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*"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it"*  
 - Voltaire

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## The talks that failed to start

The central pillar of what is left of the Norwegian facilitated peace process is the Ceasefire Agreement and the primary instrument that monitors the ceasefire is the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). However, recent events and what transpired at the recently aborted Oslo talks indicate that the role, competence and even composition of the SLMM are being challenged.

The LTTE has refused to accept the SLMM's rulings pertaining to the movement of its vessels in northeastern waters, and even warned that the monitors would be at risk if they went on Sri Lankan naval vessels.

In fact the trigger for the recent Oslo talks arranged by the Norwegians was the incident at sea on 11 May 2006 in which the LTTE attacked a Navy troop carrier with truce monitors on board putting their lives at grave risk. When the SLMM ruled that the incident was a gross violation of the ceasefire, the LTTE refused to accept the ruling and questioned its competence to make such a ruling claiming that the 'Sea Tigers' and their vessels had sovereign rights over the Northeastern waters. The SLMM thereafter 'temporarily suspended' monitoring activities to avoid the security of its monitoring personnel being put at risk.

It is learnt that the idea of the meeting between the Government and the LTTE in Oslo was first mooted by Mr. Erik Solheim, during a meeting he had with President Rajapakse on 26 May when he suggested the need to have a meeting to assess the situation and address the safety and security of the monitoring mission. Thereafter, invitations were sent out by Norway to both parties which were accepted and the parties were aware in advance of the composition and names of the respective delegations.

The LTTE delegation arrived in Oslo on 4 June, and SL delegation arrived on the following day. The two-day talks were scuttled at 9 am on the first day of the talks when Norwegians informed to the bewilderment of the SL delegation after it had arrived at the venue of the talks that the LTTE had refused to have direct talks with the Government delegation. It is also said that the Norwegian government representatives themselves expressed complete surprise at the turn of events despite all the background preparations they had made in promoting the talks.

Visibly irritated by the failure of the parties to restart negotiations, the Norwegian Government in a press release issued following the collapse of the talks, said, "After having accepted the Norwegian invitation, and after having arrived in Norway, the LTTE raised objections to the previously communicated intentions and modalities for the meeting. This was the reason for the meeting not being held. By this a critical opportunity has been lost for the peoples of Sri Lanka who so desperately need their leaders on both sides to renew their obligation to uphold the CFA and other CFA-related commitments and to improve security."

In the event, the SL delegation returned to Colombo having made a futile journey to Oslo. The LTTE delegation continued to remain in Oslo and in bilateral talks with Norwegian facilitators, had objected to the inclusion of nationals from Sweden, Denmark and Finland which are members of the European Union that had listed the LTTE a 'terrorist organisation', though the EU in its statement of listing specifically provided that engagement with the LTTE could continue for the purpose of fostering the peace process.

Now, the much frustrated Norwegians have warned that what "will determine which steps will next have to be taken by the Royal Norwegian Government and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission" will depend on the response of both parties to five important questions they have put directly to President Mahinda Rajapakse and LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan.

The five questions primarily seek written confirmation of their commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement of 22 February 2002; for the continued existence and operation of the SLMM as a mission coordinated, facilitated and led by Norway with diplomatic immunity to ensure its impartial operation; and for the provision of full security guarantees for all monitors, employees and physical assets of the SLMM in all situations.

Though the Oslo talks were to have had a limited agenda centering on the question of guaranteeing security for the SLMM and its monitoring operations, nevertheless, they were seen by many as providing a window of opportunity for the parties to get together and pave the way for further negotiations in the future. But that was not to be.

Meanwhile, the situation in the country is dire primarily for the people in the Northeast. People are being displaced in their thousands as they flee some of the areas in the east of the island. Each and every day, there have been reports of countless killings of government soldiers, Tamil Tiger and Karuna cadres and killings of civilians some of which in the most gruesome manner. One shudders at the thought of what a full scale war will entail if the currently on-going so-called 'low-intensity' war is claiming so many lives with such monotonous regularity.

The two-day talks expected to take place on 8 and 9 June in Oslo between the Government and the Tamil Tigers brokered by the Norwegian facilitators collapsed even before they began with the LTTE delegation refusing to have face-to-face talks with the Sri Lankan delegation.

Even as the talks collapsed, Norway warned that the response of both parties to the conflict to five important questions they have posed to President Mahinda Rajapakse and LTTE leader V Pirapaharan "will determine which steps will next have to be taken by the Royal Norwegian Government and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission."

If the countries representing the European Union had hoped that the EU action in banning the LTTE as a 'terrorist organisation' would serve as a positive message to the LTTE to seriously consider a return to the negotiating table to end the conflict in Sri Lanka, that hope did not materialize. On the contrary, the EU action would appear to have pushed the Tamil Tiger leadership to signal an abrupt end to the present phase of the whole Sri Lankan peace process leading to fears of a full scale war resuming.

The Oslo talks were to have a limited agenda, centering on the question of guaranteeing security for the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and its monitoring operations. Nevertheless, they were seen by many as providing a window of opportunity for the parties to pave the way for further negotiations.

The government delegation led by the Secretary General of the Government Peace Secretariat Dr. Palitha Kohona included Shanaka Jayasekera, Gomin Dayasiri and Sajin Vas Gunawardena.

The LTTE delegation, having been flown in a Sri Lankan Air Force helicopter to the Katunayake Airport in Colombo, had arrived in Oslo on 4 June led by its political head S.P. Thamilselvan and included LTTE's Police Chief Balasingham Nadesan, Director of LTTE's Peace Secretariat S. Puleedevan and the Legal Advisor Visuvanathan Rudrakumar from the United States

Norway's International Development Minister Erik Solheim, who has played a pivotal role in the Sri Lankan peace process, his successor as Special Oslo peace envoy, Jon Hansson-Bauer, the Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka Hans Brattskar, Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Major General UIF

## Oslo Talks Collapse

Henricsson, and the former State Secretary Vidar Helgesen were at hand to facilitate and participate in the talks.

Prior to the talks, Erik Solheim had said: "It is positive that the parties have come to Oslo to discuss the situation of the SLMM. These talks are not aimed at finding a political solution to the armed conflict and do not substitute the Geneva talks aimed at strengthening the implementation of the ceasefire agreement of 2002. "The agenda for the meeting is limited to SLMM, and we haven't got any further expectations," he said adding the monitors need clear support from the government and the Tamil Tigers. "They have to stop criticising the monitoring mission and send out a clear message that they support what they do," he said.

Earlier Mr. Puleedevan, Secretary of the LTTE's Peace Secretariat had told the media that the EU ban on the LTTE, its implications on the peace process and the violence in Sri Lanka were likely to figure in the two-day talks. "With three EU member states, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, represented in the SLMM, the LTTE feels it should discuss the impact of the EU ban and how it will affect the involvement of these three countries," Mr. Puleedevan had said.

### LTTE's surprise move

It would seem that it was in the morning of the talks were to begin, 8 June, that the Tigers notified the Norwegians of their refusal to have direct talks with the Sri Lanka Government delegation. All the efforts made by the Norwegians to get the LTTE to change its decision failed to succeed.

The Sri Lankan delegation was taken by surprise when they were informed by the Norway of the LTTE's decision. A statement later issued by the Government delegation pointed out that they came to Oslo at the invitation of the Norwegian Government to discuss the operational modalities and functional attributes of the SLMM and that the LTTE had refused to meet with the Government delegation after arriving at the conference venue in Norway. The parties were aware in advance of the composition and names of the respective delegations.

It is learnt that the idea of a meeting between the Government and the LTTE was first mooted Mr. Erik Solheim, dur-

ing a meeting had with President Mahinda Rajapakse on May 26 when he suggested the need to have a meeting

to assess the situation and address the safety and security of the monitoring mission.

The LTTE delegation had arrived in Oslo on 4 June for the talks. It was at 9 am on 8 June the Sri Lankan Delegation was informed by the Norwegians that the LTTE had declined to meet the Government delegation for talks. The Norwegian government representatives themselves expressed complete surprise at the stance taken by the LTTE despite all the background preparations made by the Norwegian facilitators.

The GOSL delegation was also informed that the LTTE had indicated that the presence of Nationals from Sweden, Denmark and Finland as members of the SLMM was objectionable as these were nationals of EU member countries.

### EU monitors asked to quit

Angered by the EU ban, the LTTE in direct talks with the Norwegians, called for the removal of SLMM truce monitors originating from all EU countries. Norwegian diplomats said the removal of EU members of the SLMM would reduce the mission to 20 Norwegian and Icelandic peacekeepers, from the current 60, which includes monitors from EU states Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

The presence of monitors from EU member states was the only sticking point for the rebels. "Their (the Tigers') only problem with the SLMM's work is the observers from the three EU countries due to the Union's terror list prescription," Hanssen-Bauer said.

Norwegian officials appeared to fault the European Union for offending the LTTE at a sensitive time, by adding the LTTE to its list of terrorist organisations last month. "The EU decision was taken on the basis of certain criteria about which organisations should be on the list, without taking into consideration the adverse consequences the decision might have for their own member states," the director of the Oslo Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Stein Toenneson, was quoted as saying. "The EU is not suited for taking positions on acute political problems. It has long been known that the LTTE, through the Norwegian facilitators, has tried to avoid ending up on the EU terror list," Toenneson said.

## Norway profoundly concerned with grave situation in Sri Lanka

*The following is the full text of the press release issued by the Royal Norwegian Government on 8 June 2006:*

The grave situation in Sri Lanka, with escalating violence in breach of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), is intolerable for the civilian population and a cause of great concern to the international community. As expressed in no uncertain terms by the Tokyo Co-Chairs in their statement of 30 May, the full responsibility for halting violence and giving the peace process a new start rests with the parties.

The Royal Norwegian Government regrets that it was not possible to hold the foreseen and much needed meeting between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to assess the difficult situation in Sri Lanka and to address the safety and security of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM).

After having accepted the Norwegian invitation, and after having arrived in Norway, the LTTE raised objections to the previously communicated intentions and modalities for the meeting. This was the reason for the meeting not being held.

By this a critical opportunity has been lost for the peoples of Sri Lanka who so desperately need their leaders on both sides to renew their obligation to uphold the CFA and other CFA-related commitments and to improve security.

The Royal Norwegian Government has been informed that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is not ready to accept SLMM monitors originating from states which separately or by membership in international organisations have included the LTTE on lists for the application of specific measures to combat terrorism. At present, 37 out of 57 monitors originate from these countries.

By not being able to address this urgent issue in the presence of both parties, the Royal Norwegian Government and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission have been seriously

hampered in their efforts to find a future solution for the SLMM and thereby encourage respect for the CFA and its effective monitoring.

The Royal Norwegian Government is profoundly concerned with the gravity of the situation on the ground, the objection by the LTTE to collaborate with the SLMM with its present composition, the lack of dialogue between the parties, and the doubts voiced by many about the continued full commitment of the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement.

On this background the Royal Norwegian Government have deemed it necessary to take the unprecedented step of requesting both parties, through letters to President Mahinda Rajapakse and the LTTE leader Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran, to provide responses in writing to five critical questions.

1. Will the parties stand committed to the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) of 22 February 2002?
2. Do the parties want the continued existence and operation of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission as a mission coordinated, facilitated and led by the Royal Norwegian Government with diplomatic immunity to ensure its impartial operation?
3. Are the parties able to provide full security guarantees for all monitors, employees and physical assets of the SLMM in all situations, in accordance with CFA Article 3.9?
4. Will the parties accept amendments to CFA Article 3.5 in order to enable the continued functioning of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission at its current operational levels and with the necessary security guarantees?
5. In the event that amendments to Article 3.5 are made, will the parties provide full security guarantees for current SLMM personnel and assets during a six-month transition phase until an amended solution has been identified, decided and fully implemented?

The responses by the parties to these questions will determine which steps will next have to be taken by the Royal Norwegian Government and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, in close partnership with other actors in the international community.

### Nothing to discuss with Govt

In refusing to have face-to-face talks with the Government delegation, the LTTE insisted that they had nothing to discuss with the Government as the talks were to be focused on the safety of the international truce monitors. "The discussion was to be with the Norwegian facilitators and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) as it was about safety of their monitors," Head of LTTE political wing S P Thamilselvan told journalists in Oslo.

On the composition of the international truce monitors, "We entered into the CFA with a clear understanding that the SLMM will consist of Nordic coun-

tries who have maintained a balanced view on Sri Lanka and our struggle. But with the EU ban the neutrality of these countries, apart from Norway and Iceland, has come into question," Thamilselvan said. He said the LTTE was firm in their decision that all monitors from EU countries should be removed and leaves the Island. The LTTE political leadership would grant Norway the time if requested to arrange a withdrawal of the EU monitors, Thamilselvan said.

"We have no objections to talking to the monitors from member countries of the European Union, as we have demonstrated even today. What we have problems with are the formal engage-

ment of the members from EU in adjudicating critical matters on the ground," Thamilselvan said.

Thamilselvan said the LTTE would consider allowing other countries into the SLMM if necessary. He said such nations would have to honour the position of the LTTE as an equal party in the ceasefire agreement.

"Our commitment to the peace process and the ceasefire agreement is full and continuing with the sincerity we have shown since the beginning," he said.

Thamilselvan categorically denied Minister Solheim's accusation that it was the LTTE who should take the responsibility for the talks collapsing. He said that

they are concerned about and surprised to hear Norway putting the blame on them, adding that the LTTE still had full confidence in Norway as a facilitator.

#### A frustrated Norway

A much frustrated Norway said it intended to continue to act as peace broker between Sri Lanka and Tamil Tigers despite the latest collapse of the talks at Oslo between the two sides which had thrown further Norwegian mediation into doubt. "It's not all negative, we stand ready to help both parties in any way to take the peace process forward," said Norway's Special Envoy for the peace process, Jon Hanssen-Bauer. The initiative for progress lay however with the parties themselves, he stressed. "It is up to the two sides to come forward with their own initiatives and ideas," he said. "Norway will not be taking any new initiatives," Hanssen-Bauer added.

The head of the Norwegian team Minister Erik Solheim speaking to journalists said, there are many other examples of the world where truce monitors have come from countries where one party is proscribed. "We hope the LTTE reconsider their position. Otherwise we will have to find other avenues such as reducing the monitoring to a minimum operation or reconsider the concept of the SLMM."

He said he had written two letters to President Mahinda Rajapakse and the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran asking them to reconfirm whether they are committed to abide by the CFA.

Visibly irritated by the failure of the parties to restart negotiations, Mr. Solheim said there was no room for any fresh Norwegian initiative, unless parties come up with a new initiative. "Both parties did not listen to Norwegian advice and have chosen their own paths and therefore we cannot take the blame."

Warning that no party would gain any major advantage from the war, he expressed hope that the collapse of the Oslo talks may not be the "end of the road".

Urging both parties to abide by the Geneva pact where they agreed to curb violence against each other, the Minister said both parties are responsible for the escalation of violence.

But the talks impasse was mainly due to one party, according to the Minister. "We are disappointed. This is negative. We point the finger on the LTTE on this issue," Soheim said.

Reacting to the complaint by the LTTE that the GoSL had sent a delega-

tion which was not headed by a Cabinet Minister who could make decisions, a visibly angry Solheim told journalists that the LTTE was provided with a complete list of the GoSL delegation prior to departure from Sri Lanka. The LTTE did not inform Erik Solheim then that they would refuse to meet the GoSL delegation face-to-face in Oslo.

In a press release issued following the collapse of the talks, the Norwegian Government said, "After having accepted the Norwegian invitation, and after having arrived in Norway, the LTTE raised objections to the previously communicated intentions and modalities for the meeting. This was the reason for the meeting not being held.

By this a critical opportunity has been lost for the peoples of Sri Lanka who so desperately need their leaders on both sides to renew their obligation to uphold the CFA and other CFA-related commitments and to improve security."

#### Five questions

Seeking a commitment from the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers, in letters to President Rajapakse and to the LTTE leader Velupillai Pirapaharan, Norway has asked for answers for five important questions.

The press release further said, that "the Royal Norwegian Government have deemed it necessary to take the unprecedented step of requesting both parties, through letters to President Mahinda Rajapakse and the LTTE leader Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran, to provide responses in writing to five critical questions:

1. Will the parties stand committed to the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) of 22 February 2002?

2. Do the parties want the continued existence and operation of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission as a mission coordinated, facilitated and led by the Royal Norwegian Government with diplomatic immunity to ensure its impartial operation?

3. Are the parties able to provide full security guarantees for all monitors, employees and physical assets of the SLMM in all situations, in accordance with CFA Article 3.9?

4. Will the parties accept amendments to CFA Article 3.5 in order to enable the continued functioning of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission at its current operational levels and with the necessary security guarantees?

5. In the event that amendments to Article 3.5 are made, will the parties provide full security guarantees for current SLMM personnel and assets during a six-month transition phase until an amended solution has been identified, decided and fully implemented?

The responses by the parties to these questions will determine which steps will next have to be taken by the Royal Norwegian Government and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, in close partnership with other actors in the international community."

#### LTTE hardens position

In what is seen by many analysts as a hardening of its earlier position adopted during previous rounds of peace talks facilitated by the Norwegians, in a unilateral communiqué issued from Oslo on Friday (9) and released to the press on Saturday, the LTTE, "reaffirmed" its position that a solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka should be based on the "right to self-determination." It also appeared to question "the international community's insistence that the solution should be found within a united Sri Lanka".

The communiqué contained significant omissions from an earlier joint communiqué by the Government and the LTTE in December 2002 after the third round of negotiations between the two parties. In that earlier statement, it was "agreed to explore a solution founded on the principle of internal self-determination in areas of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples, based on a federal structure within a united Sri Lanka."

The departures from the 2002 document were the omission of the phrases "internal self-determination," and "federal structures" as the basis for a solution. Instead, the LTTE's June 9 communiqué merely said that it "reaffirms its policy of finding a solution to the Tamil national question based on the realisation of its right to self-determination."

The "de-facto state of Tamil Eelam," the release said, exercised "jurisdiction over 70 per cent of the Tamil homeland" and had "control over the seas appurtenant," and had its "own laws" and other structures such as a judiciary, police and administrative apparatus. Calling itself the "authentic representative" and the "sole interlocutor" of the "Tamil nation," the LTTE referred to the "misguided" attempt by international community to

differentiate the "Tamil Nation" from the LTTE, the statement said.

While most of the clauses in the LTTE's lengthy document blamed the Government for the current situation and reflected its recent thrust towards "parity" with the Sri Lankan state, it reflected the LTTE's disenchantment with international community's rejection of the separatist option. "The international community's insistence that the solution should be found within a united Sri Lanka coupled with the military threat against the LTTE will not only disrupt the power equilibrium but also remove the incentive for the Government to seek a negotiated settlement," the communiqué said.

The statement alleged that Sri Lanka had "achieved the status of being 25th in the index of failed states" lacking in ability and will to find a "just and equitable negotiated settlement" of the ethnic conflict in the island.

#### India backs SLMM

Worried over possible outbreak of war in Sri Lanka, India has thrown its weight behind the continuation of the SLMM's role as the body monitoring the island's shaky truce, saying its weakening would result in 'adverse consequences'.

At the same time, the external affairs ministry called for early resumption of stalled peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

Shortly after the LTTE refused to talk to the Sri Lankan delegation in Oslo or deal with three of the five members of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) for belonging to countries that have outlawed the group, New Delhi came out with a statement underlining the seriousness of the situation. "It remains our conviction that the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka must be resolved through peaceful dialogue and, in this context, any weakening of the role of the SLMM is likely to have adverse consequences," external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters in New Delhi.

A press release issued by the Government of India said, "The Government of India is deeply concerned over the failure of the proposed meeting between the Government of Sri Lanka and representatives of the LTTE, aimed at strengthening the role of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and ensuring the security of its members.

"India has supported the role of the monitoring mission and believes it has made a significant contribution to the

maintenance of the ceasefire and in preventing and limiting the violations of the ceasefire, which have, unfortunately, become more frequent in the recent past.

"It remains our conviction that the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka must be resolved through peaceful dialogue and, in this context, any weakening of the role of the SLMM is likely to have adverse consequences.

"The Government of India appreciates the willingness of the Government of Sri Lanka to engage in the talks in Oslo facilitated by Norway and express the hope that the dialogue process would be resumed at the earliest in order to avoid any further worsening of the situation."

#### Fears of war

Reports from northeast Sri Lanka indicate that the Tamil Tigers are preparing for war, beefing up bunkers and checkpoints telling people that the internationally-brokered peace process is at an end. The message that is going out to the people in small functions and gatherings is that the peace process will not achieve anything and that war is the only solution, according to residents.

Reportedly people coming from LTTE areas have seen sandbags being piled up and frontline positions being strengthened.

With reports that of Sri Lankan army is also engaged in a military build-up to meet any eventuality, fear and uncertainty appear to be gripped the island's northeast that a war was all set to break out. Residents are being quoted as saying that the fear is real and everyone thinks there is going to be fighting.

Tamil sources in Colombo complained of fuel shortages and rising sugar prices in the northern district of Jaffna, where moneyed families were beginning to hoard essential commodities.

Because of the ceasefire, there is a regular traffic of civilians - teachers, traders and government employees - between the government- and LTTE-held areas in Batticaloa district. Many also come from LTTE territory to Batticaloa town for medical treatment. However, if war were to breakout, these movements will become disrupted and people are going to suffer.

Already thousands of people have fled in fear of the incidents of violence that have escalated over the past two months. There have also been skirmishes between Tamils and Muslims particularly in the Muttur district in eastern Trincomalee, adding to the tensions. According to reports, the fear of war is more

evident in Trincomalee, which lies to the north of Batticaloa and from where thousands of Tamils have already started to flee to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

According to one source, about 5,000 families have been displaced from both government and LTTE controlled areas, the former due to violence for which the security forces are being blamed. Killings and counter-killings, blamed mainly on the LTTE, the Karuna group and security forces, have increased at an alarming pace in recent months in the east and north of Sri Lanka.

#### Warning of attacks

Amidst mounting violence stoking fears that the country is sliding back into civil war, a suspected Tamil Tiger front organisation recently vowed to intensify attacks against the security forces.

