, one of

them paralysed.

The main Out Patients Department of the makeshift hospital was attacked at 9:00 a.m. when the hospital was very busy with outpatients. There were more than 400 wounded patients accommodated in and around the building.

The second attack came as the medical staff and volunteers were engaged in clearing the attacked area of the hospital.

HRW said it had documented at least 30 artillery and air attacks on permanent and makeshift hospitals in the combat area since December 2008.

"Patients, medical staff, aid workers, and other witnesses have provided Human Rights Watch with information about at least 30 attacks on permanent and makeshift hospitals in the combat area since December 2008," the statement said.

"Witness accounts suggest that in some cases the Sri Lankan military attacks may have been targeted at LTTE forces present in the vicinity of the hospitals, yet in other cases witnesses said there were no LTTE forces anywhere near the hospitals."

"Hospitals, whether permanent or temporary, are specially protected under international humanitarian law. Like other civilian structures, they may not be targeted. Under the Geneva Conventions, hospitals remain protected unless they are "used to commit hostile acts" that are outside their humanitarian function. Even then, they are only subject to attack after a warning has been given setting a reasonable time limit, and after such warning has gone unheeded. The presence of LTTE medical workers or injured combatants does not affect the civilian character of medical facilities," the statement further said.

"Since mid-February, the International Committee of the Red Cross has evacuated more than 13,000 wounded and their caregivers from the war zone by sea. Permanent and makeshift hospitals within LTTE-controlled territory continue to receive hundreds of patients daily. Many arrive wounded from the fighting, while others are sick due to inadequate sanitation, and acute shortages of food and clean water," the statement said.



The targeting of hospitals and patients by the Sri Lankan government is a war crime say rights groups

Horrific accounts from refugees fleeing 'No Fire Zone'

The Telegraph

TAMIL refugees who fled Sri Lanka's war zone by boat have given harrowing first eye-witness accounts of how they were shelled by the army in a "No Fire" civilian safe zone.

The refugees were speaking from India's Andhra Pradesh coast where they landed nine days after fleeing the town of Mullaitivu in the war zone by boat. Ten of the 21 refugees, including a four year old child, died on the voyage, according to the campaign group Human Rights Watch, which interviewed them while they were recovering in hospital.

In a series of interviews, they revealed how friends and relatives had been killed in heavy army shelling of the so-called "no-fire zone" that the government had designated as a safe area for civilians.

S. Indra Kumar, one of the refugees, said his family had travelled to Puthumatalan inside the zone on the north-east coast but they soon came under heavy artillery fire.

"We were living in such fear. There was constant shelling. On April 5 or 6, our neighbours were injured in the shelling. A shell landed inside the bunker. Ten people were injured, and of them, five died. There was no anaesthesia. The doctors had to cut off a girl's hand without any anaesthesia. My small daughter was crying and scared. I decided then that we had to leave," he said.

The refugees said they had been trapped in small bunkers below houses for up to four houses during heavy shelling, and that many of the raids had followed firing from Tamil Tigers from within civilian areas.

One of the men whose wife and four year old son died during their hazardous sea voyage, said they had left because of a shortage of medicine. "In the beginning, before we came to the safe zone, the government hospital was still there. My wife just had a baby, so she needed medicine. But there was no medicine at the hospital. I waited a whole day for medicines."

"The ICRC was giving tents, but they could not cope with the

demand. We built a shelter with coconut thatch. And when it rained or there was shelling, we ran to the bunker. "There was shortage of food. One day, I was waiting in queue for food and there was suddenly shelling. I ran away, but later heard that 40 people had died," said Sivadasa Jagdeśwaran.

He said his wife's father had died, her two brothers had jumped overboard and she herself died after drinking sea water while weak with dehydration.

Meenakshi Ganguly of Human Rights Watch, who interviewed the survivors, said the Sri Lankan government had tried to stop stories like theirs from being heard. "These accounts must be multiplied tens of thousands of times to capture the full horror of those who remain trapped by the Tamil Tigers and shelled by government forces," she said.

The Sri Lankan government has consistently denied shelling civilians in the no-fire zone, though several Western governments and the UN believe they are continuing to attack the area with artillery and aerial bombing.

Sri Lanka blacklists HRW official

THE Government of Sri Lanka has blacklisted an official of Human Rights Watch (HRW) citing violation of the immigration and emigration laws.

Anna Neistat, a senior researcher of the emergencies division at HRW was accused Immigration and Emigration controller P.B. Abeykoon of entering the country using forged documents last February.

Tamil analysts, say Neistat is being targeted for speaking against the government's human rights abuses.

Neistat recently testified before the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing on Sri Lanka. She described the welfare centers set up for the civilians reaching gov-

ernment controlled Vavuniya as 'internment camps with barbed wires and machine guns'.

Neistat also admitted that she managed to collect credible information about 'egregious violations by the parties to the conflict' and also that the HRW visited the Vavuniya hospital on February 11 and interviewed patients.

NEWS

IDP camp abuses exposed by British Television

TamilNet

AN independent report by a British Television channel has exposed the grim conditions that exist in the camps that Sri Lanka has setup to hold Tamil civilians coming from the conflict zone.

The secretly filmed video footage and anonymous interviews by aid workers has exposed widespread abuses including rape, torture and disappearances and the sub-human conditions under which the people are forced to live, including days old corpses lying around and children being crushed fighting for food parcels.

As access to the IDP camps are prohibited to journalists, unless they are under military escort, independent information about conditions inside is hard to come by.

But British broadcaster, Channel Four News, managed to send a cameraman into the camps, without army escort, who filmed these scenes.

The cameraman also interviewed a number of relatives of people held inside and, importantly, a number of aid workers.

They gave the first independent testimony of life inside. Stories of children trampled in the rush to get food; of three women's bodies found in a bathing area in the open. There have also been reports of disturbances close to riots in some camps over food and water.

Over the last week, at least 20 people have died due to starvation and lack of medication. One aid worker, speaking anonymously, said he saw four dead bodies lying on the ground, one of which had worms crawling from its mouth.

Another aid worker said women have been abducted by Sri Lankan soldiers and assaulted.

"Nobody dares to talk," she said. "They know they're being watched."

One refugee quoted by Channel 4 called the camp a "jail."

Man Made Crisis

Channel 4 reporter Nick Paton Walsh, writing in a blog said: "We saw, and in our case filmed, pictures of the hungry displaced, freshly arrived in the camps from

the far worse hell of the no-fire zone. It looks like another war-related crisis, where international aid must flood in to help. But this is different, many aid workers told me: it's man made, a crisis born of the decision to detain much of the population of the country's northern Vanni area indefinitely."

"An aid worker told me how a Tamil woman in the camps had approached - tired of wearing the same dirty clothes and eating meagre handouts. She had money and asked the aid worker just to go outside the camps barbed wire fence to buy her a change of clothes and some food.

"She had money, she had relatives to stay with. But they would not let her out."

"This is a man-made humanitarian disaster, the aid worker explained. "I am in the strange position of just keep telling all our donors when they come here to NOT to give money".

UN Assistance

The international community, through the UN and aid agencies, have been helping to build and organise aid inside the growing camp network.

Critics say the UN money is in effect being used to help the Sri Lankan government build a huge internment camp system.

The UN also said it has received "persistent reports" of assaults on Tamil refugees in government territory.