The Tamil Resurgence Force, which surfaced last December, said it would resume attacks on the security forces and against non-Tiger Tamil groups which the LTTE describe as 'Tamil paramilitaries'.

"All this while we reduced our activities and our attacks due to the GCE A-level examinations," the Tamil Resurgence Force said in a statement. "Now that the exams are coming to an end, we would be intensifying our attacks on the military and EPDP in a few days' time. Hence we request the public not to unnecessarily move around on the roads and to avoid any movements close to military installations."

Increasingly, the Tamil civilian population is being drawn into situations of violent confrontation with the military with the Tamil Tigers giving formal training and organizing auxiliary and civilian self-defense forces from among civilians.

"All these people, those who are attacking the security forces in Jaffna, have been trained by the Tigers," said military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samara-singhe. "If they have been given military training by the Tigers, they are under their organisation. They are terrorists."

In the army-held northern enclave of Jaffna, which is hemmed in by a heavily-guarded border with the LTTE controlled areas in the north, shootings and grenade attacks now occur almost daily and residents live in constant fear. What the latest threat by the Tamil Resurgence Force means is that there will be more attacks leading to retaliation by the military in which the people will get inevitably caught. □

# Co-chairs statement on sri lanka

**30 May 2006** – The Co-Chairs of the Sri Lanka peace process representing Japan, European Union, Norway and USA called upon the LTTE to re-enter the negotiating process and it must renounce terrorism and violence. It also must show that it was willing to make the political compromises needed for a political solution within a united Sri Lanka. At the same time they called upon the Government to show that it would address the legitimate grievances of the Tamil people and must immediately prevent groups based in its territory from carrying out violence and acts of terrorism.

*The following is the full statement issued by the Donor Co-Chairs – Japan, EU, United States and Norway – following their meeting in Tokyo on 30 May:*

Co-Chairs met today (30 May) in Tokyo at a time when Sri Lanka is on the brink of war. Japan convened this meeting, three years after the original Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka, to decide whether the Co-Chairs, namely the European Union, Japan, US and Norway, can usefully help further in addressing Sri Lanka's crisis when the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE do not seem to be able to prevent the sliding back into violence.

The Co-Chairs call on both parties to take immediate steps to reverse the deteriorating situation and put the country back on the road to peace.

The LTTE must re-enter the negotiating process. It must renounce terrorism and violence. It must show that it is willing to make the political compromises needed for a political solution within a united Sri Lanka. This solution should include democratic rights of all peoples of Sri

Lanka. The international community will respond favourably to such actions; failure to do so will lead to deeper isolation of the LTTE.

The Government must show that it will address the legitimate grievances of the Tamils. It must immediately prevent groups based in its territory from carrying out violence and acts of terrorism. It must protect the rights and security of Tamils throughout the country and ensure violators are prosecuted. It must show that it is ready to make the dramatic political changes to bring about a new system of governance, which will enhance the rights of all Sri Lankans, including the Muslims. The international community will support such steps; failure to take such steps will diminish international support.

The Co-Chairs recognize that both parties have responsibilities, which they have failed to deliver upon, including the commitments made at their meeting in Geneva in February 2006. The LTTE is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks. The Government has failed to prevent attacks of armed groups, including Karuna and violent elements of EPDP.

The violence that has resulted is no longer confined to the parties to the conflict but has spilled over to ruin or end the lives of innocent civilians. This has led to a breakdown of law and order and the terrorization of the affected population. Abuses of human rights have been assessed recently by the UN and others. The Co-Chairs call on all parties to respect human rights and pursue human rights' abuses. This situation is not sustainable and the country will continue its slide into greater conflict unless the two protagonists cease all violence and resolve their differences through peaceful negotiation.

While the situation gives cause for grave concern, the Co-Chairs

concluded that the ingredients for a peaceful settlement remain present. The majority in Sri Lanka still seek peace. All Co-Chairs renewed their commitment to do all possible to help Sri Lanka in a manner that promotes peace and to support the current Norwegian-facilitated peace effort. Other countries and organizations share this view and wish to support the Co-Chairs' effort. To this end, the Co-Chairs will explore interest for allocating tasks to other groups of countries to improve the efficiency of work within the areas defined by the participants in the Tokyo Conference three years ago.

The Tamil and Muslim peoples of Sri Lanka have justified and substantial grievances that have not yet been adequately addressed. The Co-Chairs encourage the Government of the Sri Lanka to further develop concrete policies for addressing the grievances of minorities and for building mutual confidence between different communities. The Co-Chairs and the international community will support the Government's efforts towards implementing such policies.

However, three years of work since the original Tokyo Conference shows the international community can only support but cannot deliver peace. Peace can only be delivered by Sri Lankans themselves. The Co-Chairs' role can be meaningful only where those parties want to help themselves in bringing peace with commitment and honesty.

Both parties have agreed to the basic principles of any future peace during the successful period of negotiation in 2002-2003. The parties should recommit to these principles set down in the Ceasefire Agreement, the decisions from the six rounds of talks, and the meeting in Geneva in February 2006. In this context, the Co-Chairs will support any solution agreed by the parties that safeguards the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, assures protection and fulfils the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people and indeed of the Muslim people, guarantees democracy and human rights, and is acceptable to all com-



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munities.

Norway has prepared a number of initiatives for the parties to return to talks, which will be issued shortly. The Co-Chairs endorsed these initiatives.

The solutions to the problem cannot be brought through conflict – the history of Sri Lanka shows that war is not winnable for either side and simply causes immense suffering to the citizens. Finding solutions requires political commitment, imagination and spirit of compromise and the responsibility for this lies solely with the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

The Co-Chairs reiterate their support for the important role of Norway as facilitator to the peace process and the ceasefire monitoring activities of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in an increasingly difficult situation. At the same time, it is necessary to examine how to strengthen the role of SLMM.

The Co-chairs note that over \$ 3,400 million has been provided by donors based on Tokyo pledges and tsunami funds, and more than 20% of that assistance has been allocated to the North and East including LTTE controlled area. Such assistance has contributed to improving the livelihood of people in Sri Lanka. As long as the commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement by both parties is proven by way of their actions, the international community will continue its assistance in addition to humanitarian aid. As improvement of health, education and development is important as confidence-building measures, the Co-Chairs could also provide funding to support the efforts to meet these critical needs.

The Co-Chairs reaffirm that a continuous and positive involvement of the UN, Red Cross, and civil society, including the NGOs, in the peace process is vital.

However, there has been increas-

ing criticism of and even open attacks against these actors lately. The Co-Chairs condemn absolutely these attacks. The Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE should ensure their protection so their positive work for Sri Lanka can continue. The Co-Chairs will follow up closely the findings of the agencies involved in monitoring human rights, such as the UN and SLMM.

Three years ago at the original Tokyo Conference, the international community was requested to support the peace process. The key elements to this process were the facilitation by Norway, the monitoring role of the SLMM, the Co-Chairs and substantial aid flows from a multitude of donors. The international community remains committed to its supporting role agreed three years ago but it turns to the government and LTTE to deliver on their side of the bargain if war is to be avoided. □

## EU Declaration on listing LTTE as a terrorist organisation

**Brussels, 31 May 2006: Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union concerning listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation:**

1. The Council of the European Union (EU) decided on 29 May 2006 to include the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) on the EU list for the application of specific measures to combat terrorism. This list contains the names of persons, groups and entities against whom, for reasons of their involvement in terrorist acts, specific restrictive measures have to be taken, including:

- the freezing of funds and other financial assets or economic resources of the persons and entities specified,
- a ban on the provision of funds, financial assets and economic resources, and a ban on the provision of financial or other related services, directly or indirectly, for the benefit of these persons, groups and entities,
- police and judicial cooperation between EU Member States.

2. The decision of the EU to list the LTTE should come as a surprise to nobody. Several warnings have already been provided to the LTTE, which the LTTE has systematically ignored. In its statement of 27 September 2005 (12669/1/05) the EU stated that "it was actively considering the formal listing of LTTE as a terrorist organisation". The EU then called upon all parties to show commitment and responsibility towards the peace process and to refrain from actions that could endanger a peaceful resolution and political settlement of the conflict. Unfortunately, this appeal has gone unheeded. The decision of

the EU to list the LTTE is based on the actions of that organisation. The EU still sees a need for the LTTE to amend its violent course and return to peace talks, and will maintain its dialogue with the LTTE where such contacts, in the pursuit of the peace process, may help to bring about a return to negotiations and an end to violence. Listing the LTTE will not diminish the EU's determination to play its role as one of the Tokyo co-chairs [1]. The EU stresses that its decision is directed at the LTTE, and not at the Tamil people.

3. At the same time, the EU calls upon the Sri Lankan authorities to curb violence in Government controlled areas. In this regard, the EU stands by all of the findings in the reports of the SLMM (Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission). The EU urges the Government of Sri Lanka to act effectively on the commitment of President Rajapakse to put a stop to the culture of impunity and to clamp down on all acts of violence in areas controlled by the Government. The EU further urges the Government to ensure law and order for all citizens of Sri Lanka, and to investigate and prosecute all cases of violence that have so far not resulted in arrests or convictions.

4. The upsurge in violence is not caused by the LTTE alone. The EU strongly urges the Sri Lankan authorities to curb violence in Government controlled areas. The EU notes with concern the growing number of reports of extrajudicial killings. The EU views the activities of the Karuna Group in the gravest possible light. These are clearly contributing to increased instability in Sri Lanka, and

further endanger the peace process. The EU intends to keep the activities of the Karuna Group under close review, with a view to considering possible further steps.

5. The EU will keep the situation in Sri Lanka under active review, taking account of the activities of all parties to the conflict. It will remain ready to adopt further measures as and when they may be warranted by changing circumstances.

6. The European Union firmly believes that only a peacefully negotiated settlement can ensure a lasting solution acceptable to all. In this connection, the EU recalls the agreement reached in Oslo by all the parties involved to explore a specific institutional solution for Sri Lanka. It is the responsibility of all those concerned to act in the interests of all the people of Sri Lanka. The EU remains fully committed to the peace process in Sri Lanka. The EU sincerely urges all parties to put an end to violence and to return to the negotiation table, so as to relieve the Sri Lankan people from the ordeal of twenty years of persistent conflict.

7. The EU remains firmly committed to assisting the Norwegian facilitator in his work and to helping the two parties to the Ceasefire Agreement in Sri Lanka to resolve their conflicts and find a long term peaceful settlement for Sri Lanka. This, however, requires real commitment to the peace process from both the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. The EU clearly expects all parties to respect the role and physical safety of the SLMM monitors.

*[1] The Tokyo co-chairs are Japan, Norway, the United States and the European Union. They are so-called because of their role in co-chairing the conference on "Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka", held in Tokyo on 9-10 June 2003.*

## 'Inevitable Outcome' of EU ban of LTTE

June 3 - The European Union's decision to proscribe the Liberation Tigers "sends an unambiguous message to all Sri Lankans that, when all is said and done, President Mahinda Rajapakse is being backed by the international community against the LTTE," the Tamil Guardian, a newspaper that normally reflects the LTTE viewpoint, said in its editorial this week. Amid a slide to war, the EU move has "left the Tamils isolated and confronting the Sri Lankan state" and this will thus "radically transform the long-term strategies of both protagonists," the paper said in its editorial titled 'Inevitable Outcome'.

The editorial further said, "The [European Union's decision to proscribe the LTTE] move will have far reaching consequences for the peace process and for Sri Lanka's future. The most obvious impact has been stated repeatedly ad nauseum over the past few months: an EU ban on the LTTE will embolden the Sinhala nationalists in the south and encourage Colombo to confidently take a militarist approach to the ethnic question. But this appeal, repeated this week by thousands of Tamils who demonstrated in several European cities, has fallen on deaf ears. The EU rationale instead is that coercive steps by the international community are needed to deter the LTTE from returning to a new war and that, above all else, is the priority. There is simply no consideration of Colombo's role in the steady escalation towards war.

"But this is not only the only reason why the EU's action coming at this particular juncture can be expected to radically transform the long-term strategies of both protagonists. The EU move comes as thousands of Tamils are fleeing government-controlled areas and seeking refuge in LTTE-controlled ones or in neighbouring India. There have been unabashed demonstrations in the past few months, not just days, of the racist cruelty that underlines Sri Lanka's US-trained military's approach to the Tamils. Norway's veteran peacemaker, Erik Solheim, pointed out last week that 'people all over the north and east are living with fear.' The question, therefore, is: how are they to be provided with security? Coming precisely when the Tamils are again facing state-sponsored violence - by the armed forces, paramilitaries and racist mobs, the EU's move has thoroughly discredited internationally-backed 'peace and reconciliation' efforts as nothing but an strategy to contain and crush the LTTE. This in itself is not a surprise - many Tamils have long viewed international involvement in making peace in Sri Lanka with skepticism and some have openly denounced it as a trap. As an emboldened Sri Lanka continues its present course of action, these voices will grow in number and vehemence.

"Despite Tamil reservations about international bias towards the Sri Lankan state the LTTE has explored the peace process for ways to advance the Tamil liberation struggle without recourse to war. Contrary to the central charge against it today, it has stuck with the peace process. This is despite a failure to get greater recognition - by way of direct engagement - from the international community and despite the rapid disintegration of almost all agreements reached through the talks. Even when the conditionality imposed by donors in Tokyo

three years ago frayed and was eventually dumped, particularly after the tsunami, the LTTE has remained engaged. It has also done so despite vitriolic and unabashedly one-sided condemnation by key states underwriting the peace process.

"The EU's move is thus the most severe intervention in the Norwegian initiative to date. It has devalued the peace process and left the Tamils isolated and confronting the Sri Lanka's state, which has by stealth resumed a new round of aggression.

# NEWS REVIEW

Amidst the state's relentless violence, the pre-truce economic embargo has also been gradually reimposed: a total blockade on cement and fuel into LTTE areas came in last week. In short, the war is already upon the Tamils.

"The EU ban sends an unambiguous message to all Sri Lankans that, when all is said and done, President Rajapakse is being backed by the international community against the LTTE. The logic that casts the LTTE, rather than the Sri Lankan state, as the primary aggressor is based partly on a statist disdain for armed non-state actors, partly on a failure to recall the full sequence of events that led Sri Lanka out of war and into peace - and back towards war - and, most importantly, a profound lack of understanding of the dynamics that have denied Sri Lanka a single year since independence free of ethnic tension. Mr. Solheim has given voice to international frustration with both sides. But it is the state which is stoking the shadow war. And it is the state which is receiving international support. That is why there will, sooner or later, be a return to open war."

## Claymore blast in Colombo

June 6 - Sri Lankan military officials reported a Claymore landmine explosion in the capital Colombo, at Mahapage, 50 meters from the Welisara Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) camp in Ragama, on Colombo-Negombo Road, on Tuesday (6) morning around 4:45 am. Mahapage is located 11.2 km northeast of Colombo.

A civilian Ceylon Transport Board bus which left the Welisara Depot near the Navy camp was heading for the Mahabage junction en-route to the Bandaranaike International Airport when it was caught up in the blast. There were no passengers in the bus since it was leaving the depot. The bus was completely damaged by the explosion. The bus driver and conductor who were injured when the mine hit the bus were taken to the Ragama hospital.

This is the first claymore landmine attack in Colombo since the ceasefire agreement came into effect in February 2002.

Navy Spokesman Lt. Commander D.K.P. Dassanayake said the two claymore mines were strapped together to cause maximum damage. The target was clearly the Navy shuttle bus carrying personnel to Ratmalana to take them to operational areas, he said.

"It is certainly the work of the LTTE which is continuing with its barbarism," Dassanayake said. According to him, the claymore mine was activated by a remote control device and this can only be done by the LTTE.

OIC Welisara Police IP Wasantha Kumrapeli said the Navy bus which usually transport between 15 to 20 Navy personnel, had 40 sailors bound for the North and East on the day. Their main target was the particular bus. It appears that they triggered the mine prematurely," Dassanayake said.

Military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said by targeting a civilian passenger bus within 200 metres of the Welisara navy camp, the LTTE might have wanted to show it could explode a bomb even in the vicinity of a military camp. He said the Tigers had carried out the attack in a built up area risking the lives of civilians while a bus, a Montessori school and another vehicle were badly damaged in the explosion.

## SLMM work not affected by EU Ban

The work, mandate and functions of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) have not been affected by the EU ban on the LTTE since monitors from Nordic countries – Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland – are acting in their individual capacity and not as government representatives and function in their individual capacity, according to SLMM Spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir.

Speaking to the media, Helen Olafsdottir said that in Oslo talks scheduled to for June 8 and 9 there would also be discussions about the role of SLMM and issues such as the security of monitors.

Ms. Olafsdottir said that the SLMM had not discussed deeply with the LTTE on matters pertaining to the EU ban. However the SLMM would only focus on the ground work and would stay away from the high political implications of the EU ban.

Referring to the visit to the Sea Tiger base by Maj. Gen. Henricson in Mullaitivu, the SLMM Spokesperson said that the Sea Tigers are being recognized by the Ceasefire Agreement as a component of the military balance. "According to the ruling by the Head of Mission at that time (Maj. Gen. Trygve Tellefsen in 2003) the LTTE still cannot operate in the sea. As such the Sea Tigers still cannot operate at sea nor have any right to go to sea." Mrs. Olafsdottir said.

She added that during the duty mission discussions were held with LTTE Police "Chief" Nadesan, Sea Tiger Chief Soosai, Political Wing Leader Thamilselvan and Peace Secretariat Head Pulithevan. The LTTE delegation had stated to the SLMM Chief that they were keen to go to Norway.

Mrs. Olafsdottir said that the Head of Mission had tabled a request to contributing countries Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland to increase the number of monitors by 15 from the present 60 and it is up to the contributing nations to take this up with their relevant ministries and obtain their approval.

She said that although SLMM has suspended sea monitoring it still did liaised with the Eastern and Northern Naval Command and is having meeting with fishermen's societies. "The naval monitors too at the moment are conducting land monitoring and although they are not monitoring naval vessels, they are still working on the naval issues. The only thing they have stopped doing is to patrol with navy and resumption of sea patrolling is still undecided." Mrs. Olafsdottir said.

Head of Mission Maj. Gen. Ulf Henricson confirmed that the role of SLMM in the wake of the EU ban would also be a topic at the Oslo meeting on 8 and 9 June. Mr. Henricson said that his four day duty mission to the North was very informative and that talks with the LTTE were constructive and friendly. The Head of Mission added that the LTTE was waiting for the decision regarding the role of SLMM after Oslo talks.

## UK standing together to fight terrorism

June 7 - British High Commissioner Dominic Chilcott reiterating Britain's support in combatting terrorism, said Britain could stand shoulder to shoulder with Sri Lankan forces in the fight against terrorism, not least because Britain and Sri Lanka share a democratic tradition, and because terrorism is a rejection of the democratic method.

British envoy Dominic Chilcott was speaking at a reception marking the visit of the first Sea Lord and Commander of the Royal Navy, Admiral Sir Jonathan Band. A large number of senior officers of the Sri Lankan armed forces attended the event, on Saturday. While remembering the strong past and current relationship between the Royal Navy and the Sri Lankan Navy. He thanked the Sri Lankan Navy for the tremendous welcome they had given Admiral Band during his stay, including his visit to Trincomalee Naval base.

He also emphasised that because the fight against terrorism is also the fight to maintain our democratic way of life it can only be fought effectively and convincingly if democrats remain true to those democratic standards. And over the medium term, Britain could only maintain its support for countries dealing with the scourge of terrorism if they live up to those standards.

### Excerpts of the speech:

Black clouds are looming on the horizon; the people of Sri Lanka could be about to face a violent storm. Let us hope that they are not sleep walking into disaster.

There has been too much violence and bloodshed in the short history of independent Sri Lanka. The country has hugely benefited from the last four years of so of relative peace. Tourism has flourished, manufacturing and exports, on the back of a rise in foreign investment, have increased. Standards of living have risen. Economic growth has averaged over 5% a year.

A return to full-fledged war fighting would put all this progress in jeopardy. The British government applauds the determination of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to pursue an end to the present problems through negotiation.

As a good friend of Sri Lanka, the British government will do whatever lies within its power to help create the conditions for a lasting peaceful settlement. Ultimately, we can't make peace for Sri Lanka; only the people of this island can do that. But we can help by influencing the international context in which peace is sought.

This week, the European Union listed the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, a step that will enable European governments to prevent funds going from Europe to the LTTE. In Britain's case, EU listing, which we have strongly advocated, will not change our own position, funding the LTTE has been outlawed in the UK since we proscribed them in March 2001.

Britain can stand shoulder to shoulder with Sri Lanka's forces in the fight against terrorism, not least because Britain and Sri Lanka share a democratic tradition. Terrorism is a rejection of the democratic method. By trying to bring about change through intimidation, fear and violence, rather than through argument, persuasion and the ballot box, terrorism is the antithesis of democracy.

The fight against terrorism is therefore also the fight to maintain our democratic way of life. But that fight can only be fought effectively and convincingly if we, the democrats remain true to those democratic standards. And over the medium

term, Britain can only maintain its support for countries dealing with the scourge of terrorism provided they live up to those standards.

The rule of law is the bedrock of any democratic society, no one is above the law. All of us are subject to it equally. In the Navy House at Trincomalee, there is brass plaque above the mantelpiece in the main dining room, put there by Admiral Goonasekara, when he was commander of the Navy. It is a quotation from John Paul Jones, which must have appealed to the Admiral. Let me finish by reciting it.

It is by no means enough that an officer of the Navy should be a capable mariner. He must be that of course. But also a great deal more. He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manner, punctilious courtesy and the nicest sense of personal honour.

## India renews ban on LTTE

May 28 - The Government of India has renewed its ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam saying that the organisation's objective for a separate homeland for all Tamils continues to threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

In a gazette notification dated 14 May, 2006, the Government of India observes that the LTTE is an association actually based in Sri Lanka, but having sympathisers, supporters and agents on Indian soil. It says that the Tamil Eelam concept still remains a goal among pro-LTTE groups in Tamil Nadu and that the free functioning of the Tigers as a lawful association in India would be "highly detrimental" to the sovereignty and integrity of India.

The Indian Government reveals in the gazette that "enquiries on the activities of the LTTE cadres, dropouts, sympathisers who have been traced out recently in the State of Tamil Nadu would suggest that the cadres sent to Tamil Nadu would ultimately be utilised by the LTTE for unlawful activities."

The gazette states, too, that the activities of pro-LTTE organisations and individuals have come to notice in India, despite the ban in force, and that attempts have been made by these forces to extend their support to the LTTE. Meanwhile, the Central Government has information that "the LTTE leaders have been cynical of India's policy on their organisation and reaction of the State machinery in curbing their activities".

The gazette reads: "And whereas the LTTE's objective for a separate homeland (Tamil Eelam) for all Tamils threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, and amounts to cession and secession of a part of the territory of India from the Union and thus falls within the ambit of an unlawful activity;

"And whereas the turbulence in Sri Lanka is being exploited by pro-LTTE forces to draw up support for the LTTE and its cause by taking out processions, demonstrations, etc., in spite of the ban causing disquiet and threat to the security of the State of Tamil Nadu;

"And whereas most of the criminal cases involving the LTTE and pro-LTTE groups like Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT), Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA), and Tamiliar Pasari, have ended in conviction but the Tamil Eelam concept still remains as a goal among the pro-LTTE groups in Tamil Nadu.

"The forces are still at work to further its cause thereby contributing to the vulnerable milieu in which the LTTE's free functioning in India as a lawful association, if allowed, would be highly detrimental to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.

"And whereas the LTTE continues to be an extremely potent, most lethal and well organised terrorist force in Sri Lanka and has strong connections in Tamil Nadu and certain pockets of southern India. The LTTE continues to use the State of Tamil Nadu as the base for carrying out smuggling of essential items like petrol and diesel, besides drugs to Sri Lanka.

"And whereas the LTTE will continue to remain a strong terrorist movement and stimulate the secessionist sentiment to enhance the support base of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu as long as Sri Lanka continues to remain in a state of ethnic strife torn by the demand for Tamil Eelam which finds a strong echo in Tamil Nadu due to the linguistic, cultural, ethnic and historical affinity between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka.

"And whereas for the reasons aforesaid, the Central Government is of the opinion that the LTTE is an unlawful association and there is a continuing strong need to control all such separatist activities by all possible means."

"And whereas the Central Government is of the opinion that the aforesaid activities of the LTTE continue to pose a threat to, and are detrimental to, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India as also public order and, therefore, should be declared as an unlawful association.

"And whereas the Central Government is further of the opinion that because

(i) of its continued violent and disruptive activities prejudicial to the integrity and sovereignty of India;

(ii) it continues to adopt a strong anti-India posture and also continues to pose a grave threat to the security of Indian nationals, it is necessary to declare the LTTE as 'an Unlawful association' with immediate effect.

## Stronger safeguards for civilians urged

June 5 - Mr. S C Chandrasaran, on behalf of the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR) has made representations to Norway by means of letter addressed to its Prime Minister, Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, emphasising the importance of the role of the SLMM and urging stronger safeguards for civilians displaced due to escalating violence in the North-east Sri Lanka. In his letter dated 5 June to the Norwegian PM, Mr Chandrasaran states:

"We are writing to you in relation to the forthcoming meeting between the Government of Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (GOSL) and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Oslo on 8th and 9th June 2006.

OfERR is an organisation of Ceylon refugees providing relief and rehabilitation for over 65,000 Sri Lanka Tamil refugees in south India since 1984 and since 2004 for returning refugees and displaced people in Sri Lanka. We have consistently lobbied for the safe return of Tamil refugees and the safety and security of civilians and displaced persons in Ceylon since the Sri Lankan Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) of February 2002.

May we congratulate you on Norway's role in the Co Chairs statement of 30 May 2006. We welcome the unequivocal message it sends on the need for real commitment from both parties to a peaceful democratic solution. The renewed pledges of support of a broader section of the international community to implement the aims of the Tokyo conference are especially welcome.

We are similarly encouraged to learn from the Co Chair

statement that Norway has prepared a number of initiatives for both parties to return to talks and we look forward to these being fruitful. OfERR believes that it is of the utmost importance that both parties move forward to discussions of the substantive issues.

The threat of return to full-scale hostilities is already all too evident, particularly in the use of proxy and paramilitary forces by both sides. As the Co-Chair statement makes clear, violence is not restricted to the parties to the conflict but increasingly spills over to ruin or end the lives of innocent civilians, often as a deliberate target.

The breakdown in law and order has led to widespread terror in the civilian population and to new flows of displaced people seeking refuge in India and elsewhere. Over 2,000 breaches of the ceasefire, 90% of which directly targeted civilians have taken place since the Geneva round of peace talks in February 2006.

The focus in the Oslo meeting on the role and the security of SLMM is critical. OfERR is amongst those who believe that the role of SLMM must be widened to incidents involving either party to the ceasefire, as well as proxy or paramilitary forces. The close cooperation of GOSL and LTTE authorities with SLMM is essential if violators are to be prosecuted and civilians protected.

The important role that SLMM played in the recent incident at Allaipiddy where eight civilians were murdered including two children on 13 May 2006 is a timely reminder of how SLMM's presence at the scene of alleged atrocities can compel local authorities to launch investigative activities and the due

process of law.

OfERR believes that the SLMM has an important augmented role to play as a human rights monitoring body. A wide variety of observers, such as the UN Special Representative on Extrajudicial Killings, Prof. Phillip Alston, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Prof Louise Arbour as well as international and Sri Lankan NGOs now see this role as increasingly critical in protecting civilians and preventing further atrocity. We believe that the present CFA allows sufficient scope for SLMM's mandate to be strengthened in this way

Breaches of the CFA bring the threat of retaliation by any party including proxy forces on surrounding civilians causing widespread displacement and terror amongst local people. Over 500 frightened people fled villages near Vankalai, Mannar District on 1 June 2006 after a Claymore landmine explosion killed a GOSL soldier and injured two at Naruvilikulam. A father and his 12 year-old daughter were seriously injured in retaliatory firing by GOSL forces.

People are taking shelter in local churches around Vankalai and SLMM is in attendance. But there is no formal protection mechanism that affected populations can avail themselves of, to ensure their longer-term safety. As a result, some 10,000 frightened people have fled Trincomalee District after incidents in April and May. Many have gone to Mannar to seek refuge across the Palk Strait in India where over 2,513 people have already arrived.

In another incident, a group describing itself as Tamil Eela Thayaham Meetpu Padai (Tamil Eelam Motherland Retrieval Force) circulated handbills on 29 May demanding that thou-

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sands' of Muslims who live in Muttur south of Trincomalee to leave the area within 72 hours after unsubstantiated claims that armed Muslim youth are acting as paramilitaries.

OfERR believes that some internal protection mechanism along the lines of the former UN Open Relief Centre in Madhu is now essential to provide local people with safety and security and a viable alternative to the increasingly hazardous choice of risking the monsoon seas of the Indian Ocean.

Such "peace zones" guaranteed by the international community, where military actors are forbidden, could act as valuable safety valve by deescalating local tensions which have created such havoc in areas like Trincomalee. We urge you to consider how SLMM could stimulate a practical protection facility for displaced populations through discussions with the UN, international NGOs and organisations like OfERR.

As the Co-Chairs statement of 30 May makes clear, in both human rights monitoring and protecting frightened civilians, practical interventions as well as promoting international standards will be critical if the current situation is to improve appreciably. We urge you carry forward these proposals to your joint deliberations on 8th and 9th June."

### The Allaipiddy atrocity

May 28 - Sixty two-year-old Paulavina Norbert and her bed-ridden husband are some of the few people who have decided to stay back in this village, once home to more than 1,200 people.

She is unable to forget the deadly sound of gunshots and the frightened screams of the victims that were heard from their neighbourhood and two other areas closeby on the night of May 13, when thirteen men, women and children were gunned down by a group of unidentified men.

Many of their neighbours have moved out of the village, either to Jaffna or to the LTTE controlled Wannai for safety.

"We cannot leave this house. How can I can take my husband who is ill and live in a refugee camp or a welfare centre," a worried Ms. Norbert asks.

Less than 25 people now live in this village, which is part of the Kayts Island, situated close to the Jaffna mainland and linked by a causeway.

The caretaker of St. Philip Neri's Church, K. Pillendran, 72, is another villager who has decided to stay behind as he feels there is no one to take care of the church.

On the night of May 13, it was this church which provided shelter to the traumatized men, women and children who escaped the carnage of that night. The Parish Priest Rev. Fr. A. Aamalaraj was the first to leave the safety of his church almost immediately after the shooting, to see to the people who had come under attack only to find most of them already dead. He found three people with gunshot injuries lying in a critical state and rushed them to the Jaffna General Hospital. He drove them himself in his own car, but unfortunately one of them succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

Frantic telephone calls soon followed. One of them was to the Jaffna District Judge Srinidhi Nandasekaram who in turn alerted the Kayts Magistrate Jeyaram Trotsky. Acting promptly, Mr. Trotsky urged the Kayts police to provide him with security to visit the scene of the massacre. But the request was turned down on the grounds that they did not have sufficient men. "I requested the police to make arrangements for me to visit the scene of the savage attack on the morning of the following day. But the police informed me that they were un-

able to accompany me due to a shortage of police personnel," Mr. Trotsky said.

"As the police had not acted even three hours later, I decided to go to the police station. I was taken there in an ambulance. I spent another hour waiting for the additional men that the police were expecting. Since they did not arrive I informed them that I would go to the scene of the massacre by myself," he added.

Meanwhile, the Kayts Hospital had been alerted and an ambulance with one employee was dispatched to the scene, which was one of bullet riddled bodies of men, women and children including that of an infant.

Eventually at 11 a.m. the police accompanied the Magistrate to the Allaipiddy junction, but at the junction the Navy informed him the road leading to the scene of the massacre had not been cleared and therefore they were unable to guarantee the Magistrate's safety. "I was able to set out only after I kept telling the police that I would proceed on my own and they eventually agreed to provide me with 15 men to visit the scene of the tragedy," the magistrate said.

The Magistrate first visited Allaipiddy where nine were killed. He later proceeded to Puliyanakkodal where three were killed and Velanai where one man was shot dead.

At the Magisterial inquiry two witnesses had said they might be able to identify the attackers. An identification parade was ordered by the Magistrate two weeks ago, but this has not yet been held.

A group of Scandinavian monitors accompanied by NGO workers later visited the area to assess the situation. ASP Mahesh Perera and his team of detectives were assigned by the government to carry out the investigation and the Magistrate directed them to submit a detailed report of their findings to court by June 5.

More than 600 villagers who fled after this massacre are now being sheltered in the Church of Our Lady of Refuge and St. Nicholas - two of the churches in the mainland.

"The people don't know where to go or what to do. Though some are anxious to get back to their village as most of them are fishermen, they want more security if they are to return," the assistant parish priest of the church of Our Lady of Refuge Rev. Fr. P. Tayaparan said.

"Though the government is providing food rations, we do not have the basic facilities such as sanitation and drinking water for the welfare of the refugees and we are finding it difficult to continue keeping them in the church premises," he said.

About 600 villagers had also fled to the LTTE-controlled area in the Wannai with others also being asked to do so for their own safety and security. The government is reportedly trying to get the people to return to these deserted villages by moving Army personnel into the area, for the first time, to provide additional security.

Meanwhile the refugees now housed in the two churches were still undecided as to whether to head towards the Wannai or return to their homes in Allaipiddy. (Courtesy, Sunday Times, 28 May 2006)

### Soldiers accused of killing family of four

Suspected Sri Lanka Army soldiers armed with bayonets and knives allegedly entered the house of a family of four and

slaughtered 35-year-old father, 27-year-old mother, 9-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son on Thursday (8) midnight in Vankalai, 12 km southeast of Mannar.

Reportedly, eyewitnesses in the area, Thomaspuri Ward No 10 in Vankalai, have told Mannar Additional Magistrate that they could identify the soldiers involved in the massacre. Villagers alleged the mother was raped before the massacre. Tension prevails in Vankalai. Religious leaders including the Bishop of Mannar, parliamentarians and civil society members in Mannar have rushed to site. Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission officials have visited the massacre site. The victims killed were: Mary Medaline (Chitra), 27, the mother, Moorthy Martin, 35, the father, Ann Nilxon, 7, the son and Ann Luxica, 9, the daughter.

Martin was a carpenter by profession. It is alleged that soldiers had also used the carpenter tools to kill the victims. Bootprints and a military badge with star were found at the massacre site. The bodies were reportedly discovered by fellow residents of the area, around 5.30 a.m., on Friday (9) morning.

The family, once displaced as refugees in India, had returned during the Ceasefire and resettled in the village, the residents said. Mannar Additional Magistrate T.J. Prabakaran visited the massacre site and ordered the Police to carry out investigations into the massacre.

More than five thousand people took part in the funeral procession of the four victims on Saturday (10). The funeral Mass was held Saturday morning at St. Anne's Church at 9:00 am. by Vicar General A. Xavier Cruz and Mannar Bishop Rayappu Joseph, sources in Mannar said. Religious leaders, community leaders, Governmental, Non Governmental offi-

cial, Tamil National Alliance TELO, EPRLF (Suresh) members and Vanni district parliamentarian Sivasakthi Anandan attended the burial held at Vankalai burial grounds.

Local residents and eye witnesses reportedly told Mannar Additional Magistrate Mr. T. J. Prabakaran who went to the scene of the murders that they had seen three Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers in uniform around 10 a.m. on the day of the killings, Thursday 8th June 2006.

The Sri Lankan army has vehemently denied that any of their soldiers were involved in the killing of the victims. The soldiers stated that they were on a routine search operation to ascertain the names and identities of the residents of the household and their occupations, and the details of their period of residence at the current location. Rev. Fr. Rayappu Joseph, the Bishop of Mannar, the Vankalai SL Commanding officer and village representatives on Friday met at St. Ann's church; the SLA Commanding officer denied any involvement of the Sri Lankan military in the massacre.

After the killings, around four thousand restive villagers, angered by the massacre, gathered near the house. The riot police had been called to provide additional security in the area guarding against outbreak of violence by angered villagers.

It is alleged that Mary Madeline (Chitra), 27 years, the mother of the two children, was raped by soldiers before being stabbed in the chest. Her stab wounds were fatal causing death within minutes, medical sources said. The Medical Superintendent has sent the clothes, blood samples and other specimens taken from of the fatalities including swabs from the alleged rape victims to SL government forensic experts for examination. The Additional Magistrate Mr. Prabakaran has asked eye witnesses to register their statements with the police, legal sources said. The commanding officer of the SLA in Vankalai and the chief of the Vankalai police have been instructed by the Magistrate to attend a hearing set for 23rd June 2006. An identification parade has been scheduled and the coroner's inquest has also been fixed for the same day, legal sources said.

The bodies were returned to relatives 8 pm Friday after postmortem examinations. The bodies were held at the St Anne's church nursery school until the completion of the funeral Mass.

### 13 construction workers shot and hacked to death

May 30 - Attackers who entered the village of Rantharathenna in Omadiyamadu, around 10 km north of Welikanda in Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa border on Monday (29) night shot and hacked to death 13 Sinhalese construction workers settled in Omadiyamadu in connection with an irrigation project work. Army and police teams escorted by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) went to the site of the attack.

The scene of the attack indicated that some of the victims had been ordered to sit down in a line and shot at close range. Two workers who survived the attack had reached Welikanda the next morning and informed Police.

Welikanda Police said 2 persons were admitted to Polonnaruwa and Welikanda hospitals. Additional Sri Lanka Army soldiers were rushed to the village on Tuesday (30) morning. The attackers before fleeing the scene had also set fire to a number of residential huts and also the victims' belongings and the equipment including a tractor and motorcycle.

An eyewitness told police that 15 armed cadres of LTTE - some in striped uniforms and some in civilian dress tied the construction workers together and fired at them point blank range killing 12 instantaneously.

One of the two eyewitnesses, Priyadarshana Wijebandara reached Welikanda Police station early morning and described

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the gruesome massacre. He was immediately admitted to Welikanda hospital, but later transferred to Polonnaruwa hospital for surgery, OIC at Welikanda police Saman Perera said. He told the police that attackers spoke to them in Tamil and most of them wore LTTE striped uniforms.

The workers were engaged in constructing an irrigation canal at Ransaratenna in Omadianamadu in Welikanda. The construction of a canal and a tank at Ransaratenna was a part of Mahaweli Scheme and a subcontractor from the village hired workmen.

Subcontractor P. G. Abesuriya, popularly known as Mahatun Mudalali and his tractor driver Kumara, Dharmasiri, a mason and nine other labourers were killed. The workers were from nearby village Maithreegama. Two representatives from Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), Tagrie Ktala of Finland and Paul Erik Lauritsen of Denmark arrived at the site by midday.

They admitted that they were shocked by the gruesome scene. "This is brutal and senseless violence," Lauritsen of the SLMM said. However he added that he could not comment as to who was responsible for the ruthless murders as they had not yet made any queries. "We are going to interview the eye-witnesses and study all the information available before making a statement," he added.

The government and the military accused the Tamil Tigers of carrying out the massacre but the Tigers denied any involvement and accused the military of orchestrating the killing to discredit the LTTE.

Deputy Inspector General Nihal Karunaratne said that according to eyewitnesses and other reports, some 15 suspected LTTE cadres had stormed the worksite and abducted the workers when they were leaving in a tractor. He said the bodies of 12 victims were found by last and at least three of them had been shot in the head from close range. The DIG said the survivors had told the Hospital police that their hands were tied and they were ordered to sit on the ground. Later the gunmen had shot them in the head one by one.

Upali Rajakaruna (34) who mysteriously escaped unhurt in the attack said that suspected LTTE cadres thought he had died when the other person who was bound together with him was shot in the head.

"Around 5 pm we were taken to a place with two each bound by their hands. I fell on the ground as my colleague was shot and my body was splashed with blood that oozed from the victim who was on my body by then. The attackers thought I was also dead as I remained still and pretended to froth from my mouth. By night I loosened the knot with which my hands were bound and freed myself on my own and ran into the jungle. I walked about 7 km and arrived at a Tamil village called Ominiyamadu. They brought dinner to the jungle and helped me. Later the Nagastenna police post was informed and I joined the Welikanda police team which visited the scene of the crime. I am a resident of Koranegama in Galnewa. I came to work in the Tiger-controlled jungle for Rs. 400 a day, as I have to feed four children," he said.

## Massacre in the Park

May 29 - Seven tourists and a Wildlife Department tracker were killed in a landmine attack at the Wilpattu National Park early on Saturday (27) morning. The explosion had occurred whilst they were returning to the Park's Kokmotai Circuit Bungalow after visiting the Periyakottakombu tank, which is located 50 km away from the main entrance to the park.

The members of the group of tourists, including two females, were residents of Rosemead Place, Colombo 7. The names

of the seven persons who were killed in Saturday's blast were Chandi Aseerwatham, Anula Aseerwatham, Darrel Perera, Nihal de Silva, Nanda Abeyesuriya, Henrieta Abeyesuriya and Anura Dissanayake (Tracker).

Except the tracker, the seven persons including two women killed by the pressure mine blast hailed from the affluent section of Colombo society. One of the victims was Nihal de Silva who was the author of the book 'Road from Elephant Pass'. And another person named Chandi Aseerwatham was the brother of former Bank of Ceylon Chairman Rajan Aseerwatham. Rajan Aseerwatham was in the delegation that initiated talks with the LTTE soon after President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge came to power in 1994.

The security forces suspect that blast was that of a pressure mine set up by the LTTE.

The incident had occurred around 5.15 a.m., but the Nochchiyagama police said they were informed about it in the evening.

Military sources said that they suspect that the LTTE had laid the three landmines connected together on Friday (26) night and placed them where the blast had taken place purely to prevent the public crossing the area which the LTTE was using for their activities.

The tourist group had reached the Wilpattu National Park on Friday (26) evening. They booked the Kokmotai circuit bungalow in the park to spend the weekend. On Saturday morning the males visited the tank, located 15 km from the bungalow. The two ladies stayed back in the bungalow. The group had gone on the tour in two vehicles, a Prado jeep (WP C 4146) and a van (58-9783), the Wildlife Department's Wilpattu office sources said.

At the same time, another group of tourists, visiting the same area, had reported to the nearby police that they had seen the remains of the blasted Prado jeep and some human parts about 40 km inside the thick Wilpattu jungles, located between the Madawachchi and Anuradhapura western borders. They had told the police they did not want to get closer to the scene due to fear.

Security sources said that several police and Army officials had been sent to the park to investigate the incident.

Meanwhile, seven people, including the bungalow keeper, minor employees and two ladies from the group, who were at the bungalow, left the Park from the Wilachchiya side.

Sources also said the search team had spent almost nine hours to reach the spot to recover the bodies and that of the seven who were killed in the blast, one was a tracker and the other six were those who had come from Colombo to visit the sanctuary.

"From the bodies brought only four could be identified and others were in a mutilated state. The heads of two other bodies were also found at the site of the explosion," sources said. The Prado vehicle used by the tourists which got caught to the pressure mine was shattered to pieces and some of its parts and body parts of the victims were scattered and hanging on tree tops, military sources said. According to them, there had been three explosions at the time of the incident.

The Wilpattu National Park is located 30 km west of Anuradhapura and spans the border between the North Central and North Western provinces. The park with an acreage of 131,693 hectares, was upgraded to the status of National Park on February 25, 1938. The Wilpattu wild life sanctuary is famous for leopards and wild elephants and it remains the largest wild life park in the country, attracting both local as well as foreign wild life enthusiasts.

The Park was closed down for public in 1989 due to the

volatile security situation in the country at the time. After 16 years, it was reopened to visitors on March 16, 2003, much to the relief of many nature lovers who had missed out on the natural treasures of the Wilpattu National Park. The Kokmotai bungalow was reopened after renovation on May 2004.

## In the grip of terror

The following story under the caption 'Redlight on Rajan' appeared in "The Nation" (4.6.2006) by its correspondent Sulochana Ramiah Mohan:

He is a lad just reaching 17, having obtained an A for mathematics and few Bs and Cs in the O/L examination held last December. Rajan (name withheld for security reasons), joined the Karuna's faction in Batticaloa, all because he wanted to 'escape' from the clutches of the LTTE. The best thing is to be a 'soldier' he thought, and got himself 'trained' by Karuna's TMVP (Thamil Eela Viduthalai Puligal). But now, he is in pain lying in a bed at the National Hospital, Colombo, after being operated on his arms and chest.