"We have received persistent reports of physical assaults on men and women fleeing into government-controlled areas," a UNHCR spokesman, William Spindler said.

"We are reminding the government of its responsibilities towards the civilian population and to ensure the protection of its own citizens. We urge that all necessary steps be taken to investigate these incidents and to bring those responsible to justice."

UN Staff on site also report of overcrowding, malnourishment, dehydration and limited medical facilities at the current sites. There is also a lack of food aid and delayed distribution. This, coupled with limited water and sanitation facilities at the sites, is compounding existing health problems, according to UN staff.



Civilians in Sri Lankan internment camps reported sexual abuse, disappearances and rotting bodies

British journalists deported for exposing grim conditions

SRI LANKAN authorities arrested and deported a British news team that produced a report exposing the abuse and ill-treatment of Tamil refugees in military controlled internment camps.

Three journalists from Channel 4, Asia Correspondent Nick Paton-Walsh, producer Bessie Du and cameraman Matt Jasper, were seized and handed over to Sri Lanka's Criminal Investigation Department for interrogation, police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekera told reporters.

They were deported from Sri Lanka on Sunday, May 10.

The report, aired Tuesday, May 5 on Channel 4, chronicled the alleged abuse of Tamils in internment camps in the city of Vavuniya in northern Sri Lanka.

Officials discovered that Paton-Walsh consistently filed

fabricated stories and has tarnished the country's image, according to a government Web site. Paton-Walsh's visa was canceled, the Web report said.

Channel 4 said the team -- which had been in the country with valid visas and had been reporting there independently for a couple of weeks -- has been told to leave the country.

"We will be seeking an explanation from the Sri Lankan government for this decision," an ITN official said.

Writing about his team's deportation, in his blog, Nick Paton Walsh described a call he received from Sri Lankan defence secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse.

"Who is this? You rang me earlier? Is this Channel 4? You have been accusing my soldiers of raping civilians? Your visa is

cancelled, you will be deported. You can report what you like about this country, but from your own country, not from here".

I'm missing out my interjections, but that's pretty much how you get deported in Sri Lanka, wrote Walsh.

British condemnation

The Foreign Office in London said it was "deeply disappointing" that a UK television news team had been expelled from Sri Lanka after reporting on alleged poor treatment of Tamils in camps there.

In a statement released on Sunday May 10, the Foreign Office said: "This is a deeply disappointing decision when the case for more transparency, not less, is overwhelming."

OPINION

A cornered tiger is still deadly

The LTTE has switched strategy and has prepared a protracted war for Eelam's independence.

Fred Burton and Scott Stewart
STRATFOR

SRI LANKAN Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake told parliament May 5 that he believes Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is among the large group of Tiger militants trapped in a 4-square kilometer coastline area near Mullaitivu. The area around Mullaitivu has been the final focal point of a recent larger government military offensive aimed at restoring government control of northeast Sri Lanka and crushing the South Asian country's separatist rebels, who have controlled large parts of the region for the past several years.

As STRATFOR has previously noted, if Sri Lankan troops manage to crush the remnants of the Tigers' hard-pressed conventional military forces, the Tigers will have little choice but to give up on conventional warfare (at least for the time being). But the Tigers' separatist struggle is more than 30 years old and has been marked by great brutality on both sides. Because of this, there is very little chance the Tigers will simply accept defeat and fade into history. Instead, now that the government has the military advantage, the Tigers can be expected to continue their war against the government by melting back into the populace and resorting to guerrilla tactics and terrorism.

In many ways, this will resemble events in Iraq and Afghanistan, where a militarily weaker force melted away in the face of a more powerful conventional military force. The Tigers, however, have a far more experienced and effective terrorist apparatus than either their Taliban or Iraqi counterparts. This struggle will therefore remain bloody in Sri Lanka (and perhaps even abroad).

Background

The Tigers are battling for the creation of an independent Tamil homeland for the country's 10-15 percent Tamil minority, the dominant ethnicity in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. The Tigers are struggling against the majority Sinhalese Buddhist-controlled government, which has fought the Tigers in a bloody civil war that has lasted nearly three and a half decades. Over the decades, the Tigers have developed an extremely sophisticated paramilitary organization. This force consists of not only ground forces (complete with artillery and even some armor), but also a sea wing that engages in arms smuggling

and naval attacks against the Sri Lankan Navy - to include suicide boat attacks - a small air wing, and an elite force of militants trained to conduct assassinations and terrorist attacks known as the Black Tigers.

The Tigers' fortunes have fluctuated over the years. Several times they have brought large swathes of northern and eastern Sri Lanka under their exclusive control, only to lose them to government offensives, such as an offensive launched in January 2001. As mentioned, international pressures on their finances and logistics in recent years, plus the loss of the strategically significant Elephant Pass in January - formerly a key logistics hub for their resupply efforts and an important base for their naval efforts - mean the Tigers are now in an uphill battle for survival. Compounding the Tigers' woes, the government now is far better prepared, equipped and trained than it has been during previous military offensives. But despite being so hard-pressed and having taken such significant losses, there are no signs that the Tigers have lost the will to fight. They continue to hold out rather than surrender, and we have not seen news of desertions.

The Tigers' material losses will be more difficult to overcome than their loss of personnel. They should be able to find new volunteers (or conscripts) among Sri Lanka's Tamil population. Their ability to recruit should be aided by the Sri Lankan military's policy of forcing Tamils into internment camps, something the Tigers also have leapt on as an international propaganda opportunity. Tiger militants are well-trained and are also subject to rigorous political indoctrination. With rare exception, the Tigers prefer to fight - or take their standard-issue cyanide capsules - and die rather than surrender.

Insurgency & Terror

As seen from Iraq, Afghanistan and any number of historical examples, it is very difficult to eradicate an insurgency that can blend in with a sympathetic local population. Doing so is even harder when the insurgents can exploit international borders to create a place of refuge. Although Sri Lanka is an island, it is located very close to the coast of India. It lies just a few miles from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, an Indian state that,



While some speak of the end of the Tigers, STRATFOR predicts that the Liberation Tigers will fight on to achieve Tamil independence, even if the struggle takes a different format in the future

as its name implies, has a substantial ethnic Tamil population. Some Indian Tamils are sympathetic to the Tigers, and the Tigers have established a sizable presence in Tamil Nadu.

Sympathy in Tamil Nadu for the Tigers came into view May 5, 2009, when a large group of pro-Tiger Indian Tamil activists blocked a convoy of Indian army trucks in the city of Coimbatore because they believed the trucks were carrying supplies destined for the Sri Lankan military. The activists reportedly damaged and ransacked some of the trucks.

Support in Tamil Nadu means that the Tigers can - and do - exploit the international border to their advantage. The Tigers use India in much the same way that the Taliban and al Qaeda use Pakistan. The Tigers' logistical and training infrastructure in India is especially important during times (like the present) when the Sri Lankan government is hammering them. The Tigers also have a long history of working with an array of other militant groups in India and the general region. This cooperation is not based on ideology, but rather on mutual benefit, such as bolstering the groups' ability to smuggle weapons and other goods.

Another truism about insurgency is that it takes far fewer resources to sustain an insurgency than it does to fight a conventional war. The amount of ordnance expended in a single conventional battle can sustain months or even years of insurgent activity, especially if the insurgents can acquire ordnance from their enemy during their operations. Conducting terrorist attacks requires even fewer resources than insurgent attacks; terrorism is a cheap and time-tested means of hitting a militarily superior foe. When properly conducted, terrorist

attacks are the ultimate exercise of asymmetrical warfare.