He looked pale and drowsy. The letter TMVP etched on his breastbone confirmed that he was Karuna's man. He managed to turn around and look at me when I called him by his name. The police guard who revealed his name to me said that the boy was transferred from the Batticaloa Base Hospital to Colombo last Thursday (8).

Reason: Shot three times by four LTTE cadres while he was trying to escape from them.

Rajan, who hails from Maamangam, Batticaloa, is the only child and brought up with love and affection by the Ramajeyams. Being a little naughty like all boys of his age, he cycles around with friends to play in the nearby ground. He is also considered

to be very intelligent in his class and his father had plans to get him down to Colombo to continue his studies here.

It was in January this year, that Rajan's father, Ramajeyam, fell sick and underwent an operation. He was unable to continue his work at the Road Development Authority (RDA) where he was a supervisor. Rajan's mother and their relatives were busy attending the sick man. It was during this time that Rajan secretly joined the TMVP. Every time the father inquired his whereabouts, Rajan said he was working at a carpentry shop to pass his time.

"He lied to us, and now he is suffering", Ramajeyam said standing by the bed of his son. "I wonder how he will come out of this rut. His future is in danger," continues Ramajeyam. His only hope is to send Rajan to join his aunty in Switzerland soon.

What Rajan said, on the other hand was a story of being 'caught-between' the LTTE and Karuna's faction.

"One day in the month of January, I was on my way from the church when I was stopped by the LTTE who wanted me to join them. I was frightened. I was told that the LTTE doesn't care much for the 'soldiers' of the east and I will not be able to see my parents at all if I am based in Jaffna. I rejected their offer but I knew I was now 'well-noted' by the LTTE. Fearing that they might come after me again, I approached Karuna's soldiers who welcomed me and gave me training," he said.

Rajan wanted 'the training' mainly to safeguard himself if he were caught again. He wanted to learn the defence techniques. Rajan's tone changed... "Karuna is in Batticaloa and he will take care of all the people of the east. He doesn't kill innocent people. He is not biased like Prabhakaran."

Rajan, having had the 'training' for two months was paid Rs.12,000. "I was basically working at the 'office' after few hours of 'training.'" When asked what was his job in the office, he said, "browsing the internet and downloading e-mails." After completing two months of 'work', Rajan wanted to see his beloved parents to whom he was bare-facedly lying throughout.

"It was around 5.30pm when I said goodbye to my colleagues and walked down the road. To escape the eye of the LTTE, I took a short-cut through the jungle. But to my utter surprise, I got caught by them!"

Rajan was duped by the LTTE who said that they were 'friends of his friends'. Believing all what they said, Rajan had confided that he worked for Karuna and now planned to go to Colombo to do his A/Ls. Then all of a sudden, hell broke loose! "I was taken deep into the woods. They burnt me with a cigarette butt. They tortured me for about two hours questioning me about Karuna and forced me to be their spy. I had a grenade with me which was given to me for 'defence purposes'. But before I could bite off the pin, they grabbed it from me.

I started to run when one of the cadres pulled out his AK47 and shot me three times on my arms. I fell on the ground and played dead. They checked my pocket and took out my money and ID card and said, "Hail! Tamil Eelam." I was in pain, but I remained as dead for sometime and then got back on my feet. I managed to reach home... and the rest is now known to all," he added.

When asked how would he come out of that whole issue, he simply said, "I want to study. I have relatives in Colombo and I will neither go back nor join any factions. I realised that I had made a mistake. I had put my parents into trouble but now I am happy that I am in this hospital. God is with me.

Well...Rajan is one of those lucky boys and girls who has escaped death - dealt by both terrorist groups. But is there a way out for other little "soldiers" and "workers" stranded in the north-east? □

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# The desire and drive for peace

May 25 – The following is the text of a Pastoral Statement from the Rt Revd Duleep de Chickera, Bishop of Colombo released on 25 May 2006:

I have just returned from one of my regular pastoral visits to the North. I made a similar visit to Trincomalee three weeks ago.

## ● Trapped Tamils

The situation in these areas is tense and dangerously volatile; various groups are engaged in a struggle for ideological, political and geographical space which invariably spills over into the routine lives of civilians. Streets are deserted after 2 p.m. and the people live in fear of each other.

Tamil civilians in particular are helpless and fear all sides. They fear being suspected as LTTE sympathisers or as military informants. They fear the struggle for power between the LTTE and other armed Tamil groups most of whom for very obvious reasons often happen to be either relations, neighbours or associates. They fear for their adolescent children who may be conscripted by the LTTE or arrested by the Sri Lanka Armed Forces.

The civilians in these areas have no one to turn to. Subtle intimidation and whisper campaigns encompass all. Independent Tamil voices are reluctant to speak for fear of being caricatured as 'the enemy'.

## ● Professor Ratnajeevan Hoole

I suspect that it was this prevailing culture that prevented Professor Ratnajeevan Hoole from assuming duties as the Vice Chancellor of the Jaffna University. Contrary to some elements of public opinion, his being a Christian had little to do with this resistance. He had much to offer academically and wanted very much to serve the University and the people of Jaffna. He should have been given a chance to prove himself.

## ● Civilians – Armed Forces Dynamic

In Trincomalee and in Jaffna the presence of an almost entirely non

Tamil security Force providing security, though inevitable in the circumstances, creates a worrying polarization. The difficulty that the Forces face is to convey that their presence is meant to provide security for all civilians as well as for the State apparatus and machinery. This is much more difficult in Jaffna, where all civilians are Tamil (there is now a very small Muslim community as well) and all Sri Lankan Armed Forces are non-Tamil. In Trincomalee rightly or wrongly the Tamil civilians have a perception that the Forces are friendlier with the Sinhala population than with the Tamil population.

Much of this, no doubt, has to do with the cultural cum communication gap. Previous communal prejudices and the dynamic between authority and powerlessness emerge to further widen and intensify this gap when there is a return to violence. The Sinhala soldiers in Jaffna appear apprehensive and ironically vulnerable. When on duty on the roads, they stand at intervals sometimes of 300 to 400 meters in a clearly non-friendly atmosphere. At times their posture of crouching beside walls or standing behind trees, no doubt a requirement from a military perspective, adds to this atmosphere of a presence that distances. The Tamil civilians on the other hand seem to distance themselves from the soldiers possibly due to resentment of their presence or fear of being misunderstood.

## ● Allalpidy

I visited this island and saw for myself the tensions that prevail after the gruesome massacre of civilians, eight of them whom belonged to one family. Surviving members of this family witnessed the killing and are likely to be able to identify the killers.

The movement of civilians from this island following a threatening order presumably by a militant group adds to the misery of this people and to the complex nature of human suffering in such instances. The people have little desire to move and it is only a

speedy investigation into the massacre and deliberate measures of dialogue and trust building between the people and the Sri Lanka Armed Forces that will somewhat stem the fear and panic and dislocation of an already previously displaced people.

## ● INGOs

In these circumstances I was disturbed to discover that reputed INGOs who we thought were here to protect the most vulnerable seem unable to do what most thought they were here to do. It appears that either their mandate or their interpretation of this mandate prevents them from taking options when necessary to protect the afflicted and the frightened. An apparent policy that seeks concurrence from 'both sides' in the discharge of their mandate is hopelessly inadequate and requires review. In today's context of a subtle and deepening conflict, that also tends to be unreasonably trivial at times, such concurrence could remain illusive, thus neutralizing the role of such INGOs.

The exception to this stance is the presence of a small INGO – the Non Violence Peace Force. The policy of this small team of foreign and local peace workers is to visibly stand by victims of violence, and needs commendation.

It is for this reason that the attack by an armed group on their office in Muthur must be condemned. This act has been done by forces that see their presence as a threat. Consequently, all peace loving people must do all they can to appreciate and endorse such vulnerable groups whose mandate is to stand with the vulnerable, and whose only weapon is their moral strength to be able to do so.

## ● Hope Still

Contrary to what anti-peace forces imagine, the desire and drive for peace grows when conflict increases. In the context of where we stand today, the following requires attention if these aspirations are to be consolidated;

The speedy investigation of atrocities and action against the perpetrators. Such action mostly can counter fear and build trust.

A prompt return to normalcy. E.g. the functioning of schools, work places, public transport, etc must be ensured.

A more people friendly approach in the provision of security within the

(continued on next page)

# US spells out tough stance on Sri Lanka conflict

*Excerpts from speech by Richard Boucher, US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs to the American Chamber of Commerce, Colombo, on 1 June 2006:*

I'm very happy to be in Colombo on my first visit as Assistant Secretary, though this is not my first trip to Sri Lanka. I was here a little over a year ago with Secretary Powell under much sadder circumstances, in the wake of the Tsunami. That trip will stay in my memory for so many years to come. We saw people whose homes were destroyed and lives were devastated and yet within a few days of the terrible wave they were banding together to help each other. I admire them and often think of their example.

Since December 2004, Sri Lankans have come together to move forward from this horrible tragedy. I'm proud that the people and government of the United States, along with many other nations and private organizations, responded almost immediately to send hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian relief supplies. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) quickly dispatched a Disaster Assistance Response Team to

(continued from page 19)

realistic parameters of the ground situation.

A clear demonstration by the Government of Sri Lanka that the three armed services and the police and the STF are its only authentic representatives for purposes of ensuring security and maintaining law and order.

Opportunities need to be provided for independent Tamils to voice grievances, express concerns and offer solutions. For this a continuing dialogue with the authorities is necessary. Thankfully there are still some outstanding persons in authority who are sensitive to this need. The present Governor of the North and East is one such person and his presence and thoughtful initiatives need commendation.

An immediate return to the next round of peace talks at which the principle of devolution should be addressed.

help the government assess the country's needs and coordinate the many different relief operations. The U.S. military sent 1,600 Marines along with helicopters, backhoes and tractors to ferry food, blankets and other supplies to the coasts, and help clean up the rubble. This quick action to give people access to food, medicines and sanitation contributed to the extraordinary lack of disease or malnutrition following the disaster. Of course, you had many friends in this massive effort. And, for our part, we will always be grateful to the many Sri Lankans who assisted American citizens caught up in the Tsunami.

In the 16 months since the Tsunami, the United States has committed more than \$130 million to a wide variety of projects to help with rehabilitation. Working with private partners and nongovernmental organizations, we've built thousands of transitional shelters and dozens of children's play parks, started vocational schools and provided over \$16 million to rebuild lives. And, to make sure all the funds that came into the country are spent effectively, we are supporting an anti-corruption program to oversee the management of government budgets.

It is encouraging how much progress Sri Lanka has made in recovering from the Tsunami, but there are still reasons to be seriously concerned about the country's future. There was hope that this same spirit could be applied to overcoming a man-made disaster — Sri Lanka's long and violent ethnic conflict. Tragically, that has not happened, and if anything, the political situation has only worsened. The atrocities range from Foreign Minister Kadirgamar's assassination to the recent attempt on the life of the army commander and the massacre of civilians in Kayts and Wilikenda.

The violent incidents and serious violations of the 2002 Ceasefire agreement have been too numerous to list, and listing them merely overlooks the fact that each one of these incidents involves lives lost, individuals whose smile and creativity are lost to their families and to your nation's future. The United States believes the Liberation Tigers of Tamil

Eelam bear the major responsibility for the upsurge in violence and near-breakdown of the ceasefire agreement. They have committed scores of unprovoked attacks on civilians and military personnel, carried out assassinations and suicide operations, continue to recruit children and prevented Tamils from exercising their democratic rights in last year's election. For nine years we have had them on our official list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations; they truly deserve the label. In that regard, we welcome the European Union's decision to list the Tigers in Europe as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

As we've said many times and will continue to say, the Tamil Tigers must renounce terror in word and deed, stop the violence, and recognize that the only solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka is a political one. They need to focus their vision on how to achieve their legitimate goals through a legitimate process of negotiation. If the Tigers give up terrorism, the United States will be able to consider dealing with them. The Tiger leadership has to understand that the entire world is united in its determination to combat terror, whether it emanates from the mountains of Afghanistan or the fields of the Wannai. As a friend of Sri Lanka, the United States will do whatever we can to help the sovereign Sri Lankan government in its struggle against this menace.

We are working with other governments to cut off financing of terrorist groups, including the Tigers. The United States has also brought to Colombo experts in money laundering to assist the government in tracking these streams. We're also sending dozens of Sri Lankans to the U.S. for training in anti-terrorism programs. Our donation of a Coast Guard cutter last year to the Sri Lankan navy was a tangible symbol of our commitment to stand firm with the government in its opposition to the Tamil Tigers. It is important to be clear that the purpose of our assistance is not to encourage a return to war, because we firmly believe that there is no military solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. Rather, our assistance is meant to help Sri Lankans deter a return to war.

The Government of Sri Lanka also has responsibilities it must live up to. We have high expectations of a democratic government: respect for human rights, outreach to all citizens, respect for the rights of minorities, clean government for all, and a true vision of peace. In

Geneva this February, the government agreed to prevent groups operating in areas under its control from carrying out armed attacks, and yet three months later it seems as if some groups continue to operate freely in those areas, carrying out their own violent operations. We think the government should uphold law and order in all areas under its control, and when incidents occur, they must be investigated thoroughly and impartially. Arrests should be made, and the culprits prosecuted. All Sri Lankans - Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese — need to have confidence that the government will protect them, or they will turn to other groups for protection. This is the government's responsibility in any country. As a recently elected member of the new UN Human Rights Council, the Sri Lankan government must firmly commit to upholding human rights at home so that it can more forcefully advocate protection of these rights within the Council.

We also think the government should provide a positive vision to Tamils and Muslims of a future Sri Lanka where their legitimate grievances are addressed and their security assured. President Rajapaksa has spoken of "maximum devolution." Previous negotiations have

agreed on "internal self-determination" within a federal framework. However the idea is expressed, it could offer hope to many in the North and East that they will have control over their own lives and destinies within a single nation of Sri Lanka. A further elaboration of this idea could spur much needed debate on the contours of a settlement acceptable to the Sri Lankan people. Already there are steps the government can take to reach out to demonstrate the sincerity of this vision. For example, Tamils can be assured of their right to use their language and provided with equal opportunities in public and private sector employment.

Naturally, neither the United States nor the Co-Chairs nor the international community can dictate what a political solution should look like. Ambassador Lunstead and I have just come from a Co-Chairs meeting in Tokyo, and I'm sure most of you have seen the statement we put out Tuesday. We all remain extremely concerned about the deteriorating situation here. We've been urging all parties to cease the violence and get back into talks as soon as possible. We remain fully supportive of Norway's facilitation of the peace process and the work of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. Frankly, we

think that the criticism we've seen of Norway in the media is wholly unfair and unhelpful in getting parties back to the table.

Governments are not the only entities who have a role to play in fostering peace - as Ambassador Lunstead has said many times, the business community also has a helpful role to play. Peace and prosperity go hand in hand, whether here in Sri Lanka or elsewhere around the world. In a way, AmCham is already in the peace-making business, and it needs to maintain a strong voice in support of peace. You know that Sri Lanka has already lost business because of the uncertainty of the situa-

tion here. You know that if Sri Lanka reverts to a full-scale war, the consequences for the business climate will be devastating. Investors — be they foreign or local — won't support projects that could collapse in the chaos and uncertainty of a war-torn country. Tourists will almost certainly stay away, and insurance rates on shipping could go up significantly. The government's outlays for the cost of war will drain much needed resources from other development enterprises.

Conversely, an expanding and healthy economy with a regulatory framework that encourages foreign investment could undergird efforts to arrive at a negotiated settlement, since more people will see the tangible benefits of peace. In that regard, it's important that the government look at how it is structuring its policies, in order to ensure that it is taking full advantage of all the country's potential resources.

Sri Lanka's economy grew at an impressive six percent last year, though there are questions about how evenly distributed the growth has been. However, I think growth could expand even more quickly if bold economic policies were implemented and even more if the specter of war were no longer hanging over the country. ....

Sri Lanka has qualified for funding from our Millennium Challenge Corporation — a revolution in assistance designed to help those who are trying to do development right. Sri Lanka has submitted its proposal, focusing largely on rural development. Due diligence is underway, along with negotiation of terms. We hope we can conclude the negotiations this year and get started with these important projects. This opportunity for a Millennium Challenge Corporation compact, along with the assistance and moral support we have given Sri Lanka over the years, should leave none in doubt that we consider Sri Lanka a true friend and partner. It is disconcerting to us to see a friend sliding back towards turmoil, and away from peace, from internal divisions and self-inflicted wounds. We do not want to see this nation that inherited great civilizations and cultures, descend once again into senseless war with no winners.

Sri Lanka, its people and its future, are important to the United States and we will continue to push vigorously to see peace here. In addition to working with the parties and the international community, I would urge all of you here today to do all that you can to foster an environment where peace can take root. □

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# A leaf from South Africa on conflict-resolution

Lynn Ockersz

The Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE should not only talk directly to each other, without outside help or facilitation, they must do it right here and now in Sri Lanka on the basis of an inclusive process which involves all sections of relevant local opinion.

These were some of the most significant points to emerge from addresses made to the Advisory Council of the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration by two, visiting conflict-resolution experts from South Africa, Roelf Meyer and Ebrahim I. Ebrahim, at a workshop in Colombo on June 3. Deputy Minister Dilan Perera presided.

Meyer, who addressed the workshop first, is a former Constitutional Affairs Minister of South Africa. He held office immediately before South Africa made the transition from apartheid to democracy and also served under President Nelson Mandela. He was the chief negotiator for the National Party during the negotiations which led to a political settlement in South Africa.

Meyer retired from active politics in 2000 but has provided his expertise to the resolution of a number of conflicts in the world, including those in Northern Ireland, Middle East, Rwanda, Burundi and Kosovo.

Ebrahim, who has been an active member of the African National Congress from his youth, negotiated on behalf of the ANC in the South African peace process. A member of the South African Parliament, Ebrahim was imprisoned for fifteen years by the white government in South Africa's apartheid years.

A senior member of the ANC, Ebrahim is a member of the ANC's National Executive Committee. Meyer emphasized the importance of parties to a conflict talking directly to each other without preconditions

or reservations. "Extend absolute goodwill to the other side" was his recommendation.

Besides, inclusiveness in a peace effort is vital. In the South African conflict-resolution effort, the negotiators from the National Party government and the ANC, combed the countryside consulting all shades of opinion on a peaceful settlement to the country's conflict.

The leadership for such an exercise was provided readily by ANC leader Nelson Mandela and President Frederik de Klerk of the National Party government. The provision of leadership in such an exercise is essential. In the South African case both Mandela and de Klerk were chiefly instrumental in impressing on South Africa, the need for a political settlement.

On the subject of direct negotiations, Meyer said that, "we negotiated by ourselves - we did not need outside help". Contacts between the parties were established at a both formal and informal level when the need for negotiations was recognized and actively promoted. Informal contact even took the form of the antagonists sharing a common meal and openly dialoguing even amid on-going violence.

Thus is trust and mutual respect built-up among the parties which results in a respect for diversity - communal, linguistic and religious. Meyer said in lighter vein that "Lanka knows nothing of diversity" because in South Africa the situation is far more complex as regards diversity. For example, South Africa has 11 official languages besides diverse religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

Reconciliation among antagonists is another important element in peace-making. Meyer cited the case of Mandela, who visited the widow

of former South African President Pieter Botha, once released from jail in a gesture of reconciliation and cordiality. It was Botha's regime which was instrumental in imprisoning Mandela.

As important as reconciliation was tolerance and understanding. Both parties were willing to work unreservedly towards a solution - they walked "the extra mile" for peace.

The main parties never lost sight of the need for a "win-win" solution, a settlement which would render both parties victorious.

Accordingly, a "sufficient consensus" was aimed at and the parties strictly refrained from "scoring political points" in the negotiations. This proved vital in bringing about success in the negotiations.

The broad-based consultations across the length and breadth of South Africa which attended the constitution drafting process ensured its transparency and fairness. The media played a supportive role in the process.

The new constitution did not base human rights on a majority-minority division. Individual rights was the standard.

All in all, in conflict resolution it is important to have an all-inclusive public consultation. Public opinion from all parts of a polity need to be sounded out to create a framework for a solution.

Meyer also pointed out that initially, designing a process on how to talk is more important than the substance of the talks. A premature announcement of the substance to a settlement could trigger-off an adverse reaction to the negotiations among some.

Ebrahim I Ebrahim too, emphasized the vital importance of inclusivity in the search for a settlement in a conflict among groups and focused on the need for a "home-grown solution", that is, a country's own solution.

He too stressed the need for direct negotiations among parties to the conflict and highlighted the advisability of removing "party politics" from negotiations.

(continued on next page)

# Sri Lanka's Peace: Is Dialogue among Ethno-nationalisms Possible?

Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda

The post-Geneva Talks debates highlight the difficulties in the path to negotiated peace in Sri Lanka. Primary among them is the increasing gulf that exists between Tamil nationalism as represented by the LTTE and Sinhalese nationalism of the JVP and JHU. Sri Lanka's politics seem to polarize around these two nationalist axes. Dialogue among them, however unrealistic it may seem now, is crucial for negotiated peace in Sri Lanka. Political engagement among adversaries is helpful for accommodation through mutual transformation.

The Sinhalese and Tamil nationalist projects of the JVP, JHU and LTTE are mutually exclusivist. There is no constructive dialogue possible among them at present. In this relationship of mutual exclusion, there exists a peculiar logic for their co-existence too, in the sense that one

nationalism nourishes and provides legitimacy to the other. This, of course, is the strange logic of identity politics. Unless Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms move away from the reactionary identity politics of excluding the other and re-locate themselves in democratic emancipatory politics, no meaningful engagement among nationalisms – Sinhalese, Tamil as well as Muslim – can conceivably take place.