For a militant group to effectively wield terrorism as an asymmetrical weapon, however, it must gain mastery of a range of tactical skills that we refer to as terrorist tradecraft. These skills include, among other things, the ability to operate without being detected, the ability to collect intelligence on potential targets, the ability to procure munitions, the ability to recruit operatives, the ability to plan effective strikes and the ability to construct reliable improvised explosives devices (IEDs).

Through decades of trial and error, the Tigers have developed all of these skills, as evidenced by their large number of successful assassinations. In fact, they have a record of tactical success that would make any jihadist group green with envy. The Tigers excel at collecting intelligence, and their female operatives form a significant part of their intelligence apparatus, since they generally can travel more widely than males can and do not tend to arouse suspicions to the extent male operatives do. Female Tigers who are already willing to serve as suicide bombers not surprisingly have been willing to use seduction to obtain information critical to their cause.

The group has also long demonstrated the ability to operate in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, as well as in other non-Tamil majority areas. And it has conducted scores of attacks against military, financial and political targets and civilian soft targets in non-Tamil areas. The group conducted five suicide bombings in Colombo alone in 2008, and several attacks against soft targets like passenger buses and commuter trains. The group also has a cadre of very polished

and experienced bombmakers who make reliable and effective IEDs.

Perhaps most spectacularly, the Tiger air wing launched a 9/11-inspired airborne suicide attack Feb. 20, in which their two remaining aircraft were loaded with explosives and sent out after dark on a suicide mission to attack Colombo. One of the planes was shot down, but the other plane reached the capital and struck the 12th floor of the 15-floor Inland Revenue Department, where it exploded - a scene captured by a Sri Lankan navy infrared camera and posted to

It is thought that the Inland Revenue Department was not the intended target, but that the plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire and accidentally struck that building. According to Sri Lankan sources, the intended target may have been either the headquarters of the Sri Lankan air force, which is next to the building that was hit, or the president's house or army headquarters, which also are close by. The decision to use the remaining Tiger aircraft in this type of suicide operation against the government in Colombo rather than risk losing them to advancing government troops is a prime example of the Tigers' mind-set.

Due to the long history of conflict in Sri Lanka (which has sometimes been fueled by external meddling), we do not share the assessment by some in the Sri Lankan government that the Tigers are all but dead. They may be severely damaged as a conventional military force - for a time at least - but the group's cadre of dedicated, zealous militants will certainly spill a lot more blood in their quest for independence and vengeance against the Sri Lankan government.

(Edited for space)

OPINION

Fighting the globalised Tiger

The Sinhala state's leading foreign policy advisor sets out a strategy for Colombo to fight Tamil aspirations.

Dayan Jayatilleka

The Island

THESE closing climactic weeks of the conventional war have been accompanied by tremendous external pressure on the Sri Lankan state. This has its upside because it illuminates. It reveals to us the world as it is and how it might be. It tells us who our friends are. It tells us also who our enemy's friends are. It educates us as to what we must and must not do, including in the coming weeks and days.

Here is the rude reality. There is a three pronged campaign to save the Tiger. One is mounted from within the overseas Tamil community, the dominant pro-Tiger/pro-Tamil Eelam stream having developed into a global movement. The second prong is the West, with some functioning as the spear-point of that prong, while others are less committed. Some Western quarters are clearly protectors and potential patrons of the Tigers and the Tamil Eelam cause. The third prong is located in neighboring Tamil Nadu, with some parties now committing themselves to the cause of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka.

Luckily, this external pressure comes at a time when it cannot really affect our conduct on the ground; cannot deflect our military action. Such is the resolve of public opinion, the national leadership and the armed forces. 2009 is not 1987. For the moment we can absorb this pressure while spotting and noting where it comes from and extrapolating future trend lines from these pressures and agitations.

What is the first and most basic lesson that the mounting wave of external pressure should teach us? It is this: we are seeing a number of sources, Western and sub-regional, which would easily afford patronage and succor to the surviving LTTE and the Tamil separatist project. Furthermore it cannot be ruled out that the strength of anti-Sri Lanka /pro-Tamil Eelam elements in Tamil Nadu would have a stronger position in a ruling coalition in Delhi by early June. Therefore, it is imperative that we act decisively within the narrowing window of opportunity open to us, to eliminate the LTTE as a military force, destroying its leadership and hard core cadres who have been trapped in

the Zone, after which we must wheel around and hunt down the residual terrorists who may have escaped into the jungles.

It is precisely because we are relatively weak and our enemy is relatively strong externally, while they are relatively weak and we are relatively strong domestically, that we must maximize that advantage. If we eliminate the LTTE as an army on Sri Lankan soil, we can minimize the effects upon us, of present and future patronage being offered by off-shore sources. If on the other hand, we allow the Tigers to survive and escape, they will quickly regroup and be redeployed, with all the external spaces that they have access to. In short the Tigers must cease to function within Sri Lanka, and to cease to function they must cease to exist. The Tiger is a globalized creature but its head is still on Sri Lankan soil. That head must be cut off, now.

Thus the mounting external pressures on Sri Lanka must not only NOT lead to an easing of the final military campaign, but must result in its exact opposite, the determination to inflict the most complete and decisive defeat and destruction possible on the Tigers, while taking maximum precautions to safeguard the civilians.

The second lesson is that the Tamil Eelam movement is more globalized than ever; the struggle between Sri Lanka and the Tamil separatist project will continue in the global arena, on an international scale, and that the country's future in the next stage will be greatly influenced if not decisively determined in the international theatre. This includes the preservation of the military gains on the ground.

The third lesson is that there must be a shift of national emphasis and priority, to the international front. Just as the country and state matured to the point where it shifted to the correct policy stance on the war, overhauled its military machine and placed the right personnel in the right places, the same or a similar task will have to be undertaken in the domain of Sri Lanka's external relations.

The fourth lesson is that we must clearly identify and build up our "natural" international defense lines. These are the Non



Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN sees the threat to Sri Lanka as lying in the Tamil Diaspora, the West and Tamil Nadu and distances 'Sri Lankans' from 'Tamils' like the singer MIA.

Aligned Movement and the countries of the global South. Within and outside the developing world, Sri Lanka's most reliable strategic friendships will have to be with those, mainly but not only Eurasian, who place high value on strong states, state sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity, and within this group of states, those which have no significant Tamil populations. The ties with such states must be upgraded and solidified into a structure or system. We should for example, apply for observer status with the Shanghai Organization for Security Cooperation, a structure which includes Russia and China, and focuses on counter-terrorism.

The fifth lesson is no one, even among our friends, will countenance either an insensitive or slow alleviation of the problems of IDPs and related humanitarian questions or an absence of an immediately postwar political solution based on autonomy and equality, for the Tamil people. (We have until a new administration is sworn in, in New Delhi, to get our act together on both issues, simultaneously not seque-

ntially).

The sixth lesson is that the Sri Lankan state has to catch up, get with the new calendar and new times, and learn to speak a new language. "Bush-speak" has no acceptance outside the USA even during his administration and now it is rejected within the USA itself and has no resonance anywhere in the world. Sri Lanka's dominant discourse has to change or it will lose the global struggle by simple default. Macho nationalism, religious majoritarianism, unilateralism and "anything goes in the struggle against terrorism" are out; the attempt to combine ethics and power, ("ethical realism") is in.

The seventh lesson is that if we are to compete with and beat the globalized Tamil secessionist project with its western patrons - better exemplified by MIA making TIME's 100, rather than by Velupillai Prabhakaran the least articulate and most corpulent guerrilla leader in the world - we have to rebuild our soft power and smart power, just as we did our hard power. This requires that we undergo a collective transforma-

tion, amounting to a revolution, in education, culture and mentality. If anyone wants to understand shifts in US policy towards Sri Lanka, they must factor in the 80-100 young US educated Tamils working on Capitol Hill as aides, researchers and staffers of Congressmen and Senators, and then contrast that with the output of our educational system as we have debased it.

It is not that Sri Lanka had no MIAs. We had better MIAs than MIA, way before MIA. Remember Yolande Bawan at the Newport jazz festival? Right now we've got DeLon who I think has a far better singing voice than MIA, but who is backing him in the USA to make a breakthrough? When a collective mentality looks to the past rather than the future, it has lost the capacity to envision and produce future excellence or achievement. As Dr Martin Luther King said in 1967, minting a phrase picked up and popularized by Barack Obama, "we are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now".

DIASPORA WORLDWIDE PROTESTS CONTINUE



PARIS, FRANCE



12/05/2009



LONDON, UK



TORONTO, CANADA



SWITZERLAND



NEWZEALAND



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA



LONDON, UK



NETHERLANDS



HANNOVER, GERMANY





வோல்தம்ஸ்ரோ ஸ்ரீ கற்பக விநாயகர் ஆலயம்

WALTHAMSTOW SRI KATPAHA VINAYAGAR TEMPLE

01-05-2009 வெள்ளிக்கிழமை அக்டோபர் தித் வளக்கு அருளுதல் காலை 8.00 மணிக்கு 12 மணிவரை. அத்துடன் காலை 9மணிக்கு கணபதி ஹோமம், முக்திஹோமம், நவகிரகஹோமம் கும்பராசீக்கு குருப்பியாச்சீசய முன்னிட்டு நடைபெறும்.

03-05-2009 சூரிய காலை 10.00 கயபத்தி அம்மன் அபிசேகம் நடுவீழா

04-05-2009 புதன் மாலை 5மணிக்கு அபிசேகம் ஆரம்பம் நுக்தி திசை ஹோமம் ப்ரதோசநாயகம் விதிபுலா

08-05-2009 வெள்ளி காலை 9.30க்கு விநாயகருக்கு அபிசேகம் சித்திராப்பெண்ணி வீசேட வழிபாடு

12-05-2009 செவ்வாய் சங்கடஹ சமூகத்தி் மாலை 5.00 அபிசேக ஆரம்பம் கணபதி மானா மத்தி ஹோமம் தொடர்ந்து 7.00 நுலாயப்புகை 8.00 வசத்த மண்டப்புகை

27-05-2009 புதன்கிழமை சமூகத்தி் விதம் காலை 8.00 அபிசேக ஆரம்பம் தொடர்ந்து சகஸ்ரநாம அர்ச்சனை. மாலை 5.00 அபிசேகம் கணபதிஹோமம் 7.30 நுலாயப்புகை 8.00 வசந்தமண்டபம் புகை.

29-05-2009 வெள்ளி 108 கலசஸ்தாபன புகை

30-05-2009 சனி காலை 7மணிக்கு 108 கலச யாக வழிபாடு மீண்டும் மாலை 6 மணிக்கு 108 கலச யாக வழிபாடு

31-05-2009 சூரிய காலை 7 மணிக்கு 108 கலா அபிசேகம் 11 மணிக்கு மஹா பூர்ணாதுத் திபாராதனை வீசேட புகை, பிரசாதம்.

ஆலயம் தொழுவது சாலவும் நன்று

மங்கள வாத்திய தேவைகளுக்கும் தொடர்புபடுவதற்கு

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

NEWS

99 percent of Norway Tamils aspire for Tamil Eelam

TamilNet



Tamils in Norway lined up to express their electoral support for a sovereign Tamil Eelam

IN a secret ballot of universal suffrage, conducted by a Norwegian media simultaneously in 14 centres across the country among Eelam Tamils, 98.95 percent of the voters said that they aspire for the formation of an independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam in the North and East of the island of Sri Lanka.

The voter turnout was a high 89.8 percent in the capital city of Oslo and an average 80 percent for the country, Utrop biweekly that conducted the ballot said.

The ballot gains significance not only in democratically and concretely revealing what the Tamils want, but also in telling that the so-called Oslo Declaration that speaks about internal self-determination is not up to their expectations, Tamil circles said.

A couple of days before the ballot, Norwegian Minister Erik Solheim advocated a federal solution to the crisis.

The ballot results were announced Monday noon at a press conference conducted by the Utrop newspaper.

Out of 5,633 votes polled, 5,574 votes were in favour of Tamil Eelam and 50 votes went against it. 9 votes were invalid, the paper said.

The 14 centres, 6 in the major cities and 8 in suburban and remote towns, where Eelam Tamils live in large numbers, were accessible to roughly 7,000 eligible voters aged 18 and above, the multicultural biweekly said.

A chief polling officer, lawyer by profession, handing over the results to the editor-in-chief of Utrop

Cities and towns of Norway where polling booths were organised: 1. Oslo (3 centres: Stovner, Grorud, Bryn), 2. Bergen, 3. Stavanger, 4. Trondheim, 5. Lørenskog, 6. Bø, 7. Florø, 8. Nordfjordeid, 9. Ålesund, 10. Narvik, 11. Tromsø. According to government statistics, a total of 14,431 Sri Lankans, including Tamils as well as Sinhalese live in Norway. Out of them, the number of eligible voters aged 18 and above are 8,797, according to the Statistics Norway.

The number of Sinhalese in Norway is very small. But, there is no way of differentiating their number in the official statistics. Tamil circles say that there could be roughly 300 eligible Sinhala voters.

The polling centres have covered provinces of 8,267 voters.

However, due to remoteness

and transportation difficulties, the centres were not accessible to all of them, especially in the provinces.

At least around 1,000 eligible voters might have not found the polling centres easily accessible.

The ballot was on ascertaining the current validity of the political fundamentals set by the Vaddukkoaddai Resolution of 1976 that called for the creation of Tamil Eelam.

The Resolution that was declared by all the Tamil Political parties was overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of the provinces of the North and East of the island of Sri Lanka in the 1977 general elections.

After 1977, the Tamils were never able to democratically demonstrate the continued validity of this political will of theirs, as the Prevention of Terrorism Act

of 1979, and later in 1983 the 6th Amendment of the constitution prevented them from expressing secession.

The present ballot taken in Norway has given a unique democratic opportunity to Eelam Tamils after 33 years.

The enthusiasm was obvious in the voters who stood in long queues to vote Sunday between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

The statement for the ballot, based on Vaddukkoaddai Resolution was "I aspire for the formation of the independent and sovereign state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east of the island of Sri Lanka on the basis that the Tamils in the island of Sri Lanka make a distinct nation, have a traditional homeland and have the right to self-determination".

As in a referendum, the voters were asked to say yes or no.

Stopping traffic draws international attention

TAMIL protestors in London and Toronto have closed roads and brought traffic to a standstill in their cities, drawing the attention of local media which had been reluctant to cover the carnage in Sri Lanka and the protestors who have been taking to the streets daily.