The impossibility of dialogue among nationalisms is grounded in the old politics of ethnicity within which Sinhalese as well as Tamil nationalist projects in Sri Lanka operate. Many Sinhalese nationalists continue to believe in the political hegemony of the majority over ethnic and religious minorities. They see in the unitary and centralised nation-state the best model of political or-

ganization of Sri Lankan society. Their conviction that political power in a democracy should be unevenly and hierarchically distributed among majority and minority communities has not gone through any significant change, even after two-and-half decades of ethno-political civil war. The enduring opposition to power-sharing, regional autonomy and federalism regularly articulated by Sinhalese nationalist parties, politicians, lawyers and intellectuals demonstrate that post-colonial Sinhalese nationalism has not grown up much since the 1950s. It remains stagnant in the old world of ethnic-majoritarian democracy. It can talk to minority political projects only from a position of strength, hegemony and domination, and not equality and parity.

## Limits

The Tamil nationalist project is also stuck in time and space, being unable to democratise itself in any significant way. The separate state project, conceived in the late 1970s and executed by means of an armed insurgency from the early 1980s onwards, has now reached a historical turning point. It is a goal that cannot be achieved by military means alone. For fulfilment, it now requires democratic, political means and strategies. The Tamil nationalist insurgency for secession has only succeeded in establishing a huge, effective and oppressive military machine for the Tamil nation.

From the Tamil nationalist perspective, the LTTE through a protracted war has produced a status of military parity with the Sri Lankan state. It has also established structures of a militarised sub-national state. But, Tamil national struggle is not about military achievements alone. It has to deliver political emancipation in the form of independence or autonomy accompanied by political democracy, social justice and economic re-building. An undemocratic separate state or a sub-national state unit can produce only an illusion of political emancipation for the Tamil masses. The inability of the LTTE to reflect and represent democratic emancipatory impulses of Tamil so-

(continued from page 22)

Women, children, youth, intelligentsia, etc. from both sides of the divide should meet to evolve a consensual solution. It is crucially important that the parties to the negotiations put out a Statement of Intent, outlining the fundamental aims of the settlement process.

For example, that Sri Lanka belongs to all its sections and that the country would have a single defence and foreign policy.

Ebrahim said that the international consensus now was that conflicts should be resolved by negotiations. He sees the EU ban on the LTTE as an instrument that compels all parties to the Lankan conflict to move towards a negotiated settlement.

Outlining some of the main elements that contributed towards the success of the South African negotiations, Ebrahim said that, all parties were genuinely committed to a nego-

tiated settlement. Face-to-face interaction proved vital in this process.

It is also important to keep in mind the "Third Force" element which always aims at disrupting a negotiatory effort. For instance, while talks were on in South Africa, killings were continued by an unseen force aimed at scuttling the talks. Nevertheless, the negotiations were held to a finish on account of the main parties' commitment to a solution.

It is also important that the economic dividend or benefits from the talks are focused on and the people made to enjoy them.

Right throughout, the ANC and the National Party addressed the people together on a negotiated settlement, thereby showing a joint commitment to a settlement. Right through, sincerity on the part of the leadership of both parties to the conflict, proved very vital for success of the negotiations. □

ciety effectively and without delay reflects the limits to which the Tamil nationalist project has reached after an extremely costly armed struggle of over two decades.

The rise of Muslim-ethno nationalism has further highlighted the limits of Sinhalese as well as Tamil nationalisms. Nationalist projects of small ethnic communities demand power sharing at regional as well as non-territorial levels. Deepening of self-rule arrangements, or federalism within federalism, provides an option for meeting aspirations for political emancipation of regional and small minorities. But Sri Lanka's two dominant nationalisms, Sinhalese and Tamil, are not yet mature enough to accommodate such possibilities.

### Transformation

Does this picture present a bleak future for Sri Lanka? Not necessarily. There have been trajectories of positive transformation that need to be consolidated and strengthened. The first is that leading sections of the Sinhalese political class have moved away from the visions and perspectives of extreme Sinhalese nationalism. The UNP and the SLFP, the latter backed by the Left parties, have come to accept negotiated political settlement accompanied by power-sharing and state reforms as the way out. Despite setbacks in the negotiation process, masses in Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim ethnic formations do not support war. A strong sense of political moderation is visible in the country even though the media does not always reflect it. There are objective conditions that have made war not an option either to defend the Sri Lankan state or achieve Tamil national rights, although there are some who ideologically argue that war is necessary and winnable. These are ground conditions on which a process of transformation towards negotiated peace with democracy can be built.

Such a process of transformation has been taking place in Sri Lanka, particularly in Tamil and Sinhalese societies, slowly yet noticeably. Even the JVP's latest characterization of Sri Lankan society as multi-ethnic and

multi-cultural is a reflection of that change. What this process of transformation lacks is a political and ideological leadership, a leadership that can have a sustained political dialogue with JVP, the LTTE and the Muslim political parties concerning a shared political future for Sri Lanka. A political solution to the ethnic conflict is actually about re-constituting Sri Lankan state so that all communities and citizens can have a sense of shared belonging as equals and communities of equal political worth. Ethno-nationalisms that flourished during the two decades of war were not about shared, but separate political futures.

In the post-CFA condition of relative peace, both Sinhalese and Tamil ethno-nationalisms find themselves at a historical turning point. Transition from relative peace to full-scale civil war is perhaps not easy. Actually, all nationalist projects in Sri Lanka now need to change in a context of transition from civil war to peace. If they don't, they are likely to become irrelevant to the processes of transformation that are slowly taking place in their own social formations.

### Peace and Democracy in Tamil Society

The relationship between peace and democracy in Sri Lanka's Tamil society remains essentially contested. The LTTE's position seems to be that peace should precede democracy. This vision of peace is linked to the goal of achieving the self-determination rights of the Tamil nation. Thus, in LTTE's conceptualisation, the realization of self-determination rights and peace is prior to democracy. The other approach is that peace should be in parallel with democracy.

The 'peace with democracy' approach further posits that peace without democracy is nothing but 'totalitarian peace.' In fact, the 'totalitarian peace' thesis is a direct critique of the LTTE's position that peace has priority over democracy. There has not been a meeting between these two approaches, as they remain mutually antagonistic. Is there a way out

from this debate about 'democracy after peace' vs. 'democracy with peace'? Is there a third option in which goals of peace and democracy are posited as mutually reinforcing historical processes?

### Can there be a third option?

Before exploring a third option, let us note that it has become a common place in the ideological and intellectual debates on Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict to exclusively blame the LTTE for the absence of democracy, human rights and pluralism in the Tamil polity in particular and in the North and East in general. There is no doubt at all that the LTTE, through its policies of militaristic authoritarianism, has done much damage to democratic possibilities in Sri Lanka's Tamil society.

At the same time, it is crucially important to recognise that there are other forces too directly responsible for the erasure of space for democracy in the Tamil polity. The Indian and Sri Lankan states that prosecuted a war in Tamil society as well as the Tamil politico-military groups that have collaborated with the Indian and Sri Lankan states in the war cannot escape the responsibility for contributing to the 'death' of democracy in the North and East. The peculiarity of the political debate in Sri Lanka is that the culpability of all these 'actors' is seldom acknowledged.

### Third Option

The third option I suggest involves a dialogue among and within nationalisms in Sri Lanka for peace and democracy through political transformation. It begins with the understanding that claims made by both approaches with regard to peace and democracy are valid and that an agenda for peace and democracy should be an agenda for political transformation.

An agenda for transformation is important because peace and democracy are social goods, or conditions, that cannot be imposed on the Tamil polity either by the Sri Lankan state or the international state system. The conditions have to evolve within the Tamil society. But, as long as there is



war, or the threat of war resumption, in the North and East, the space for democracy will also be absent, because peace is an essential precondition for transition to democracy. To put it in other words, since the war has militarised the Tamil polity, its demilitarization is the most important pre-condition to enable the political conditions for democracy to emerge. In short, there are no shortcuts to peace and democracy in Sri Lanka's Tamil society. The path to peace and democracy is a transformatory one.

Bu this transformation is a dialectical process. Tamil society alone, and by itself, cannot achieve political transformation for peace and democracy. Transformation of Tamil polity is a joint process with the transformation of Sinhalese polity. This is point that many champions of peace and democracy in Tamil society do not seem to comprehend at all. For some of them, it is a unilateral, external process, to be initiated and completed by the Sri Lankan state through a military victory over the LTTE. For some others, issues of peace and democracy are no more than an ideological weapon to deny the legitimacy of Tamil national struggle.

### Reformism

I argue that a reformist thrust in the Sinhalese society aimed at transforming the existing unitary state into a post-conflict federal state has the greatest potential to precipitate a reciprocal process of change towards peace and democracy in the Tamil polity. The logic that connects these two processes is quite simple. Only a concrete possibility of pluralistic reforming of the Sri Lankan state could provide the Tamil polity strong and effective political incentives to re-embrace the Sri Lankan state. At present, there is no such an 'exit strategy' for the Tamil nationalist project of secession. A reform thrust for pluralizing the state, leading to extensive regional autonomy with constitutionally entrenched groups rights, is certain to precipitate new and re-

formist political dynamics in Tamil society as well.

Such a process of change for reform is in fact underway in the Sinhalese society, although it has so far been happening in a slow pace. Leading sections of the Sinhalese ruling elite have now reached the position that federalizing the state is essential for a political solution to the ethnic conflict. However, there are two vital issues that limit the capacity of the Sinhalese ruling classes to move in this direction. The first is that their most advanced vision of power sharing, federalism, falls short of the LTTE's vision of federalism in terms of the depth of autonomy. This became quite clear during the debate on the LTTE's proposals for an interim self-governing authority. This indeed is a case of thin and thick conceptualisation of autonomy.

The second issue is about the absence of a consensus across the Sinhalese political class for such reform. The absence of such a ruling class consensus and the power struggle between the UNP and SLFP has enabled the extremist Sinhalese nationalist forces to capture the political space. The recent mobilization of hard-line Sinhalese nationalism has brought back the counter-reformist majoritarian nationalist agenda to the political debate.

The continuing political space for hard-line Sinhalese nationalism is facilitated to a great measure by the absence of an effective and continuing political engagement between the Sinhalese ruling class and the LTTE to bring the war to an end. The negotiations between the government and the LTTE have not led to a peace agreement as such. The uncertainties about the stability of the CFA and the possibility of the breakout of war have narrowed the space for the argument for a negotiated political settlement.

### Dialectic

One can notice an interesting political dialectic at play in this regard.

To transform the Tamil nationalist politics from secession and war to regional autonomy and peace, a strong state reformist drive in Sinhalese society is an essential precondition. At the same time, for the state reformist process in the Sinhalese polity to consolidate and move further forward, the threat of secession and the resumption of war from the LTTE needs to be effectively diminished.

It is useful to note in this regard that the counter-reformist Sinhalese nationalist mobilization of the JVP and JHU now defines itself primarily against the military threat from the LTTE. One way to address this problem is to continue the government-LTTE political engagement to bring about an early termination of the war and a consequent settlement agreement so that the threat of war and secession would be politically managed. The second is for a JVP-JHU-LTTE dialogue – a dialogue among the hard-line forces of Sinhalese and Tamil nationalisms.

A dialogue among hard-line ethno-nationalist forces? This may seem at once a virtual impossibility. It would perhaps be possible under new political conditions in which the threat of returning to war is no longer real. But, the threat of returning to war will not disappear overnight. In the absence of the possibility for a 'no-war' peace agreement between the government and the LTTE, a protracted period of no-war can best be possible only under long-term conditions of ceasefire.

The nurturing of the existing ceasefire, notwithstanding its imperfections and inadequacies, is thus a crucial and essential requirement for transformative peace through dialogue among nationalisms, even among hard-line nationalisms, under difficult conditions. War does not allow dialogue among competing ethno-nationalist actors; Peace, even imperfect, or relative peace, may.

(Focus Sri Lanka,  
27 March 2006)

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# Remembering Rajiv on Fifteenth Death Anniversary

D.B.S. Jeyaraj

Fifteen years ago on this day (May 21st) Rajiv Gandhi was killed at a place called Sriperumbudoor in Tamil Nadu. He was not prime minister then. An election campaign was going on to elect a new Lok Sabha or Parliament. The Congress led by Rajiv was the front runner. After Rajiv's death it was a Congress government that assumed office under Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

Death came in the form of Dhanu a young Tamil woman from Sri Lanka. Dressed in a churidar she came up to the smiling Rajiv and garlanded him. The chubby, dark - skinned, be - spectacled girl bent low to touch his feet as a mark of respect. Then came the explosion. A bomb strapped to her body was triggered off. Rajiv Ganhi was no more. Eighteen died and many others injured in the suicide bomber attack.

The date of Rajiv Gandhi's death has poignant significance for me. May 21st is the date of my birth day. Thereafter his memory looms large on each birthday. My birth and his death which happened thirty - seven years later are inter - twined in my consciousness. It is hard to believe that fifteen years have passed since his death.

I recall discussing Rajiv's death with then "Frontline" Editor Narasimhan Ram on the telephone. Both of us could not believe then that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was responsible. It was a time when influential journalists in Chennai were trying hard to bring about rapprochement between Rajiv and the LTTE. The well - known Tamil poet Kasi Anandan (Kathamuthu Sivan-andan) had met Rajiv Gandhi in March that year. The London based financial consultant Arjuna Sittambalam had met Rajiv some weeks later. Both were regarded

as pro-Tiger emissaries.

It appeared that the stage was being set for some kind of political reconciliation. The Indian establishment at that time was more angry with Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa for booting out the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) than the LTTE which fought the Indian army. Earlier Rajiv had told "Murasoli" Maran that he was prepared to discuss even a "de-facto" Eelam with the LTTE if necessary.

It was against this backdrop that we felt the LTTE would not have committed this murder. I wrote an article then for "Frontline" in which I argued the pros and cons. It was overwhelmingly against the chances of the Tigers being responsible. Yet I ended the piece with the line that if the LTTE was indeed responsible the ultimate losers will be the Sri Lankan Tamils.

Sathasivampillai Krishnakumar alias "Col" Kittu then in London argued passionately with me that the Tigers were not responsible. He sincerely believed then that his movement was not responsible. It was Kittu acting at the behest of his leader who was instrumental in sending emissaries to meet Rajiv Gandhi.

He was doing so because Velupillai Prabhakaran had ordered him to do so. I was quite close to Kittu then and also played a minor role in these efforts. Though I had been critical of Rajiv Gandhi and the IPKF earlier the wisdom of hindsight had made me realise that the Tamils could not afford to be alienated from India in the long term..

Alas! All those hopes and the efforts of those Indian Journalists who in association with Kittu arranged for the meetings with Rajiv were all dashed when it became clearly estab-

lished that the Tigers were responsible for the killing. What has happened thereafter is a progressive estrangement between "Mother" India and her "Eelam" Tamil children. The people of Tamil Nadu in particular were hurt and angry.

Jayalalitha Jayaram swept the polls in Tamil Nadu. The DMK regarded as being partisan towards the LTTE was vanquished. Only its leader Karunanidhy managed to scrape through with 800 vote lead. Jayalalitha followed a hard, strict policy towards Tamil refugees in the state. Even educational opportunities were restricted. Harassment became the order of the day. Thousands of Tamils who preferred to live in Tamil Nadu because of the Tamil ethos reluctantly relocated to the west.

More importantly the Indian public mood changed. India had welcomed Tamil refugees in 1983 and looked after them. Now they were made to feel unwelcome. Sri Lankan Tamils were regarded as having abused Indian hospitality. The LTTE was officially banned. Indian policy towards Sri Lanka changed. No longer was the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils paramount in Indian calculations. Having banned the LTTE India found itself unable to interact with the Tamils as it had done before. That situation prevails still though some improvement is there.

The LTTE had a golden opportunity to salvage the situation a little in April 2002 when Prabhakaran held his famous press conference in Kilinochchi. When Indian journalists raised the issue of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination the LTTE leader could have been apologetic. Some remorse could have been displayed. This could have demonstrated that the killing was regretted and the Tigers were sorry. Instead Anton Balasingham called it a "thunbiyal sambhavam" (tragic incident) and asked journalists not to dig into it. This perhaps made the situation worse.

The killing of Rajiv Gandhi was arguably the single most harmful act inflicted upon themselves by the Tigers. Not only the Tigers but all Sri Lankan Tamils by extension were affected. Fifteen years later it remains as the

biggest stumbling block to better relations between India and the Tamils.

I was in Jaffna when the IPKF - LTTE fighting began. I saw the atrocities and civilian killings first hand. When I returned to Colombo and exposed these in "The Island" I was arrested and detained. It was this and consequent harassment that made me leave Sri Lanka then.

There was a time when my relationship with the Indian High Commission people in Colombo was excellent. I was "Hindu" correspondent then. Other Indian journalists used to call me the blue-eyed boy of the IHC. Yet my relationship soured because I criticised the IPKF, some aspects of the Indo-Lanka accord and Rajiv Gandhi. I was even fired by "The Hindu" for trying to expose IPKF rapes.

I was for some time very bitter about Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian role in Sri Lanka. But time changes things. Rajiv's assassination was a shock. However much one may be critical of a person no decent human being would want that person to die or worse still be killed in this gruesome fashion.

As time went on my thoughts about the Indian role and Rajiv Gandhi too began to change. Looking at the predicament of the Tamils now I feel that the Indo-Lanka accord with all its short-comings would have been much better for Tamils in particular and Sri Lanka in general if it had been allowed to be implemented.

The Indo-Lanka accord has provisions that changed Sri Lanka for the better. The accord recognized the reality of Sri Lanka being a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation and not a mono-ethnic, mono-religious entity as proclaimed by majoritarian chauvinists. It also acknowledged the North-East to be the historic habitat of the Tamils and Muslims.

The accord also brought about the North-East merger. It afforded Official language status to Tamil. More importantly it brought about a scheme of devolution. The Provincial Councils were introduced because of the Indo-Lanka pact. The powers had to

be reduced due to the tricky situation of getting it past the Supreme Court. The SC decision was five to four with three of those Judges voting in favour coming from the minority communities.

The Indians had plans of enhancing devolution on a staggered basis. They had obtained an assurance in writing from JR Jayewardene to that effect. One of the changes envisaged was doing away with the concurrent list of powers. But then the Provincial Council was never allowed to function properly in the North-East. Today PC's are active in the Sinhala areas but not in the North-East for whose people it was mainly intended for.

I recall High Commissioner Dixit, Political secretary Hardeep Singh Puri and information secretary Lakshmi Puri trying to convince me in discussions that the Indo-Lanka accord was the best possible deal that the Tamils could have obtained at that time. Historically it was the highest quantum of Tamil rights recognized by the Sinhala dominated state. "lets work it out and improve it further" they would say. But I would have none of it.

Appapillai Amirthalingam and I were engaged in a heated argument once about the Indo-Lanka accord. I remember him repeating again and again "I am telling you from experience. The Sinhala state will never accept our rights without outside intervention. We need India to help us. If the Indian army goes off before our rights are ensured our people particularly those in the East and Vavuniya will be finished."

Belatedly I realise the wisdom in those views. I too wanted the Indians out then. I was happy when the N-E provincial council was dissolved. But what has happened now? After years of strife and sacrifice the Tamil people have not achieved anything tangible. Multitudes have died or been maimed, economy is shattered, people dispersed, values brutalised, culture eroded and dwellings destroyed. Yet the Tamils have nothing.

The LTTE may have built a military machine. But practically it is of

no use other than to perpetuate misery, destruction and loss if the LTTE do not go in for meaningful negotiations. Even the LTTE had lost only 711 cadres at the time of the Indo-Lanka accord. Today they have lost more than 19,000. Compared to this situation the Indo-Lanka accord if implemented would certainly have been better.

It is with this mindset therefore that I think of Rajiv Gandhi. Though critical of him then I realise now that he was trying to do the right thing by the Tamils and Sri Lanka. N. Ram now Editor-in-chief of "The Hindu" was to tell me once that Rajiv Gandhi despite his blunders was genuinely sincere in trying to resolve the ethnic problem in Lanka. Other Indian journalists have also told me that Rajiv really felt sorry for the Tamils and wanted to usher in a fair deal for them. I also subscribe to these sentiments now.

Rajiv was the great grandson of Motilal Nehru. The grandson of Jawarhalal. Son of Indira and Feroze Gandhi. He belonged to what was modern India's greatest political dynasty. Yet he was reluctant to enter politics. It was the plane accident that killed his brother Sanjay which made Rajiv enter politics. Otherwise he would have been quite content to be flying planes. His mother's assassination catapulted him into the Prime Minister's seat.

I was in India covering the momentous election of Dec 1984 when Rajiv Gandhi won with a landslide. It was the biggest margin of victory enjoyed by the Congress till then. With his handsome features and attractive smile Rajiv was India's darling. He brought modern methods into politics. Initially Rajiv with Arun Nehru and Arun Singh formed a trio at the helm. The three "P"s they were called (Pilotwalla, Polishwalla and paintwalla).

Rajiv's mission was to take India into the 21st century. That was not to be but today India has entered that century and is doing gloriously well. The dynasty too flourishes. His widow Sonia is the power that rules

India. His dashing son Rahul is an MP. His vivacious daughter Priyanka reminding many of grandma Indira will be a political force to be reckoned with in the future. Even his sister-in-law Maneka and nephew Varun are in politics though at the other end of the political spectrum.

After Rajiv Gandhi became premier he brought about two praiseworthy political settlements in the domestic sphere. One was the pact with Punjab Sikhs and the other the accord with Assamese student activists. It was in the wake of these agreements that he accelerated efforts to resolve the Sri Lankan crisis. He was a man in a hurry and people in a hurry often make mistakes.

He removed veteran G. Parthasarathy and sent the high flying Romesh Bhandari as his special envoy to Colombo. Rajiv made a significant departure from his mother's strategy when he brought in the militants for talks. Indira and GP kept the militants out and relied on the TULF alone for negotiations. Five militant groups were kept on par with the TULF at the Thimhu talks. Being in haste the originally envisaged extended time frame of the staggered ceasefire was telescoped into short duration. The talks failed but not due to this reason alone.

Later Rajiv got into a "huff" with foreign secretary AP Venkateshwaran which led to the latter's resignation. This was a great loss as APV was fully cognizant with the Lankan issues. Then came Natwar Singh, P. Chidamparam and even Dinesh Singh as emissaries. In Colombo it was Dixit who did the spade work ably assisted by the Puris.

It was a matter of touch and go. It was the Indian air drop that prevented Jaffna peninsula being overrun by the Lankan Army in 1987. Had Sri Lanka resisted the air drop of supplies by India things may have been different. India was not taking any chances and

had made preparations for such an eventuality.