Traffic in Westminster, in central London, came to a standstill as hundreds of people staged a sit-in around the Houses of Parliament. Around 500 Tamil supporters calling for a ceasefire in Sri Lanka pushed past police lines in Parliament Square and they took up positions sitting in the middle of the road between the square and Whitehall.

Police diverted traffic and closed the approaches to Parliament Square from Westminster Bridge and Whitehall. The main Carriage Gates entrance to the Houses of Parliament were also closed off. A total of 36 people were arrested.

Tamil supporters, including several hunger strikers, have been camped in Parliament Square

since last month. The latest protest occurred after two days of shelling in the northern war zone that has left over 1000 civilians dead. Last week, representatives met Foreign Secretary David Miliband to urge him to do more to end the fighting.

Meanwhile, more than 5,000 Tamil protestors calling for intervention in the Sri Lanka civil war gathered on the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto, Canada, for six hours Sunday night, shutting the vital commuter corridor down.

Organizers agreed to move from the freeway around midnight only after a representative in Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff's office promised to bring up the demonstrators' cause in Parliament. But they continued to stay at Queen's Park.

The protestors demanded international sanctions against the Sri Lankan government until it enters into a ceasefire with Tamil Tigers in the country's north.

In keeping with expectations of the demonstrators, Ignatieff said: "Our Party has raised, and

will continue to raise, the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka in the House of Commons. We will continue to demand action by the Canadian government to address the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka.

"But the Liberal Party of Canada stands firmly against terrorism, and I restate our unequivocal condemnation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," the statement continues. "I urge Canadian Tamils to continue raising this issue publicly, and to give it the attention it deserves. But I implore them to do so legally and safely, by working with their elected representatives and through legal means of protest, and not through demonstrations that put public safety at risk," he said.

Toronto police chief Bill Blair said that it was inexcusable and dangerous for Tamil protestors to bring children up on the Gardiner Expressway.

"I think that's quite reprehensible, quite frankly," Blair said. "Having children and elderly people up front in a demonstration

like that, I think it creates a very dangerous situation."

At one point last night, out of concern for the children's safety, officers threatened to remove the kids. When asked about the tactic, Blair said: "There was a lot of conversation going on with people in the crowd."

The problem, he continued, is the low railing along the highway and the narrow lanes.

Sitting under a white tent on the lawn of Queen's Park, Gunam Veerakathipillai says he has been on a hunger strike for eight days. The 52-year-old Pickering resident says he won't eat anything until he has a written promise from the federal government that it will intervene to end the carnage in his native Sri Lanka.

"I have lost 18 family members to the Sri Lankan armed forces so I can't live a normal life anymore. Nobody seems to care and that is why I'm taking this very hard decision," said Veerakathipillai, lying on a mattress, his voice cracking. "I'm suffering but my suffering is nothing. My people are suffering a hundred times more than this."

Abey Raveendran, one of several dozen protestors at Queen's Park, drove to Toronto from London this morning at 2 after watching the shutdown of the Gardiner Expressway on the news. The fourth year health sciences student at the University of Western Ontario says she couldn't watch the news coming out of Sri Lanka and not do something.

"For three months we've been doing this and there's been nothing. Yesterday they really had no choice. When people take a stand like that, that's when people take notice."

"No one wants to cause an inconvenience but ... members of the (Tamil) community have seen their blood relatives massacred and killed in the most inhumane ways. If this happens after four months of peaceful protests, what else is there to do? That's a question the protestors are asking," said Senthana Nada, a spokesperson for the Coalition to Stop the War in Sri Lanka.



European Parliament Election 2009



Jan Jananayagam

Tamil candidate in European Parliament Election

*Register
before*



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NEWS

Sri Lanka shrinks 'No Fire Zone'

IN an attempt to stave off accusations that its military is firing at civilians living in the conflict zone and in a step seen as sign of stepping up its offensive against the LTTE, Sri Lanka has redefined the area it unilaterally demarcated as 'No Fire Zone' few months ago.

With thousands of civilians being killed and maimed by targeted aerial and artillery attacks by Sri Lankan soldiers in the demarcated area since the beginning of the year, it has only been a 'No Fire Zone' by name. The United Nations has already rejected the term 'No Fire Zone' and calls it 'Conflict Zone'.

Announcing the futile exercise of redefining the 'No Fire Zone' and relabeling it as 'New Safe Zone', Sri Lanka asked civilians in the conflict zone to move into a smaller, more concentrated area.

The Sri Lankan Defence Ministry on Saturday, May 9, said the Army now is in full control of more than two-third of the existing Puthumathlan "No Fire Zone" and declared that the re-christened 'New Safety Zone' is confined to south of Karayamulliva-ikkal including Vellamullivaikkal - two km in length and 1.5 km in width - along the Mullathivu sea coast.

"This has been modified to match with the present situation and after considering the concentration of civilians in the area," it said.

Asked if the army would mount a full-fledged assault in the surrounding territory still held by the LTTE, an Army spokesman said it would not be full-fledged but that "troops will have to target the LTTE cadres" while trying, he added, to rescue civilians.

LTTE reacted by calling the re-demarcated zone "a joke" as the Sri Lankan armed forces never respected their undertaking. LTTE accused Sri Lanka of continuing to use heavy weapons resulting in many civilian casualties.

The government estimates that 20,000 civilians are still trapped in the area, but UN agencies say there are about 50,000 civilians there.

However, according to Tamil sources there are at least 165,000 civilians in the conflict zone. Both the government's and the United Nations original figures on civilians living in LTTE controlled territory were proven wrong when more people than they estimated to be in the conflict zone crossed over when the army attacked the 'No Fire Zone' on Monday April 20.



Sri Lanka continues its aerial and naval attacks on its self-declared 'no-fire zones' killing thousands

Intense fighting continues in and around 'No-Fire Zone'

FIERCE fighting continued both on land and sea as Sri Lankan forces, using heavy weapons, repeatedly attempted to enter the 'No Fire Zone'. LTTE fighters put up fierce resistance, inflicting heavy casualties on the advancing forces.

Tamil media sources quoting LTTE battle command reported that Sri Lanka Army (SLA) suffered heavy casualties around Irattaiyaikkal in the first few days of this month.

Whilst 60 SLA troopers were

killed on the Saturday May 2 alone, another 150 was killed between Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1. The reports further said that over 600 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in the last few days on April.

The close quarter combat and the open terrain are proving to be unfavourable to the Sri Lankan soldiers, according to media sources.

In addition to the fierce fighting at the land based entry points to the 'No Fire Zone', there were

also intense sea battles between the Sri Lankan Navy and the Sea Tigers as the Sri Lankan forces repeatedly attempted seaborne invasion of the 'No Fire Zone'.

According to LTTE sources at least 8 Navy vessels, including Super Dvoras, Dvoras and Arrow speed boats, were sunk by Sea Tiger Commandos in these battles. Many Sri Lankan soldiers, including the second in command of the Special Boats Services (SBS), were killed in the sea battles according media reports.

LTTE announces unilateral ceasefire

"IN the face of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and in response to the calls made by the UN, EU, the governments of the USA, India and others, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam has announced an unilateral ceasefire. All of LTTE's offensive military operations will cease with immediate effect," a press statement issued by the Political Head Quarters of the LTTE.

"The suffering inflicted on our people by the Sri Lankan armed forces in violation of all international humanitarian laws has now reached its peak. Over 165,000 people living within the coastal area under our control in Mullaitivu are being subject to continuous attacks by Sri Lankan Navy, Air Force and Infantry. Death and destruction continues unabated. This has been made worse by the deliberate withholding of food and medicine over many months," the press statement said.

"We have taken into account the recent declarations by the G8

nations, the Whitehouse, Indian Ministers and the EU and other members of international community. We are in full agreement that the humanitarian crisis can only be overcome by declaration of an immediate ceasefire," the statement, issued on Sunday April 26, further said.

It also called upon the international community to pressure the Sri Lankan Government to reciprocate it.

"We are of the view that only such a ceasefire can end the humanitarian crisis and help avert the long term impact of this crisis on the region and on the peoples of the island," the statement said.

The Sri Lankan government, however, rejected the ceasefire declaration by the LTTE, calling the announcement "a joke".

Gothabaya Rajapakse, the Sri Lanka defence secretary, said: "That is a joke. They were not fighting with us, they were running from us. There is no need of a ceasefire. They must surrender. That is it."

Rajapakse rejects truce calls, western lectures

SRI LANKA'S President Mahinda Rajapaksa once again ruled out a ceasefire with the Liberation Tigers and added the West should not lecture him about it. Addressing foreign diplomats in Colombo on Thursday May 7, Rajapakse rejected international calls for a cease-fire to allow civilians to leave the conflict zone and said a halt to the fighting at this late stage would be useless as the Tigers only understand the "language of terror".

The UN, EU, UK and Canada have persistently called for a ceasefire or humanitarian pause and expressed concern at civilian deaths. Rajapakse, however, said there will be no pause in the fighting on the verge of a total battlefield victory over the LTTE but there is still an opportunity for the LTTE to surrender.

"We have at no time gone for a ceasefire. We will not do so now. There is no time for that. In the five or six days remaining, we have given an opportunity to the LTTE to lay down their arms and

surrender to the armed forces," he said. "The war with the LTTE is rapidly nearing its conclusion and it is my hope that this will create the space for democracy to flourish in the North again," he said.

"The people of Sri Lanka have suffered too long under the trauma and agony unleashed by terrorist acts. Finally, we are on a threshold of defeating terrorism and facing a new era of lasting peace and security for all Sri Lankans," Rajapakse added.

Using the diplomatic briefing session as an opportunity to attack leading powers of the world for pestering the Sri Lankan government to allow their representatives into the war zone to see the condition of the Tamil civilians, Rajapakse said such visits were not necessary as television channels were broadcasting what was happening in those areas.

"It is my duty to protect the people of this country. I don't need lectures from Western representatives."

In a further attempt to divert

the international pressure being applied on Sri Lanka Rajapakse, pointed to the LTTE's extensive network in many countries and urged the foreign governments to bring pressure on the leadership of the LTTE to 'free the civilians who are being held against their will as human shields'.

"In fact, these civilians could be relatives of those Sri Lankans who are in your countries" he told the diplomats.

Setting the stage for seeking foreign aid in the disguise of developing the Tamil homeland, Rajapakse promised that the government, in all cooperation from other countries, would give top priority to the development and reconstruction of the affected regions in the North.

Sri Lanka observers point out that the same claims were made about the East when it was 'liberated' approximately two years ago where paramilitary activities, abduction, torture, and disappearances are rampant instead of the promised development.

NEWS

Chinese fund war against Tamils

Jeremy Page
The Times

ON the southern coast of Sri Lanka, ten miles from one of the world's busiest shipping routes, a vast construction site is engulfing the once sleepy fishing town of Hambantota.

This poor community of 21,000 people is about as far as one can get on the island from the fighting between the army and the Tamil Tiger rebels on the north-eastern coast. The sudden spurt of construction helps, however, to explain why the army is poised to defeat the Tigers and why Western governments are so powerless to negotiate a ceasefire to help civilians trapped on the front line.

This is where China is building a \$1 billion port that it plans to use as a refuelling and docking station for its navy, as it patrols the Indian Ocean and protects China's supplies of Saudi oil. Ever since Sri Lanka agreed to the plan, in March 2007, China has given it all the aid, arms and diplomatic support it needs to defeat the Tigers, without worrying about the West.

Even India, Sri Lanka's long-time ally and the traditionally dominant power in South Asia, has found itself sidelined in the past two years - to its obvious irritation. "China is fishing in troubled waters," Palaniappan Chidambaram, India's Home Minister, warned last week.

The Chinese say that Hambantota is a purely commercial venture, but many US and Indian military planners regard it as part of a "string of pearls" strategy under which China is also building or upgrading ports at Gwadar in Pakistan, Chittagong in

Bangladesh and Sittwe in Burma.

The strategy was outlined in a paper by Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher J. Pehrson, of the Pentagon's Air Staff, in 2006, and again in a report by the US Joint Forces Command in November. "For China, Hambantota is a commercial venture, but it's also an asset for future use in a very strategic location," Major-General (Retd) Dipankar Banerjee of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies in Delhi said.

The British Navy used the Sri Lankan port of Trincomalee as its main regional base until 1957 and still shares a naval base with the US on the nearby island of Diego Garcia. China has no immediate plans for a fully fledged naval base but wants a similar foothold in the Indian Ocean to protect its oil supplies from piracy or blockade by a foreign power, analysts say.

Beijing sent three ships on an unprecedented anti-piracy mission to the Gulf of Aden in December, and in January a Chinese defence White Paper said that the navy was "developing capabilities of conducting co-operation in distant waters . . ."

China has cultivated ties with Sri Lanka for decades and became its biggest arms supplier in the 1990s, when India and Western governments refused to sell weapons to Colombo for use in the civil war. Beijing appears to have increased arms sales significantly to Sri Lanka since 2007, when the US suspended military aid over human rights issues.

Continued on p15



The closeness between Chinese President Hu Jintao (R) and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse echoes the situation between their two countries, as Sri Lanka increasingly looks to China for support

Rivals help Sri Lanka fight

Mazamil Jaleel
Indian Express

BEHIND the success of the Sri Lankan army's operations against the Tamil Tigers is an interesting little detail of Indo-Pak cooperation against terror. Separately but consistently, the two countries have trained and equipped the Lankan army to prepare and fight its only enemy, the LTTE.

The Sri Lankan army says the reason for its success is that "we didn't reduce the momentum", planned the entire operation in advance and employed innovative counter-insurgency tactics to confront the Tigers.

"I got training in both India and Pakistan. Both have been helping us a lot," said Brigadier Udaya Nanayakara, now the military spokesman. "We send our officers regularly to India and Pakistan for specialised training. I did four courses in India and three in Pakistan. The last time, I trained in Secunderabad". He said Lankan forces have been procur-

ing the latest technology from both countries. "We know they are rivals but we have nothing to do with that. We have benefited from both India and Pakistan," he said.

So how does Sri Lanka remain neutral in the rivalry of the armies of India and Pakistan, especially when it trains and works closely with both? "We don't talk about it. Both are our friends," Nanayakara said.

Former Army chief General L Balagalle put this military cooperation in perspective. "For me, 80 per cent of my advanced training happened in India. I have been trained in Pakistan as well. There are vacancies for our officers and men in both countries. We generally send company commander-level officers for training," he said.

Balagalle said during his tenure, India had problems providing equipment to Sri Lanka and that was when Pakistan stepped in.