Even if a de jure Eelam had not come into being a de facto Eelam like that of Turkish Cyprus may have been there. But the crafty Junius knew when to bow his head. This Jayewardene did and New Delhi was happy. Negotiations were on and soon came the Indo-Lanka accord. It had its short comings but could have been improved if allowed to work. This was not to be.

Rajiv won the world's admiration and respect when he went to Colombo to sign the accord. The Tamils on the whole were happy then. I remember writing a piece "Why Tamil eyes are smiling" for the "Island" then. Rajiv had a nasty experience when a naval rating took a swipe at him with his rifle during the guard of honour in Colombo. Rajiv saw it from the corner of his eye and deftly sidestepped taking the blow on his shoulder instead of head.

When Rajiv returned President Venkatraman defied convention and came to the air port to receive him. "The hazards of waging peace" said Venkatraman aptly describing the situation. If that blow was fatal Indo-Lanka history may have been different. Then came the war with the LTTE. A confident Rajiv said "It will be a short, swift strike. Our boys will be back home soon".

How wrong he was. The IPKF-LTTE war dragged on. Tamil civilians suffered and many harboured deep antipathy towards India. Finally India was outsmarted when the LTTE aligned with Premadasa to drive the third party out.

Then Rajiv himself lost elections. The Bofors scandal had raised its head. Had Rajiv lived longer this issue itself may have been detrimental to his image. But that was not to be. The explosion at Sriperumbudoor changed all that and the course of history.

Fifteen years have passed since Rajiv Gandhi's death. Is not the time opportune now for the "Eelam" Tamils to express their regrets publicly. I am informed by knowledgeable Indian circles that one thing troubling Sonia and the children is the fact that there has been no apology made so far publicly. Private expressions yes but no public or collective expression. What hurts the family is the fact that Rajiv really wanted to do good for the Tamils.

When the 1983 July violence happened the Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala Rt. Rev Lakshman Wickremasinghe wrote a letter publicly apologising to the Tamils. The ailing Bishop was not in the Country at the time and certainly had no hand in the violence. Yet he spoke of collective guilt and stated his views openly. I speak from experience in saying that Bishop Lakshman's act helped soothe to a great extent the pain and sorrow felt by many Tamils then.

The truth and reconciliation Commission of South Africa is another example where years of animosity are overwhelmed when frank admissions of guilt and genuine expressions of remorse are stated. Rajiv Gandhi may have been killed by the LTTE and except for a few the Tamil people have had no hand in that, but a collective expression of genuine regret could certainly help change the current status quo.

Let us remember Rajiv on the fifteenth anniversary of his death for the good intentions and actions taken in pursuance of those. Let us remember him as the man who wanted to usher in a fair deal for Sri Lankans in general and Tamils in particular. Let us commemorate his fifteenth death anniversary with the admission that the accord he signed on July 29th 1987 remains still the best possible settlement to the Tamil national question ever made so far. (May 21st, 2006) □



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# Sri Lanka: Truth, bias and the BBC

Bernard Gabony

A cartoon on our office wall shows the BBC crouching low to paint whitewash on the backside of a tiger, representing of course, Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels.

It appeared recently in a Sinhala-language newspaper at the same time as a number of other cartoons and columns vilifying the BBC's coverage of the rising violence on the island.

The reporting of the BBC's main English language journalist in Colombo, the state-run Sunday Observer observed, was "calculated to malign" the government.

Compare that with the following: "Why do your media black out news about Tamils in Sri Lanka where the Sri Lankan armed forces are still carrying out brutal murders?" an e-mailer asks.

"I think you got some bribes from the Sri Lanka government," another mailer says.

These e-mails are part of a campaign organised by a pro-Tamil Tiger website which included a bombardment of the BBC with phone calls.

## Documentary proof

The two campaigns from opposing ends of Sri Lanka's political spectrum illustrate two things.

One is that people really care what the BBC says about Sri Lanka. It is the only international broadcaster with a permanent presence in Sri Lanka. The amount of coverage we give Sri Lanka through English language online, TV and radio reports and through the Sinhala and Tamil language services is vast compared to our competitors.

The second is that, no matter how much we strive to maintain our guidelines of impartiality and accuracy,

there will always be people on either side convinced we are biased against them.

Take the cartoon about whitewashing the Tigers' backside.

That was triggered by outrage that the BBC reported that local officials had said that more than 40,000 people had fled their homes in eastern Sri Lanka after bombing by the Sri Lankan military.

We were accused of grossly exaggerating the numbers fleeing, of being naïve and of falling for Tamil Tiger propaganda.

But the fact is, local officials did say this. And the BBC has documentary proof that the figure of homeless, 43,000 plus, came from the Sri Lankan government side.

Moreover the government carried out its own examination of transcripts of BBC reports and did not identify incidents of inaccurate or biased reporting.

An earlier pro-Tamil Tiger campaign was triggered when we carried a Human Rights Watch report accusing the Tigers of extorting money from members of the Tamil diaspora unwilling to contribute to their funds.

"This report is totally biased," was a typical comment. But this is an issue the BBC has received its own reports on, independently of Human Rights Watch.

## Unseen violence

Apart from all the above, there are some difficult problems reporting Sri Lanka.

Lots of the worst things that happen go on well away from the eyes of independent journalists.

In these circumstances, when we can't be sure for ourselves who has done what, all we can do is report

what people say has happened.

In Sri Lanka that often means this: A group of people are killed, quite possibly civilians. The government and the Tigers accuse each other of the killings.

To complicate matters further, "shadowy paramilitary groups" may have been involved.

In other words, a lot of lying goes on, but unless you have the proof of who is lying, all you can do is report what the different sides say.

That can be frustrating for journalists. But for victims of the violence, and their friends and relatives, it is sometimes seen as bias on our part if we carry the denials of those accused of the attacks.

## 'Deliberate mistakes'

On top of all this we sometimes make mistakes. In less contentious areas, mistakes may be taken as just that.

A Sinhala demonstrator outside the BBC's offices in central London told me how the BBC website had published a "deliberate mistake" in one of its headlines.

"There is a den of activity here," Douglas Wickramaratne of the Sinhala Association in the UK said, referring to the BBC's Sinhala and Tamil language services. They are staffed, he said, by Tamil Tiger "sympathisers and activists - they openly influence some of the reporters who go to Sri Lanka."

"Bias Brainwashing Corporation" read one banner held by a fellow protester.

The protests from either side will doubtless continue, just as organised campaigners seek to influence how the BBC covers other hotly disputed parts of the globe, such as the Middle East.

In the meantime we can only continue to try to give as balanced a view as we can on events, knowing that that is the main reason why so many people think the BBC is worth following.

-16 May 2006  
BBC News website,  
South Asia editor

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**Two men shot dead in Jaffna:**

May 22 - A young man was shot dead by unidentified men in Kopay North, in Jaffna, around 9 a.m. on Monday (22). He is yet to be identified, police said. In a

separate incident, Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers shot and killed a young man at Vidathalpallai near Muhamalai, around 5 p.m., on Sunday. He was identified as Arunachalam Suresh Gunapalan, 42, father of three. SLA authorities said troops opened fire when he attempted to run away after flinging a hand grenade at them.

**Two killed in mine attack in Madhu:** May 22 - A 15 year old student and his companion were killed in a Claymore attack by Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Deep Penetration Unit (DPU) in the LTTE controlled jungle in Periya Pandivirichan at Madhu in the Mannar district on Sunday (21), reported Voice of Tigers (VoT) Radio. The youths were reportedly out hunting when they were killed, according to VoT. The two killed youths identified as Chandran Linton, 15, and Rasarathinam Mohan, 25, left home with two dogs for hunting Sunday around 11 a.m. but failed to return at the due time. One of the dogs came home with injuries. The dog led victims' relatives to the site of the killings, added VoT. The search party found out that one of the two Claymore mines fixed at the site had exploded killing the two youths and one of the dogs, said the radio. The killings were reported to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) officials who inspected the site of the SLA DPU offensive along with the resident priest of Madu Church in Mannar, said VoT.

**Youth shot dead in Batticaloa town:** May 22 - Two unidentified gunmen riding a motorbike shot and killed Iknesias Rasman Lanthilad 20, of Kallady Dutchbar Batticaloa on Monday (22) noon around 12.00 p.m. at Gnanasooriaym Square in Batticaloa town. The dead body was taken to Batticaloa hospital for autopsy and inquiries into death. The gunmen escaped immediately after the shooting.

**Decomposed body found:** May 23 - Valaichenai police recovered a body of a male in semi-decomposed state with guns shot wounds at Pandimadu in Valaichenai police division on Sunday 21st May on receiving information from Pandimadu residents, said the police. At the inquest held by Additional Magistrate Mr. Ushan, the dead man's uncle S. Nagarajah, identified the body as belonging to Mahalingam Vijayakumar, a textile trader from Tamil Nadu, police added. Nagarajah in his statement to the Magistrate further said that Vijayakumar, a father of one child, was one of more than 25 Tamil Nadu textile peddlers presently staying at a lodge in Batticaloa and that complaint was made to the Valaichenai police when Vijayakumar was found missing from the 18th of May 2006.

**Soldier shot dead:** May 23 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier deployed at the Omanthai, Vavuniya Forward Defence Line (FDL) on security duty was shot by suspected Tamil Tigers and gravely injured at 4:00 a.m. on Tuesday (23), sources in Vavuniya said. He died in the intensive care unit at the Vavuniya Hospital.

**Youth shot dead following grenade attack:** May 23 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers shot dead a Tamil youth, suspected to be a Tamil Tiger, in a location between Chenkalady Black Bridge and Kumaraveliyar village in Eravur police division in Batticaloa district on Tuesday (23) around 5.45 p.m. The shooting followed an attack by suspected Tamil Tigers on the SLA patrol unit on the Badula road near the Black Bridge. The SLA retaliated with mortar attack and gunfire for 20 minutes. The SLA troopers, conducting search operation immediately after the incident, found the dead

# NEWS TRACK

body of a Tamil at the edge of the Kumaraveliyar village and handed it over to Eravur District hospital, said the sources.

**Armed men abduct four stu-**

**dents, release three:** May 23 - Unidentified armed men in a white van abducted a student riding a bicycle near, Vantharumoolai University on Tuesday (23) around 4.10 p.m. At around 4.50 p.m. the van tried to abduct five students standing near the Pethalai Sivan Temple in Valaichenai, but two of the students managed to escape, said sources in Batticaloa. The van with four abducted students sped away reportedly in the direction of Welikanda along the Colombo trunk road, in Batticaloa district, sources further said.

The three abducted students in the second incident were released after being questioned at Vahaneri on the Colombo main road and sent back on a tractor transporting sand around 6.30 p.m., but the fate of the student first abducted near Vantharumoolai university remains a mystery. The abducted students, all of them G.C.E Ordinary level students, were forcibly taken in the white van, while returning after private tuition class, added the sources.

**One killed, another injured in Jaffna:** May 23 - The body of a young man with his throat cut, and hands and legs tied together was found behind a church near Mallakam junction, north of Jaffna town, sources said. He was identified as Sivagnanam Sanjeevan, 25. Meanwhile, Vilvarasa Ravesan, 24, was shot and seriously injured by unidentified armed men, at Kantharodai in Chunnakam, around 8 p.m., on Tuesday (23). He was admitted at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. The incident occurred at Kantharodai in Chunnakam.

**Civilian shot and killed in Kalmunai:** May 23 - Two motorbike-riding gunmen shot and killed a motor mechanic on Tuesday (23) around 7:00 p.m. at Manalchenai, a village in Kalmunai Police division, Police said. The victim, Rajathurai Rajamoorthy, 32, was shot 100 meters near his mechanic shop. He is a father to one child. Kalmunai is located 39 km south of Batticaloa.

**Two SLA soldiers, policeman killed:** May 24 - Two Sri Lanka Army troopers and a policeman riding in a tractor were killed in a Claymore explosion at Thandikulam, 4 km northwest of Vavuniya town, around 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday (24), Police said. The soldiers were taking meals to the troopers towards Kalmaduva. The Army blamed the LTTE for the killing.

**SLAF flies spy missions over LTTE areas:** May 23 - The LTTE Amparai political head Mr. Jeya registered a complaint on Wednesday (24) with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) against the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) for employing low flying aircrafts in reconnaissance missions over LTTE territory in Amparai district. An aircraft was seen circling over from 10 a.m. to 12.00 p.m., LTTE sources said in Amparai. The plane had circled the LTTE controlled Kanjirankudah area and all jungle areas from Vattamadu in Akkaraipatru to Pottuvil. This is the first time a Sri Lankan spy-plane was observed on reconnaissance mission over Amparai district.

**Claymore attack on SLA vehicle:** May 24 - Suspected LTTE attackers exploded a Claymore mine targeting a Sri Lanka Army vehicle on Nallur Temple Road in Jaffna on Wednesday (24) afternoon. A policeman was wounded. The SLA troopers opened fire and cordoned off the area for search operation. The Claymore landmine was reportedly attached to a bicycle that was parked along the road. The Claymore attack was reported near Kopay

Police station after the vehicle had passed through the Rasa Veethy into the temple road, sources added.

**SLA artillery fire kills LTTE cadre:** May 24 - A member of the Liberation Tigers' auxiliary force was killed during an artillery attack launched by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) from SLA camp in Kandalady in Eeachantivu in Kinniya division towards the LTTE held Upparu village on Wednesday (24) morning around 9.45 a.m., LTTE sources in Sampoor said. The cadre killed was identified as Oppilamany Sankaran..

**Tamil civilian killed in Thoppur:** May 24 - T. Chandran, a Tamil civilian, was found dead with gunshot injuries in a paddy field near a sentry point of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) in Pallikudiruppu-Thoppur road in the government controlled area on Wednesday (24) morning. He had been reported missing from the previous day since he left LTTE held Pallikudiruppu to Thoppur in the government controlled area riding a bicycle to sell fish. His bicycle was later found abandoned in Thoppur. Chandran, a fish vendor is a father of four children.

**SLA post ambushed:** May 24 - Suspected LTTE gunmen lobbed grenades and opened fire at a sentry post attached to 52-4 Sri Lanka Army (SLA) camp at Kerudavil near Thondamanaru in Vadamaradchi around 7:50 p.m. on Wednesday (24). Though there were casualties, details are not known. Kerudavil is located between Valvettithurai and Thondamanaru in the Jaffna peninsula.

**Refugee bodies washed ashore at Nedunthivu:** May 24 - Two severely decomposed bodies that washed ashore on Wednesday (24) at Nedunthivu coast have been handed over to the Jaffna Teaching hospital mortuary by Urkavatthurai police. It is feared the bodies, one male and the other female, may be that of the refugees who drowned after their boat capsized en route to Rameswaram from Mannar Saturday (20) morning. A group of ten refugees drowned when the boat capsized, civil sources in Mannar said. Only five bodies were recovered at that time. The refugees on this boat were from 10th Kurichchi and Pallathotam in Trincomalee district.

**SLA mounts mortar attacks in retaliation:** May 25 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers launched mortar attacks on Tiger controlled Vavunathivu Forward Defence Lines (FDL) in Batticaloa and surrounding areas from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. on Thursday (25), sources from the east said. LTTE officials have confirmed that there were no injuries or damages to property in the attacks. SLA officials said that the mortar attack was in response to the LTTE attacks against SLA positions, but gave no additional information.

**Claymore blast kills 4 policemen:** May 25 - Four policemen were killed and another wounded when the vehicle in which they were travelling was hit by a claymore landmine blast, at Sea Street in Kattankudy, 5 k.m. south of Batticaloa town, around 7 a.m., according to police in the eastern town. The claymore was concealed in a van parked on the road side, the police said. Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers retaliated by firing at random, eye witnesses said. The area was cordoned off and searched by the troopers following the attack.

**Ambush kills LTTE member in Madhu:** May 25 - A member of the LTTE was killed and a civilian driver was seriously injured when the Sri Lanka Army soldiers who had advanced into LTTE held area, set off a mine targeting a tractor that was transporting food to LTTE's forward defence lines (FDL) in Madhu, LTTE sources in Mannar said. The ambush occurred around 9.50 p.m., Wednesday

(24), the sources said. The civilian driver was identified as Viji, 26, of Kilinochchi.

**Home guard shot, injured in Trincomalee:** May 25 - Unidentified gunmen who came riding a motorbike on Thursday (25) morning around 10:00 a.m. shot and seriously injured a home guard at Palaiyootu, a suburb of Trincomalee town, police sources said. The home guard was immediately taken to Anuradhapura hospital where he was operated. Earlier report said he was killed in the incident. The injured home identified was identified as Asith of Chinabay. The security forces blaming the attack on the LTTE immediately launched a cordon and search operation in the area. Shops located near the crime site was closed due to tense situation when police and Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troops conducted a house to house search, sources said.

**LTTE commander dies in accidental explosion:** May 25 - Lt. Col. Veeramani, a former Commander of the Charles Antony Regiment of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), and later a field commanding official, responsible for the Nagarkovil Forward Defence Line (FDL) points, on Wednesday (24) night succumbed to his wounds from an accidental explosion, LTTE officials in Kilinochchi said. Lt. Col. Veeramani, who recovered from earlier wounds in the battlefield, has been in charge of FDL points in Nagarkovil. Subramaniam Vadivel, alias Veeramani, is from 1st Unit, Pavatkulam, Vavuniya, LTTE's media official Daya master told media.

**SLA soldier, civilian killed in mine attack:** May 25 - Suspected Tamil Tiger attackers exploded a side charger Claymore mine, killing an SLA soldier and a civilian, on Kokkuvil-Anaikoddai Road, 300 meters from Kokkuvil Junction, around 6:00 p.m. Thursday. The wounded trooper and the dead body of the soldier were taken to Palaly military base hospital, Police said. The civilian victim was identified as Sivananthan Sivakumar, 40, a Cleansing Supervisor at Jaffna Teaching Hospital, medical sources said. The claymore attack targeted an SLA patrol from Kokkuvil to Anaikoddai.

**Policeman shot dead in Kallady:** May 25 - A suspected LTTE gunman shot dead a police constable Arokiam Prasanna, 40, attached to Batticaloa police station on Thursday (25) afternoon around 3.45 p.m., close to Kallady Pillayar temple, located 2 km south of Batticaloa town, said Batticaloa police. The unidentified gunman had followed Prasanna, a Tamil, and shot him dead as he was riding on his bicycle to Kallady Pillaiyar temple after night duty at the police station. The gunman escaped from the site immediately, added the sources.

**3 Karuna cadres killed, 2 captured:** May 26 - A counter-ambush commando unit of the LTTE killed 3 Karuna group paramilitary cadres and captured two cadres alive on Friday (26) morning around 7.30 a.m. when it launched an attack on the infiltrating five-member Karuna group from the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) camp located in Pattiaddy, about 200 meters into the no-man zone from the SLA controlled area in the Trincomalee district, LTTE officials in Sampoor said. Thereafter a group of SLA soldiers had rushed to the site to rescue the captured Karuna cadres. The confrontation between the LTTE and SLA went on for few minutes, LTTE sources said. LTTE commandos captured two Karuna cadres who have admitted the presence of additional paramilitary cadres in the SLA camp, claimed LTTE officials in Sampoor.

**SLA soldiers gun down two:** May 26 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers shot and killed two youths riding a motorbike at

Aadiyapatham junction, around 12:20 p.m. on Friday (26). SLA sources in Jaffna claimed that their troopers shot at attackers who were fleeing after firing on a Police post. The victims were not identified. The dead bodies and the motorbike were lying on the spot.

**Ex-EPDP cadre shot in Kayts:** May 26 – Suspected LTTE gunmen shot and wounded an ex-EPDP member at Puliyankoodal in Urkavathurai (Kayts) islet in Jaffna. The incident took place near Inthan Pillayar temple around 11:30 a.m. on Friday (26), Police sources said. The wounded youth, identified as N.Jegatheeswaran, 29, was taken to Jaffna teaching hospital, medical sources said.

**NEIAP Deputy Project Director killed:** May 26 - Deputy Project Director (DPD) of the World Bank assisted North East Irrigated Agriculture Project (NEIAP), Ratnam Ratnarajah, 48, was shot and killed near his residence in Sri Lanka Army controlled Kalviyankadu, north of Batticaloa town at 14:15 p.m. Informed officers close to the slain NEIAP official, said, Mr. Ratnarajah, a disciplined and committed Director, was receiving a series of threatening phone calls allegedly from paramilitary operatives. Mr. Ratnarajah functioned also as Deputy Director of Irrigation. Mr. Ratnarajah, an engineer from Naippaddimunai in Kalmunai, leaves behind his wife and two children. Mr. Ratnarajah reportedly attended a meeting earlier in the day regarding irrigational development programs in the LTTE held area of the Eastern province. "He received a threatening telephone while he was attending the meeting. The conversation was about appointment of a person in the NEIAP," an official who attended reportedly said.

**Policeman injured in grenade attack:** May 26 - A Sri Lankan Policeman was seriously injured when unidentified men lobbed a grenade and opened fire at police post at Isaimalai Thalvu in Murungan on the Mannar-Madawachchi road, around 9.30 p.m., on Thursday (26). The injured policeman was identified as S. P. Fudath, 40, said, Murungan police said. He was rushed to Murungan Distinct Hospital and later transferred to Anuradhapura Hospital around 10.30 p.m, the sources said. Isaimalai Thalvu in Murungan is located 22 km south of Mannar.

**Trader shot dead in Neervely, Jaffna:** May 27 - Unidentified gunmen shot and killed L. Yasotharan, 35, a trader in front of his shop located in Neervely on the Jaffna-Point Pedro road, on Friday (26) evening around 5.00 p.m, said sources from Jaffna. Yasotharan, seriously injured was immediately rushed to Jaffna Teaching hospital but later succumbed to his gunshot wounds at the hospital, hospital sources said. Yasotharan is the third trader in Neervely to be killed by unidentified gunmen. His body is kept at the Jaffna hospital morgue for autopsy and death inquiry, added the sources.