"India was not keen to provide certain equipment because of policy, so Pakistan helped. We have

been procuring equipment from China as well. We wanted equipment and would pay later, China agreed. It was mostly ammunition and we have already paid for it."

According to Balagalle, the Americans too helped with the training.

"But they have trained very few, and only officers. Majority of our men are trained by India and Pakistan. We sent our officers and men to India for special training in jungle warfare and counter-insurgency."

Nanayakara said India assisted by sharing intelligence during the current operation.

"India also helped by carrying out naval operations in the area. There were naval exercises too that helped. Here in Sri Lanka, we have had insurgency and terrorism. We had an insurgency in 1971, there is terrorism and it is similar to that in other countries, especially in our neighbourhood."

According to Nanayakara, superior training and availability of equipment played an essential role in the success of the operations against the Tigers.

Bitter at West, Sri Lanka looks East for support

Nicolas Revise
AFP

THE Sri Lankan government is increasingly tilting towards Iran, Libya and China for foreign aid as its traditional Western allies ramp up their criticism of the war against Tamils.

Many Western nations have outlawed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and cut off their funding networks, but the Colombo administration is deeply

upset over repeated calls from the United States and the European Union for a truce.

President Mahinda Rajapakse believes he is on the verge of victory over Tamil Tigers after 37 years of fighting, and he fears that nations such as Britain, France and the US could throw a lifeline to the Tamil Tigers.

"Never did history unmask the hypocrisy and the sanctimony of the Western powers than (it has in) their behaviour towards Sri Lanka during recent times," the defence ministry said on Sunday, without naming specific coun-

tries.

Rajapakse himself vowed last week that he would not bow to outside pressure for a ceasefire, and lashed out at what he regards as Western interference.

"They are trying to preach to us about civilians. I tell them to go and see what they are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said in a speech.

Historically, Sri Lanka has had close links with the West after four centuries of colonial rule starting with the Portuguese and then the Dutch, and ending when the British left in 1948.

"We have had the closest relations with the West," said Nanda Godage, retired additional foreign secretary.

"But today, we are disappointed by their hostility."

Godage said Colombo understood the concerns of the West over ethnic Tamils because about 1.5 million Sri Lankan Tamils now live in Europe and the US.

Elected in 2005 on a promise to wipe out terrorism, Rajapakse put his retired army colonel brother Gothabhaya in charge of the defence ministry.

The duo are the architects of

the war against the Tamil Tigers, which has proved widely popular with the island's Sinhalese majority.

Buoyed up by such support and major battlefield advances, the government has begun to openly criticise Western governments for their alleged support of the LTTE.

"In this country, we have become a bit paranoid, we think that the whole world is against us," Godage admitted.

"But because of this hostile

Continued on p15

NEWS

Congress says 'war is over'

WHILST its key in Tamil Nadu, DMK says it wants a separate state for Tamil in the neighbouring island, Congress, led by Sonia Gandhi, is still hanging onto its policy of a unitary Sri Lanka and a devolution of powers as defined in the 1987 Indo-Lanka agreement.

Campaigning with Tamil Nadu chief minister Muthuvel Karunanidhi in Chennai, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi addressed an election rally on Sunday May 10, where she said the ultimate goal of the Congress with regard to the Sri Lankan Tamils issue is to secure equal rights and status for the Tamils within the framework of the India-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987.

Defending the handling of the Sri Lankan Tamils issue by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government, Gandhi said that "it is due to our government's resolute efforts" that the Sri Lankan government announced the conclusion of combat operations. Gandhi's declaration came on the same day, Sri Lankan security forces slaughtered over 2000 Tamil civilians in the conflict zone with targeted artillery attacks.

The obvious stance she was sharing with Colombo in camouflaging the war and the insistence of the failed accord of Rajiv Gandhi as solution for Tamils, are likely to backfire seriously on her election ally, Karunanidhi, political observers in Chennai said.

Gandhi further said: "Our government is doing everything possible to bring the hostilities to an end and to ensure that the affected people are moved to safe places." Pointing out how deeply anguished she was at the suffering of innocent people caught in the crossfire in Sri Lanka, "We [the

UPA government] are determined to carry forward our humanitarian work.", Gandhi added.

However, political analysts noted that Sri Lanka has in numerous occasions thanked India for its help in waging its brutal war and cited Sri Lankan defence secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse's comments saying 'India had not asked Colombo for ceasefire or humanitarian pause', which contradicts Gandhi's claim that "the Indian government is doing everything possible to bring the hostilities to an end".

With widespread anger at Congress's support for Sri Lankan government and plans by pro-Eelam activists to protest against Gandhi's visit her campaign tour was postponed from Wednesday, May 6 to Sunday May 10.

Over 200 people including, Tamil National Movement leader, Pala Nedumaran, Tamil film director Bharathiraja, arrested when they attempted to show black flags to Gandhi, police said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who visited Chennai on Saturday, May 9 said India was "deeply concerned" over the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka but there were limits to what it could do to end the killings.

Speaking extensively on Sri Lanka at a press conference in Chennai, he said "all Indians" felt that "the Tamil people have been badly treated" in the island nation.

For the first time, Singh admitted that there was a point beyond which India could not do much to halt the military offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) that has resulted in thousands of deaths and suffering.

"We are living in very uncertain times," Singh replied. He



Sonia Gandhi (R) and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi are on the backfoot as the opposition parties in Tamil Nadu have swung fully behind Tamil Eelam as the solution in Sri Lanka

added that India's neighbours were sovereign nations and "sometimes we can hurt the wider national interests" while dealing with particular situations.

He went on: "I recognise that there is a problem in Sri Lanka with regard to the place of the Tamil population. (The Tamils) are entitled to lead a life of dignity as equal citizens... Having said that the people of Tamil Nadu recognise the limitation of dealing with another sovereign state."

He reiterated India's stand that there could be no military solution to the Sri Lankan conflict and that an eventual settlement had to come within a united Sri Lanka.

The need of the hour, he said, was to help bring out Tamil civilians. The Prime Minister said India's topmost concern was to provide relief and succour to the Tamils displaced from the war zone.

Jaya to send troops to create Eelam

AIADMK leader, Jayalalitha Jayaram has vowed to send the Indian army into Sri Lanka to carve out a separate Tamil Eelam state, if her party joined the next government at the Centre and had the numbers to play a decisive role in it.

The former chief minister said she would follow the same norms and provisions of international law that Indira Gandhi had used to win freedom for Bangladesh and Rajiv Gandhi had invoked to send troops to Sri Lanka.

Jayalalitha dismissed the

criticism of the Congress that her views on the Sri Lankan issue were against the interests of the nation. In fact, she appeared to snub the Congress by invoking the name of Rajiv Gandhi and his decision to send IPKF to Sri Lanka in the eighties.

Speaking at an election rally in Musiri, on the banks of the River Cauvery, about 400 km from Chennai, AIADMK leader said, "We will respect international laws and norms just as Indira Gandhi did. Like her son Rajiv Gandhi did by sending IPKF".

Tamil Nadu activists attack Indian Army convoy

ACTIVISTS belonging to the pro-Tamil nationalist Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam (PDK) attacked a convoy of military trucks of the Indian Army allegedly transporting weapons to Sri Lanka.