Meanwhile, Ms. Srinithi Nandasekaran, Additional Magistrate Jaffna, visiting the site of the killings at the Aadiyapatham road-Nallur Temple road junction on Friday (26) around 12.20 p.m, checked the identity card said to be found in the trouser pocket of one of the two shot dead bodies and said that it belonged to Mahendran Pratheepan 22 of Ariyalai Neduntheru, said sources from Nallur. Although the photograph matched the face of the dead man, the doubts remain if the name on the identity card is the real name of the dead youth, added the sources. Both the dead bodies, still to be identified, are kept at the Jaffna Teachings Hospital morgue.

**Local elections candidate shot dead:** May 27 - A local elections candidate, representing Tamil National Alliance party ITAK in Achchuveli, Mr. Mather Sellathurai, 75, was shot and killed by a

gunmen around 9:00 p.m. Friday (26) at his residence in SLA controlled Achchuveli South in Valikamam division, Jaffna district. The dead body of the victim, a social activist, was taken to the Achchuveli Hospital morgue, relatives said.

**Shop owner shot dead in Ariyalai:** May 27 - Two motorbike-riding gunmen shot and killed a video rental shop owner on Ponnambalam Road in Ariyalai around 7:45 p.m. on Friday (26), Police said. Residents in the area alleged that the gunmen who followed the victim were Sri Lanka Army operated gunmen. The victim, Puvanendran Bolder Mayooran, 27, was an activist who has taken part in setting up Heroes Day arches during Heroes week memorial events, residents said.

**Trader shot dead in Achchuveli:** May 27 - A grocery shop owner was shot and killed at his residence around 9:00 p.m. on Saturday (27) in Achchuveli, close to the Sri Lanka Army High Security Zone in Valikamam in Jaffna district. A relative, Sathasivam Ramkumar, 27, who attempted to rescue the victim from the gunfire, was seriously wounded. The victim, Sinnatharuai Puviraj, 40, the owner of Siyam Stores in Achchuveli town, was killed on the spot at his residence, civilian sources said. Fear has gripped Achchuveli, Puttur and Neerveli areas where killings were escalating during the recent days.

**Man shot dead in Akkaraipattu:** May 27 - Two motorbike-riding gunmen shot and killed a Tamil man near Ayesha Balika Maha Vidyalayam in Akkaraipattu, 58 km south of Batticaloa around 10:30 p.m. on Friday (27), Police said. The victim, Narayappaillai Kangasooriyan, 29, a resident of Kolaavil -01, Akkaraipattu, is a father to a child. The dead body was handed over to Akkaraipattu Hospital mortuary, police said.

**Tamil youth abducted in Muttur:** May 27 - Mr. Mathavarajah Sathananthan, 26, of Kadatkaraiichenai in Muttur east was abducted on Saturday (27) morning around 9:00 a.m. by a group of unidentified persons in a white-coloured van from the Muttur jetty when he was waiting to travel to Trincomalee town by ferry with his wife. This incident was witnessed by several members of the public who were present at the site, civil sources said. Mr. Sathananthan was first checked by the Sri Lanka Police and the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) who have been guarding the Muttur jetty. Later Mr. Sathananthan was forcibly taken by a group of persons in the van, sources said. His stranded wife immediately brought this incident to the notice of the security force personnel present at the site.

**LTTE auxiliary dead in clash with SLA:** May 27 - One LTTE auxiliary cadre was killed and another rushed to Kilinochchi hospital when LTTE auxiliary cadres who were on a road clearing mission in Madhu area on Parappukadanthan Road confronted a group of 15 Sri Lanka Army personnel who were hiding with a Claymore mine attached to a tree in the area, Mannar Political Wing Head of the Tigers, S. Iniyavan said. The penetration group, spotted by the auxiliary cadres of the road clearing patrol around 3:30 p.m., on Saturday (27), exploded the Claymore and fled the scene after exchanging gunfire with the auxiliary cadres.

**Two young boys killed:** May 27 - A 12 and a 15-year-old boys were killed when Sri Lanka Army soldiers, who had moved into Thikiliveddai, an LTTE controlled border area, beyond the Kinnayadi lagoon, on Saturday (27) afternoon at 3:00 p.m., ambushed a tractor with farmers. Three civilians were wounded, Daya Mohan, Head of Batticaloa Political Wing of the LTTE said. The victims were identified, Kanapathy Balu, 12, and Vinayagamoorthy



Nanthan, 15. The wounded were admitted to LTTE's paramedical unit and later transferred to Chenkalady hospital in SLA controlled Eravur.

**Return of refugees stopped:** May 27 - Intervention by officials of the UNHCR in Sri Lanka and representatives from the Norway Refugee Council has stopped temporarily efforts by the Puttalam District Secretariat officials to force 114 refugees from 29 families who were displaced from Thambalagamam in Trincomalee to Udappu in Selvapuram Puttalam to return to their villages. Families fled their native Thambalagamam due to fear for their lives and escalating levels of violence in Trincomalee. On Saturday at a meeting between the Head of Puttalam Police, and representatives of UNHCR and Norway Refugee Council, it was decided that only after careful review of the ground conditions in the native villages of the refugees the administrative officials will decide on the fate of the refugees, Puttalam district UNHCR representative Ms Suhanya said.

**Tamil youth shot dead in Muttur town:** May 28 - A Tamil youth was shot dead on Saturday (27) night around 8:30 p.m. along Church Road in the government controlled Muttur town by unidentified men. The youth is not identified yet, Police sources said. A Muttur Police party that rushed to the site to conduct investigation into the killing of this Tamil youth came under fire from an unknown gunmen. A home guard injured in this attack was later admitted to the Trincomalee general hospital, sources said.

**Trader shot dead:** May 28 - The owner of a communications centre located in Moolai road in Vaddukkodai, Valigamam, Jaffna was shot dead and a friend of his seriously injured by gunshot wounds at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday (28), sources in Jaffna said. Gunmen had bound the hands of the two, took them to an area behind the shop, and sprayed the men with bullets from short range, sources said. Pooranam Sabesan, 26, was killed on the spot and his friend Thehilarajah, 26, was wounded in the attack. Thehilarajah has been taken to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and doctors are performing urgent surgery to save his life, medical sources said.

Meanwhile, unknown gunmen who visited another video shop close to Sabesan's business, threatened the employees by brandishing a hand grenade, took their photographs and disappeared from the area. Tensions prevails in the area, and local residents and business owners are shocked and intimidated by the threats and killing,

**Civilian, EPDP member killed in Jaffna:** May 29 - Two civilians were killed in Jaffna district on Monday (29) in the continuing violence that has gripped the Peninsula, sources in Jaffna said. In Erlalai North near the border of Palaly High Security Zone, Subramaniam Thevaraj (alias Ranjan) was killed by unknown gunmen at 10:30 a.m. Subramaniam Thevaraj from Kupilan, was on his way to the Multi-purpose co-operative society to buy provisions when three unidentified youths shot him at close range and escaped, sources said. He was earlier employed in Tamil Eelam Employment and Income Section in Jaffna in the LTTE run civil administration, sources said.

In Navanthurai inside the Municipal district, Michael Jesudasan was shot dead by suspected LTTE gunmen in front of St. Nicholas Church at 12:30 p.m. on Monday. Michael Jesudasan, 40, was a member of the Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) and was an EPDP candidate in the postponed local Jaffna Municipal Council elections. Meanwhile, the Vimalasuriar Thehilarajah, who was seriously injured in a shooting incident in Vaddukoddai Sunday, succumbed to his injuries in Jaffna Teaching Hospital, medical sources said.

**Claymore attack kills one in LTTE territory:** May 29 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers who penetrated 4 kilometers into the LTTE controlled Vilathikulam from the SLA camp in Iranai

luppakkulam, 20 km northwest of Vavuniya, exploded a Claymore mine killing a man who was cycling on Monday (29) morning, LTTE officials in Vavuniya said. The victim was identified as Subramaniam Jeyarooban, 24.

**Two Araly fishermen found murdered:** May 29 - Two fishermen who went to fish in Araly West seas in Valigamam were found murdered, and their bodies recovered from shrub jungles close to the Araly coast on Monday (29) morning, sources from Jaffna said. Nagarajah Selvarajah and Nadarajah Nageswaran, both married and estimated to be between ages of 35-40, went fishing in shallow waters of Kottaikadu in Araly West on Sunday evening. Relatives of the fishermen, went in search of them when both failed to return. The relatives discovered the bodies in Kottaikadu coastal shrub jungles and informed the Vaddukoddai police.

**Two SLA troopers injured in attack:** May 29 - Suspected LTTE gunmen opened fire on Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers of the Kalkuda Army camp on Monday (29) afternoon around 2.45 p.m. on the Pethalai road in the Valaichenai police division, injuring two soldiers. Wijeyasekara, 34, and Jakath, 38, the two injured soldiers, were rushed to Valaichenai hospital where they were being treated. The gunmen, lying in ambush fired at the soldiers, wounding an Ottamvadi aluminium utensils trader as well. The soldiers deployed at several sites in this area immediately opened fire in retaliation and assaulting several passers-by along the Pethalai road. The soldiers also arrested a number of civilians and took them to the SLA Harbour Camp on the Kalkuda road for questioning.

**Mannar, Jaffna Bishops meet SL President:** May 30 - Rev. Fr. Rayappu Joseph, Bishop of Mannar, and Rev. Dr. Thomas Saundaranayagam, Bishop of Jaffna, met Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse on Tuesday (30) in Colombo, and discussed the ground situation in the Northeast. The Bishops expressed their concern on the increasing number of civilian killings and the displacement of people from northeast seeking security elsewhere, sources said. The Bishops appealed to Mr Rajapakse to take steps to initiate talks between the Liberation Tigers and the Sri Lanka Government immediately, and also to make all efforts to stop the killings of civilians, sources close to the Bishops said.

**Two soldiers injured in attack:** May 30 - Two Army soldiers were seriously injured when a group of five unidentified gunmen fired at soldiers working in a compound near Chulipuram junction in Valligamam on Tuesday (30) 12:00 noon. The soldiers were cutting trees to reinforce the SLA camp located near Chullipuram Victoria College when the attack took place. Residents who witnessed the incident said that they saw at least two injured soldiers being transported in a vehicle to the Palaly Military Hospital. SLA soldiers immediately cordoned off the area and conducted a house-to-house search, but no one was arrested according to local residents. Road leading to Karainagar in the Jaffna Islets from Chullipuram was blocked for vehicular traffic most of the afternoon, residents said.

**Ex-LTTE cadre shot dead:** May 30 - Masked gun men shot dead Thankaraja Rajanikanth, 26, a labourer who had reportedly left the LTTE some time ago, on Monday (30) at 12:15 AM in Peythalai-Karungkalicholai within Valaichchenai police division in Batticaloa, Valaichchenai police said. Unidentified armed men entered Thankaraja's house at mid night looking for Mr Thankarajah. His mother had told the men that he is at the neighbour's house. The gun men took Mr Thankarajah by force from the neighbour's house some distance away for interrogation before shooting him dead at close range, police said.

**One soldier killed, three injured in mine attack:** May 30 - One Army soldier was killed and three soldiers were injured in a side charger type Claymore attack at Jeyanthapuram, 1.5 Kilometers

north of Batticaloa on Monday at 7:45 p.m. The injured soldiers have been admitted to Batticaloa teaching hospital. The attack blamed on the Tigers by the military took place about 100 meters from Jeyanthipuram army camp.

**Fighting breaks out near Nagarkovil FDL:** May 31 - Army soldiers and Tamil Tigers exchanged mortar and artillery fire near the Nagarkovil Forward Defence Line (FDL) in Vadamardchye east from 5:55 a.m. till about 8:00 a.m., on Wednesday (31). The LTTE had reportedly advanced significant distance towards the SLA's FDL and, SLA had been forced to move back from their FDLs, according to LTTE sources. Defense sources in Jaffna, however, said that SLA soldiers had beaten back the limited advance by Liberation Tigers. Although there are fears of several casualties, neither side has revealed details on casualties or injuries. Following attacks by the SLA, several families near Nagarkovil have shifted southwards towards safer areas, sources said. The no-man zone separating FDLs of the LTTE and those of the SLA is less than 50 meters, and the two sides have engaged in frequent skirmishes.

**Tamil families flee Muttur town:** May 31 - Tamil families in the government controlled Muttur town in the Trincomalee district have started moving out to safer areas due to the escalation in number of killings of young men, sources said. About ten Tamil families left Muttur town by ferry to Trincomalee town on Tuesday (30) morning. The previous Saturday a Tamil youth Mathavarajah Sathananthan of Kadatkarachchenai in Muttur east was abducted by unidentified persons at the Muttur jetty. His body was found on the following day morning in Muttur town. Earlier four Tamil youths were shot dead by unidentified persons in three separate incidents in Muttur town.

**Body of woman with gunshot wounds found:** May 31 - The dead body of a woman 30 to 35 years of age with bullet wounds, suspected as that of a Muslim woman, was found on Oluvil beach in Akkaraipattu Batticaloa on Tuesday (30) around 5.30 p.m by local residents, said Akkaripattu police. Akkaraipattu Police are conducting investigations into the incident. The dead body, yet to be identified, is now lying at the Akkaripattu hospital morgue.

**Body of unidentified youth found:** May 31 - The body of an unidentified youth aged about 25 was found in a fertilizer bag along Keery sea beach in Mannar town on Wednesday (31) morning around 8 a.m. by members of public, Mannar Police said. According to preliminary investigation, the youth had been killed three days earlier elsewhere and then dumped at the beach. The Mannar Police has informed the Magistrate about the discovery of the body, sources said.

**SLA officer killed in Nelliady:** May 31 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) officer, Lance Corporal Chandraratne, 41, was killed during a shootout between SLA group on foot patrol and suspected LTTE gunmen along the Jaffna Point-Pedro road, between Nelliady junction and Malisanthai junction at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday (31). The firefight which lasted nearly 15 minutes occurred near the Telecommunication Tower in the area which has 24-hour SLA protection. The body of the victim was taken to Manthikai Hospital from where it transferred to Palaly Military Hospital as directed by Point-Pedro acting judge, Mr V Kumarasamy. Two soldiers who were injured in the same incident were taken to Palaly Military Hospital.

**One killed at Batticaloa STF post:** May 31 - Suspected Tamil Tiger gunmen opened fire at the Special Task Force (STF) sentry post at the 25th mile post in Maha oya - Mangalagama border area of Batticaloa, on Wednesday (31) 12:45 am killing a home guard, Shantha Bandara, who was on sentry duties at the post. The sentry post came under attack on the previous night also, but no injuries were reported in this incident.

**Families flee following massacre:** May 31 - Batticaloa Government Agent (GA) Mr. S. Punniamoorthy said on Wednesday (31) that more than 65 families fleeing from the border villages of Batticaloa district have been placed in the Kirimichchai school building in the LTTE controlled area. The Tamil families fled from their village in fear following the killings of 13 Sinhalese construction workers on Monday 29th night in Rantharathena village in Omadiyamadu near Welikantthai, the GA said. The families are expected to return to their villages once normalcy returns, GA added.

**Policeman shot dead in Kallady:** May 31 - Suspected Tamil Tiger gunman shot dead policeman Shanmugam Kannathasan, 38, attached to Batticaloa police station on Wednesday (31) evening around 7.10 p.m, fifty meters from the Kallady bridge on the Kalmunai-Batticaloa road police check post in Batticaloa town. Mr. Kannathasan, a resident of Batticaloa and one of the three policemen on duty at the Kallady bridge check post, was shot dead on his way to get water from the water tap across the road. Kallady is located 3 km south of Batticaloa town.

**Two EPDP cadres shot dead, one injured:** June 1 - Two EPDP cadres were shot and killed at Pandarikulam in Vavuniya on Thursday morning at around 8.30 a.m. by suspected Tamil Tigers according to Vavuniya Police. At that time, they were on their way on bicycles to sell the EPDP weekly *Thinamurasu*. The victims were identified as Sebastian Rajappan (28), a former member of the Karaveddy Pradeshya Sabha in Jaffna and 19-year-old Arumugam Loganathan of Settikulam in Vavuniya. Judge M. Ilanchelian visited the scene, conducted an inquest and ordered the police to arrest the suspects. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, media coordinator of the EPDP in Batticaloa, was wounded in a grenade attack in Batticaloa EPDP office. In this incident attackers lobbed a grenade at the office of the EPDP in Batticaloa, wounding the media coordinator of the group in Batticaloa, Kandiah Arumailingam, 63, Batticaloa Police said. The incident took place around 6:10 a.m.

**Mannar body belongs to man arrested by SLA:** June 1 - The body found along Keery sea beach in Mannar town in a fertilizer bag on Wednesday (31) morning was identified on Thursday (June 1) morning as belonging to that of Arulappu Jesuthasan Prince Croos, 38, of Ward No: 06, Vankalai who was arrested by Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers from Mannar Bazaar area on 26 May Friday, civil society sources from Mannar said. Croos is married and is a father of three children. A brother of the deceased identified the body at the Mannar district hospital, Mannar Police sources said. Several members of the public had reportedly seen him being arrested by three SLA soldiers, sources said. Relatives of the deceased on Thursday had made a complaint to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Mannar regarding the alleged murder.

**Man injured in gun fire in Eravur:** June 1 - Unidentified gunmen lobbed a hand grenade on a shop owner and when it failed to explode opened fire injuring accidentally a 48 year old man on Wednesday (June 1) night around 8 p.m at Thalavai in Eravur police division in Batticaloa, said Eravur police. Kanesan Navaratnam the shop owner escaped injuries while Nahappan Parthipan who happened to be near by was injured and rushed to the Eravur hospital, sources said. Shop owner Kanesan had several times before refused extortion demands, and local residents said that the attack is linked these demands.

**Co-op officer abducted:** June 1 - Selvarajah Gajanathan, a Tamil Co-operative Development Officer (CDO) was abducted at the Kaddaiparichchan Sri Lanka Army (SLA) Camp on Thursday (June 1) evening 4:00 p.m. by an unidentified person in civil clothes in the presence of SLA soldiers when he went to facilitate the transfer of relief material to Muttur east, sources in Muttur said. Mr.S.Elilan,

Trincomalee district head of the LTTE, has registered a complaint with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) based in eastern port town that the distribution of dry ration relief supplied by the World Food Programme (WFP) to several thousands of internally displaced families in the Muttur east had come to a halt following the abduction.

**Two LTTE cadres killed:** June 2 - A member of LTTE's Auxilliary Force, Varothayan Sritharan, was killed, and another member injured in a claymore attack by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) in the LTTE controlled Nedunkerny area in Vavuniya, on Thursday (June 1) morning, according to LTTE sources. Meanwhile, on Thursday night 7:30 p.m., a Tiger cadre was killed in an attack by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) on the Forward Defence Line (FDL) at Kaakaiyan Kulam, Vavuniya, LTTE sources said.

**Families flee after claymore kills SLA soldier:** June 2 - Suspected Tamil Tigers triggered a claymore landmine explosion targeting a two-wheel tractor carrying dinner to the SLA check post in Naruvilikulam, Vankalai, in Mannar that killed one soldier and injured two other soldiers on Friday, June 2. Following this incident, nearly a hundred families consisting of around 500 members fled from their villages near Vankalai in Mannar when Army based at the Vankalai SLA camp opened indiscriminate fire on residential area. A. Lorenzia, a 12 year old girl and her father A. Arulnesan, 42, were seriously injured in the SLA fire were taken to the Murungan District hospital.

**One soldier killed, three injured in mine attack:** June 2 - Suspected Tamil Tigers exploded a claymore landmine behind Kaluvankerny Railway Station in Vantharumoolai in eastern Sri Lanka on Friday (2) at 12.45 p.m targeting Sri Lanka Army (SLA) solders resting after duty under a tree behind the Railway station, killing one on the spot and seriously injuring three. The body of M. Tilakaratne, 34, soldier killed in the attack, was taken to the Chenkalady hospital. The SLA troopers, after duty in this region which comes under the Earuvur police division, customarily rest under the mango tree behind the Kaluvankerny Railway Station where the Claymore device targeting them had been hidden, said the police. Kaluvankerny is located 25 km north of Batticaloa town.

**Elderly man killed in grenade attack:** June 2 - Unidentified men lobbed a hand grenade inside a house in Puthur area in Batticaloa on Thursday (1) night around 9.15 p.m killing Rasiyah Kanesan, 56, on the spot, said Batticaloa police. The victim's body has been taken to Batticaloa hospital morgue, hospital sources said. Batticaloa police is conducting further investigations. Puthur is located 10 km north of Batticaloa town.

**Cordon and search after grenade attack:** May 2 - A hand grenade was thrown by suspected Tamil Tigers at the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) unit patrolling along the Kaithady-Kopay road in Thenmaradachy Jaffna, on Friday (2) morning around 10.30 a.m causing wounding two SLA troopers. The SLA troopers arrested the Hindu priest at a nearby Hindu Temple during the cordon and search operation, and assaulted him severely before releasing him in the evening, sources added. Meanwhile, the SLA blocked all traffic between Puthur junction and Nunavil junction, a 20 km stretch on the A9 highway, from Friday noon till evening for moving convoys of large number of vehicles, troops and heavy army machinery to the Front Defence Line (FDL) positions.

**Gunmen fire at SLA troops:** June 3 - One Sri Lanka Army soldier was wounded when gunmen opened fire at four SLA soldiers at Vantharumoolai, 18 km northwest of Batticaloa town around 9:00 a.m. Saturday (3). The wounded soldier, A.V. Seneviratne, 38, was rushed to Sittandy SLA camp, Eravur Police said. The soldiers were taking rest after morning duty, behind the temple located on Trincomalee Road.

**Three more killed:** June 3 - Security sources reported that on Saturday (3) the two civilians were shot dead in Kaluwankarni in Batticaloa for allegedly not paying extortion money to the Tigers in the LTTE controlled area. The victims have been identified as E Sittarawel (42) and Nallaiya Wimalendran (32). Walachcheni police have reported the incident to SLMM. On the same day, according to police sources, two armed cadres of the LTTE pistol gang gunned down a security guard attached to the Walachcheni Bus Depot around 8.30pm. The victim identified as Vaidyalingam Mujewaram (26) was killed on the spot while a bystander was also injured and had been rushed to hospital.