Five trucks were damaged in the attack. Mortar shells were found in the trucks, sources in Chennai said. The vehicles at first entered Erode around 2:00 p.m. However, protests erupted there and it was subsequently solved by the intervention of the police. This information was conveyed to the PDK organizers in Coimbatore. The PDK cadres waited till 3:50 p.m. at Neelamboor near Coimbatore when the convoy of

vehicles came. Protestors threw stones on the military trucks damaging them. They emptied one of the trucks of its contents several packed boxes, including one containing mortar shells, could be seen. There was a subsequent scuffle between the Army personnel and the Tamil activists. The army resorted to lathi-charge in order to keep the activists away. Five activists, including PDK General Secretary Kovai Ramakrishnan were arrested by the police.

However, the Additional Director General of Police, for Law and Order, in a statement refuted the claim that the shipment in these lorries was meant to be sup-

plied to the Sri Lanka Army. He maintained that the Army personnel were merely returning from a training programme in Hyderabad. The high-ranking police official also warned that stern action would be taken against those who indulge in false propaganda.

Political analysts in Chennai, who saw visuals and image grabs on private television channels refuse to buy into the police version. "If indeed the army lorries were returning after training in Hyderabad, what is the need for them to be carrying mortar shells with them? Is there a war going on in any part of India?" they asked.

Now Karunanidhi also for Eelam

UNDER intense pressure from its rival AIADMK led by Jayalalitha Jayaram, Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK, led by Muthuvel Karunanidhi has jumped into the 'Eelam' bandwagon demanding a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Political parties in Tamil Nadu are seeking to gain the maximum political mileage from the pro-Eelam sympathy wave among voters in the state and in a bid to match competing rivals, DMK chief and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu said that he had assumed the responsibilities of making all efforts that 'Eelam' is created.

"As a next step, they should get Eelam and I assumed respon-

sibilities of making all efforts to ensure that 'Eelam' is created", he said in an appeal to DMK workers. Karunanidhi's remarks came after Jayalalitha made a dramatic policy shift and declared support for a separate homeland for Tamils in Sri Lanka in her election manifesto. For years since 1991, only a few political leaders in Tamil Nadu raised their voice in support of Eelam Tamils in the electoral arena. However, in the Lok Sabha poll 'Tamil Eelam' is staging a comeback. Jayalalitha fore-grounded it as a principal issue by promising voters that any government dependent on her support would strive for formation of 'Tamil Eelam'.

NEWS

British Tamils Football League 2008/2009
Final Table & Top Scores

Premier Division

Champion: Mahayana F.C
Runner-up: West-3

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Mahajana	18	14	2	2	61	10	51	44
2	West-3	18	13	3	2	52	16	36	42
3	Santos	18	11	2	5	50	32	18	35
4	Watch Me	18	9	3	4	34	29	5	30
5	wembley	18	7	7	4	30	27	3	28
6	Kingston Boys	18	5	3	10	28	22	6	18
7	Sunrise	18	5	3	10	36	49	-13	18
8	Olimpics	18	5	2	10	12	52	-40	17
9	Surbiton	18	4	3	11	15	26	-11	15
10	Blues	18	1	2	15	17	67	-50	5

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

Division One

Champion: Srimurugan F.C
Runner-up: E-17 F.C

	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	13
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

Drop ... Chinese fund ... Bitter at West ...

Continued from p2

dy it. Failure amounts to con-
nivance to the crime. US has to
immediately airdrop food," said a
relief official in Vanni.

"Colombo, blatantly lying to
the world that what takes place is
only 'hostage rescue' and it is not
using heavy weapons, is actually
engaged in an all out war to kill or
imprison free civilians by the use
of all heavy and prohibited
weapons. The worst weapon it
uses is complete denial of food,"
complained the relief official who
was engaged in arrangements
with moving the hospital to a new
location as Sri Lanka Army fired
artillery shells have hit the
makeshift hospital several times.
Patients were struggling without
medicines and shelter.

"The Indian Establishment is
not only extending its war part-
nership with Colombo indefinitely,
but also is believed to be pres-
surizing Colombo to use 'all
methods' to win the war before
the Establishment's fate is decid-
ed in the elections in mid May."

Continued from p13

Many of the arms have been
bought through Lanka Logistics
& Technologies, co-headed by
Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, the Defence
Secretary, who is also the
President's brother.

In April 2007 Sri Lanka
signed a classified \$37.6 million
(£25 million) deal to buy Chinese
ammunition and ordnance for its
army and navy, according to
Jane's Defence Weekly.

China gave Sri Lanka - appar-
ently free of charge - six F7 jet
fighters last year, according to the
Stockholm International Peace
Research Institute, after a daring
raid by the Tigers' air wing
destroyed ten military aircraft in
2007.

One of the Chinese fighters
shot down one of the Tigers' air-
craft a year later.

"China's arms sales have been
the decisive factor in ending the
military stalemate," Brahma
Chellaney, of the Centre for
Policy Research in Delhi, said.

Continued from p13

"There seems to have been a deal
linked to Hambantota."

Since 2007 China has encour-
aged Pakistan to sell weapons to
Sri Lanka and to train Sri Lankan
pilots to fly the Chinese fighters,
according to Indian security
sources.

China has also provided cru-
cial diplomatic support in the UN
Security Council, blocking efforts
to put Sri Lanka on the agenda. It
has also boosted financial aid to
Sri Lanka, even as Western coun-
tries have reduced their contribu-
tions.

China's aid to Sri Lanka
jumped from a few million dol-
lars in 2005 to almost \$1 billion
last year, replacing Japan as the
biggest foreign donor. By com-
parison, the United States gave
\$7.4 million last year, and Britain
just £1.25 million.

"That's why Sri Lanka has
been so dismissive of internation-
al criticism," said B. Raman of
the Chennai Centre for China
Studies. "It knows it can rely on
support from China."

Continued from p13

attitude of the West, we have been
forced to look at Iran. China has
always been here (supporting).
We are even looking at Libya.
Japan understands us."

The shift was underscored in
Sunday's defence ministry state-
ment, which said that Sri Lanka
was "grateful for the wholeheart-
ed support" of countries including
China, Iran, India, Libya, Russia,
Pakistan and Vietnam.

"But for their understanding
on our plight and the trust they
placed on us, we would never be
able to come this far in our battle
against terrorism," it said.

Japan provides more than half
of bilateral foreign aid to Sri
Lanka and holds two thirds of its
foreign debt.

But Yasushi Akashi, Japan's
special envoy to the island,
stressed at the end of his three-
day visit on Saturday that --
unlike Western nations -- there
was no link between the aid and
progress in peace efforts.

China also lends heavily to Sri
Lanka while being the biggest
supplier of small arms to its mili-
tary. And it is building a deep
water port in Hambantota, the
home constituency of the presi-
dent.

"Pegging Sri Lanka to Asia is
a major trend," said Eric Meyer,
French historian and expert on Sri
Lanka.

"During this crisis, China has
prevented a UN Security council
resolution against Sri Lanka."

With the support of Asians,
Colombo is also looking to Iran,
which in 2008 agreed to lend a
billion dollars for a hydroelectric-
ity facility and the refurbishment
of the island's only oil refinery.

Sri Lanka is also holding
uneasy talks with the Interna-
tional Monetary Fund for a 1.9
billion dollar financial bailout.

"Even if we don't get the loan,
we will survive," Godage said.
Especially, because negotiations
for a 500-million dollar loan from
Libya is at an "advanced stage,"
according to the central bank.

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