**24 hour power supply for Jaffna, Killinochchi:** June 3 - The Ministry of Power and Energy has worked out a plan to provide electricity for Jaffna and Killinochchi districts for 24 hours without interruption from August this year. The power supply to Jaffna and Killinochchi districts will be a joint venture by the German and Sri Lankan Governments, Ministry sources said. Under this new electricity supply project of Jaffna District will be supplied with 220 kw and Killinochchi 120 kw. Rs. 2,400 million has been allocated for the whole project. The German assistance is Rs. 1,600 million and Sri Lanka's contribution is Rs. 800 million.

**Bridge closed after landmine attack:** June 3 - All traffic on Batticaloa-Kalmunai road was blocked as Kallady bridge was shut down after a Claymore attack around 8:30 a.m. on Saturday (3). A cordon and search operation was launched by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers and the policemen in the area. Kallady is located 2 km south of Batticaloa town. The traffic resumed at noon. The Claymore explosion was reported near the Siivananda National School in Kallady.

**Soldier, 2 policemen killed in grenade attack:** June 3 - A Muslim civilian was killed when Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers in Mannar town, opened fire after an SLA soldier and two policemen were wounded in a grenade attack in front of the SLA camp in Mannar Stadium. Shops were closed and civilians remained indoors following the incident at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday (3). The Muslim civilian killed in SLA gunfire was identified as Hussain from Uppukulam. The body was handed over to Mannar hospital by the Police around 8:30 p.m. on Saturday. An SLA soldier, Upali Jegath, 42, was seriously wounded in the grenade attack. The wounded SLA soldier and two police constables, Ratnayake, 32, and Silva, 36, wounded in the incident, were rushed to Thallady SLA 21-2 base, and airlifted to Anuradhapura hospital, medical sources said.

**Soldier killed in mine attack:** June 3 - A Sri Lanka Army soldier was killed and another injured in a Claymore mine attack while they were returning to their camp after a road clearing mission at Kokkuthoduvai in Manalaru (Weli Oya in Sinhala) on Saturday (3) 12.30 p.m., military sources in Colombo said. The dead soldier was identified as SLA corporal Karunaratne.

**Transport Board worker gunned down:** June 3 - Unknown gunmen riding in a motorbike shot and killed a Sri Lanka Transport Board (CTB/SLTB) worker and wounded another youth, who were standing outside Valaichenai bus stand, on Saturday (3) around 7:45 pm., Valaichenai Police said. The CTB worker shot dead was identified as Vaithilingam Nujitharan, 26, from Karuvakerni. He died on the spot. Peethambaram Mohulan, a 24-years old youth from Valaichenai, talking with Vijitharan, was wounded and rushed to Valaichenai Hospital, and later transferred to Batticaloa Hospital, according to District Medical Officer, S. Thadchanamoorthy.

**Soldier killed in claymore attack:** June 3 - One Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier was killed and two soldiers seriously injured in a claymore attack on their vehicle inside SLA controlled High Security Zone (HSZ) north of Muhamalai checkpoint at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday (3). The injured soldiers have been taken to the Palaly

Military Hospital. The attack happened in a non-residential area interior to Kandy-Jaffna A9 highway in Eluthumadduval area between Mirusuvil and Muhamalai. The claymore mine targeted a pickup truck regularly used by high-level officers of the SLA. The soldier killed was travelling in the rear seat of the vehicle. Unconfirmed reports say the two injured in the explosion are high-level officers of the SLA.

**TNA local election candidate, relative killed:** June 3 – Suspected Karuna group gunmen, who emerged from the grounds of Karuvakerni Vigneswara Vidyalayam school, opened fire and killed a local election candidate and his relative around 10:15 p.m. on Saturday (3), Valaichenai residents said. The incident took place 500 meters from Valaichenai Police station. Nalliah Vimalendran, a father of two children and Tamil National Alliance (TNA) candidate for the local elections in Koralaipattu Pradeshiya Sabah (PS), and his relative Thambirajah Sithiravadivel, a father of four, were the victims who were from Karuvakerni. Vimalendran and Sithiravadivel were gunned down while they were on their way home Saturday night after visiting the parents of the Karuvakerni youth, a CTB employee who was gunned down near the Batticaloa Assistant Police Commissioner's office in front of CTB Bus stand, a few hours before the incident.

**Eight prisoners escape from Batticaloa jail:** June 4 - Eight suspected Tamil Tiger detainees, many of them detained for more than one year, broke out of Batticaloa jail on Sunday (4) morning between 7:20 a.m and 7:30 a.m. As one of the prisoners was pointing a handgun on the head of the security guard at the main entrance, the escapees got into an auto-rickshaw and fled from the high security area of the Sri Lanka Army. SLA soldiers and the police launched a search operation in the area Sunday morning.

**Youth escapes from LTTE custody:** June 4 - Pottuvil police say that A Tamil youth named Punnyamoorthi Wijithan (26), of Gayathri a village in Sinnanoman in the Pottuvil area in the east who was allegedly abducted by the LTTE and subjected to much harassment had escaped and surrendered to the police on Saturday (3) according to the Pottuvil police. On an earlier occasion his brother Punnyamoorthi Ruben too had been abducted by the LTTE but had managed to escape. When a second attempt was made to abduct him, he received protection from the STF and was later handed over to UNICEF. However Pottuvil police revealed that Ruben had been shot and killed on May 8th when he returned on home leave. Thambimuttu Punnyamoorthi father of the youth has also surrendered to Pottuvil police and confirmed that his son escaped from an LTTE camp.

**Grenade attack injures 2 soldiers:** June 4 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were injured when unidentified attackers riding a motorbike, lobbed a grenade at a check post at Perumal temple, close to 51.2 Brigade HQ, in Jaffna, around 2.15 p.m. on Sunday (4). The SLA soldiers retaliated by firing at the attackers. The area was cordoned off and searched by the troopers.

**10,000 civilians qualify in self-defense training:** June 4 - More than ten thousand residents of Vanni villages took part in a graduation ceremony completing self-defence training at the Lt. Malathi Sports ground in Puthukkudiyirruppu in Mullaitivu, on Sunday (4) according to LTTE sources. Graduates wore red-bands and stood in training formations for men and women. In the event presided by Pongu Thamil co-ordinator Vinthan, LTTE Head of Women's Political Wing, Thamilini, lit the flame of sacrifice. LTTE's Head of Education Section, and Senior LTTE member, V Hankumaran, hoisted the Tamileelam flag. LTTE commanders Col. Ramesh and Col. Soosai gave special speeches to the graduating members.

**Body with gunshot wounds found:** June 5 - An unidentified

dead body of a male with gunshot wounds, was taken to Batticaloa hospital by police from Navatkadu, 4 km south of Batticaloa on Monday (5) morning. The body, located near Navatkadu Hindu Culture hall in Batticaloa, is yet to be identified, medical sources said. Residents at the area said they heard gunfire around 8:00 p.m. the previous day.

**Two would be attackers killed:** June 5 - Two men suspected by the police to be Tamil Tiger cadres were killed in Claymore blast at Sinnavembu in Kumburumoolai around 4:30 p.m. on Monday (5). Kalkuda Police said the two persons were potential attackers and they were killed while they were fixing the Claymore mine. Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers who rushed to the site upon hearing an explosion, also recovered weapons, including a handgun, from the scene.

**SLA soldier killed in Nanaddan clash:** June 5 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier was killed in a clash that erupted between a suspected Tamil Tiger group of armed cadres and Sri Lanka Army soldiers near Eruvittan junction on Nanaddan - Arippu road in Mannar around 3.15 p.m., on Monday (5). A grenade explosion and continuous exchange of gunfire was reported for more than 10 minutes. The soldier killed in the clash, identified as Tissanayake, was taken to the mortuary of Mannar General Hospital. Nanaddan is located about 25 km southeast of Mannar.

**Bodies of two youths found:** June 6 - Bodies of two unidentified youths were found on Tuesday (6) morning around 7.30 a.m. lying near a school in Thangapuram, a Tamil village in the Serunuwara police division in Trincomalee district along Muttur-Batticaloa road, Serunuwara Police sources said.

**Two EPDP cadres shot dead in Velanai:** June 6 – Suspected Tamil Tiger gunmen riding a motorcycle stormed a house in Velanai, Kayts and shot and killed two persons alleged to be members of the Eelam Democratic Peoples Party (EPDP) on Tuesday (6) morning. The victims had died on the spot of the shooting. EPDP sources said that those killed were supporters of their party and not members. The victims were identified as K. Bodhini, 27, and her brother Kopavan Ananda, 29, Kayts police said. Kayts Magistrate Mr. Jeyaraman Trotsky visited the site on Tuesday morning where the bodies were lying.

**Grenade attack injures soldier:** June 6 - Two unidentified gunmen riding on motorbike lobbed hand grenades injuring a Sri Lanka Army (SLA) trooper engaged in security duty on Tuesday (6) around 10.45 am in Amman Veethy region near Kantharmadam in Jaffna. The attackers escaped on their motor bike after the explosion. The trooper was rushed to Palaly military hospital reportedly with severe injuries.

**Two policemen, a sales executive killed in mine attack:** June 6 – A claymore mine triggered by suspected Tamil Tigers killed two Policemen and a sales executive in Randarikulam, Vavuniya on Tuesday (6) while they were proceeding in a private vehicle of the SINGER Company Ltd in Vavuniya. Four Police Constables had reportedly boarded the private SINGER vehicle while they were returning after duty at an A/L Examination centre at the Vipulananda Vidyalaya at about 4 pm when the attackers waiting in ambush activated a claymore mine blowing up the vehicle killing three inside the vehicle. Two Police Constables inside the vehicle and a twelve-year-old boy on the road received injuries and were evacuated to the Vavuniya hospital for treatment. The vehicle belonging to the Vavuniya SINGER Company branch was being driven by its Branch Manager himself when LTTE terrorists activated the claymore mine.

**Self-defence training to civilians begins:** June 6 - Self-defence training to civilians in the LTTE controlled Muttur East and

Eachchilampathu divisions in the Trincomalee district began on Monday (5). "Our fighting formations are waiting for the message from our national leader to initiate a definite victory. Very soon the day would dawn for the Tamil people to live in their own villages, houses and lands without being displaced any more," Mr.S.Elilan, Trincomalee district political head of the LTTE said. Elilan, addressing the gathering said that the Tamil people were determined to free and defend the remaining areas of their homeland from the clutches of occupying Sri Lankan forces. Colonel Sornam, LTTE special commander in Trincomalee district, and Trincomalee commander Thevan participated in the inaugural event presided by Mr.Puratchi, Trincomalee district head of the Thamileelam Students Forum.

**Body of missing Hindu priest found:** June 6 - The body of the Hindu priest who disappeared under mysterious circumstances in Kopay-Kaithadi area on 26th May and found near 200 meters inland from the Kaithady bridge on an isolated earth-bund on Tuesday (6) afternoon was identified by the wife of the priest as her husband. V. Venkata Krishna Sharma, a father of four from Kopay, was working as a priest in Kaithady Pillaiyar temple, and reported disappeared after he failed to return home on that day. He was on his way home from the temple after conducting rituals for a special festival at the temple at 8:00 p.m. when he disappeared, Sharma's wife said in her complaint to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the Jaffna Human Rights Commission. Workers who went to the area for sand mining discovered the body and informed the local Grama Sevaka who notified Mallakam magistrate. The magistrate visited the site and requested Mrs Sharma to identify the body. The body, in a state of decay and partly dug out from the earth by wild boar, was officially identified by his wife.

**Two SL Police killed, two injured:** June 6 - Two Sri Lanka Police officers were killed and two seriously injured in a claymore attack by suspected Tamil Tigers near the Pandarikulam road in Vairavapuliyanakulam in Vavuniya at 4:10 p.m. on Tuesday (6), security sources in Vavuniya said. The claymore mine hit the van the officers were travelling.

**Hospital security guard gunned down:** June 6 - A gunman riding a bicycle shot and killed a Security guard of the Batticaloa Teaching Hospital, at the main entrance of the hospital on Tuesday (6) at 4:05 p.m. The victim, Sivalingam Rajanikanth, 25, a resident of Arayampathi, was gunned down when he went to the shop in front of the hospital. It is alleged that the Karuna group had warned the security guards at the hospital to ensure the security of their injured cadres who were admitted to the hospital after a LTTE attack on their camps in Thibulana, Welikande on April 30. However, on 15th May, suspected LTTE gunmen entered the hospital and gunned down an injured Karuna group cadre and seriously wounded another cadre receiving treatment at the hospital.

**Youth forced off bus and shot:** June 6 - Unidentified gunmen forced a Tamil youth out of the bus he was travelling in from Valaichenai near Theavettuvan Araba Vidyalayam, and shot him with a pistol causing serious injuries at 6.00 p.m on Tuesday (6). Yoganathan Satheeswaran, 25, who was travelling with his sister, was rushed to Valaichenai hospital first and later admitted to the Intensive Unit of the Batticaloa hospital as his condition turned critical. The gunmen had escaped from the scene. The motive for the attack is not known. Valaichenai is located 28 km north of Batticaloa town.

**Three soldiers, policeman wounded in grenade attack:** June 6 - Suspected Tamil Tiger attackers lobbed a grenade into the checkpoint of the 21-2 Sri Lanka Army camp, located in Mannar Stadium, wounding three SLA soldiers and a policeman at 7:07 p.m. on Tuesday (6). One soldier was being treated at Mannar hospital while the other three, two of them critically wounded, were rushed

to Thallady army camp for airlifting to Anuradhapura hospital.

**10 civilians killed, 14 wounded:** June 7 - Ten persons, including three children, were killed and fourteen, including two infants aged 3 and 8 months, were wounded in a pressure mine explosion inside an LTTE controlled border village at Nedunkal in Vadamunai in Batticaloa around 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday (7). Nine of the wounded were admitted to the Batticaloa hospital, medical sources said. Seven civilians were killed on the spot. Three succumbed to their wounds on the way to hospital. Five women, two males and 3 children were killed. Twenty civilians were riding in the tractor that was attacked, said S. Oliyan, LTTE's Kudumbimalai area coordinator. A 3-month-old baby was thrown away from the lap of the mother, who died in the blast. The wounded persons were transferred with the assistance of ICRC to Batticaloa hospital. The villagers were on their way to Kiran from Vadamunai village.

**Bodies of two pistol victims found:** June 7 - Two bodies found in Thanganagar in Serunuwara police division in Trincomalee district on Tuesday (7) morning were identified as Thangathurai Kugan, 22, and Mylvaganam Kumarathurai, 21, of Killiveddy area in the Muttur division. Serunuwara Police reported to the Muttur Magistrate Tuesday afternoon that both youths had been shot by 9 mm pistol. Muttur Magistrate Mr.Manickavasagar Ganesharajah visited the Serunuwara government hospital and viewed the bodies of the victims. The Magistrate also ordered the Serunuwara Police to hand over the bodies to their relatives after post-mortem examination. The bodies were found near a Tamil school in Thanganagar, a Tamil village in the Serunuwara Police division. Residents of the area said they heard gunshots previous night around 7.30 p.m. and found the bodies next morning, sources said.

**Three more bodies found buried:** June 7 - Three bodies in decomposed state were found buried on Wednesday (7) near the site where the dead body of the Hindu priest was discovered in Kaithady in Jaffna district. The bodies were discovered in shallow grave in the waste land 200 meters away from A9 highway near Kaithady bridge. One of the bodies has been sent to Jaffna Hospital for identification.

Chavakachcheri Magistrate, Mr. Annalingam Premshankar, inspected the site on Wednesday accompanied by officials of Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission (SLHRC), Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and a legal medical officer. Search investigations carried out under the supervision of the Magistrate and other officers led to one body being recovered and evidence of two more bodies buried near by was reportedly found.

**Four wounded in deep penetration attack:** June 8 - Four health officials of the LTTE's Health Service Mobile Medical Service were wounded when Sri Lanka Army Deep Penetration Unit (DPU) exploded four Claymore mines. A nurse and the driver of the vehicle were seriously wounded in the attack that took place at Akkarayan, 20 km from Kilinochchi around 10:30 a.m. on Thursday (8), according to LTTE sources. The vehicle belonging to the Health Service was destroyed in the attack that took place at 9th Mile Post in Akkarayan. The Claymore mines were reportedly detonated from 60 meters distance. One of the mines hit the vehicle which was returning to Kilinochchi after a routine visit to rural villages in Mannar providing medical services, according to LTTE officials.

**Two soldiers injured in mortar attack:** June 8 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were injured in a mortar attack on the Kiran camp by the LTTE on Thursday (8) between 5.30 am and 6.00 am SLA sources from Kiran Bridge camp in Batticaloa district said. SLA added that they retaliated with mortar fire on LTTE positions. The Kiran Bridge SLA camp is located 22 km north of Batticaloa on the edge of the boundary drawn in the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) between the LTTE controlled area and the SLA

controlled region. Meanwhile, unidentified men on a motorbike lobbed a hand grenade on the Valaichenai police sentry post on Thursday early morning around 1.00 a.m and had escaped without being caught.

**Two workers killed in mine attack:** June 8 - An Engineer and a driver of a water supply contractor, Thummara Enterprises, were killed in a Claymore attack carried out by the Sri Lanka Army Deep Penetration Unit attack in LTTE controlled Mannar district on Thursday at 12:50 pm, according to LTTE sources. The victims were identified as A. Ginadasa, 62, the engineer and H.M.Amarasekara, 45, the driver of the blue colour pickup vehicle with registration number CPHF 5832. Mannar district field commander of the LTTE was travelling in another vehicle on Periyamadu - Pallamadu Road, 5 minutes behind the civilian vehicle that was ambushed by the deep penetration unit. The DPU ambush was probably aimed at targeting the LTTE's Mannar field commander but hit the wrong vehicle.

**Two bodies exhumed from Kaithady:** June 8 - Two bodies that were suspected to be buried in Kaithady site were exhumed from the shallow grave near Kaithady bridge on Thursday (8) in decomposed state, civil society sources from Jaffna said. A wrist watch was found from one of the bodies. One body was recovered on Wednesday near the site where the body of the disappeared Hindu priest was discovered by workers who went for sand mining in the area earlier this week.

The body recovered from the grave site on Wednesday was identified as belonging to Visuvalingam Paranitharan who was reported missing one month ago while he was riding on a motorbike on Kopay - Neerveli road. The body was in decomposed state and was not identifiable. However, there was a cellphone SIM card in the pocket of the victim's trousers. The telephone number was traced from the SIM card memory and the family of the victim was located for further identification. Jaffna Government Agent, K. Ganesh, Human Rights Commission Jaffna Co-ordinator T. Surendran, Lawyer M. Remedius, SLMML officials, Divisional Secretaries from Kopay and Chavakacheri, gramasevakas from the area were present at the site being protected by the Military Police.

**Grama Sevaka shot and injured:** June 9 - Unidentified gunmen who came on a motorbike reportedly shot and seriously injured a village level administration officer (Grama Sevaka - GS) at his house, around 8.15 a.m. on Friday (9). Joseph Ratnarajah, 58, was actively taking part in organizing exhumation of bodies at Kaithady during the past few days. He was admitted at the Intensive Care Unit of the Jaffna Teaching Hospital with two gunshot injuries on his face and another on throat, medical sources in Jaffan said.

**Teacher succumbs to gunshot injuries:** June 9 - Yogaraj Satheeswaran 25, admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of the Batticaloa Teaching hospital on being shot and seriously injured by unknown men on Tuesday (6) succumbed to his wounds on Wednesday (7) evening, Valaichenai sources said. Satheeswaran, a teacher engaged in educating school drop outs project of UNICEF in the Oorikadu Government Tamil Mixed School in Vaharai, travels to his work from Valaichenai. He was forced out of the bus he was travelling in with his sister and was shot with a pistol on Tuesday (6). Goods worth 60,000 rupees and 45,000 rupees in cash and a hand phone, he had in his possession were robbed by the gunmen, sources said. The deceased, a resident of Kathiraveli in Vaharai, is also engaged in part-time business, his relatives said.

**Construction worker's body found:** June 9 - The body of Rasiyah Muraleeswaran, 42, of Meesalai East, a mason employed in the FORUT housing scheme for the tsunami affected at Nilavan Settlement Scheme in Polikandy in Vadamadachy north was found at the building site on Friday (9) morning with severe assault injuries, sources in Polikandy said. Injuries indicated he was bludgeoned to

death. Nilavan settlement, where the body was found, is located within the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) High Security Zone (HSZ), and is guarded 24 hours by SLA troopers. Rasiyah Muraleeswaran, father of two children, had earlier worked for the LTTE tsunami rehabilitation scheme before joining the FORUT as a mason. Meanwhile, another mason, Rajani, 26, from Pungudutivu, working in the same housing scheme of the FORUT, has been reported as missing from Thursday, said sources.

**Student abductions terrify parents:** May 9 - Unidentified gunmen in a white van and riding a motor bike chased and abducted 6 students walking along the road in front of Iruthayapuram Sacred Heart Church in Batticaloa on Thursday (8) evening around 4.50 p.m, said residents in the area. 30 students in the Batticaloa region have been abducted in the past, civil society sources said. The white van had the registration number 259-1259. The students were abducted 150 meters from the Police station on the Iruthayapuram Selva road. They were on their way to Valaichenai from Batticaloa town after having attending private tuition classes, said sources. This incident took place 1 km north of the Batticaloa town

**Gunmen kill two Tamil civilians:** June 10 - Unidentified gunmen shot dead two Tamil passengers travelling in a Trincomalee bound bus from Muttur town Saturday (10) afternoon. Another Tamil passenger critically injured in the attack was admitted to the Muttur government hospital. This incident took place at Puliyadichchanthi in the Muttur town. Armed persons came on a motorbike and stopped the bus along Muttur-Batticaloa road. Thereafter the gunmen entered the bus and fired at the passengers. One of the dead was identified as Krishnapillai Ravichandran, 43, of Manayaveli, a suburb in Trincomalee town. The twelve year old Tamil boy shot dead in Muttur town Saturday (10) has been identified as Vimalanathan Sajeevan of Koonitheivu in Muttur East. Krishnapillai Ravichandran killed in the attack was from Menkamam in Muttur division and not from Manayaveli, a suburb in Trincomalee town as erroneously stated in the earlier report. The injured Nadarajah Paranthaman of Allessgarden in Trincomalee town has been transferred to Trincomalee general hospital as his condition is reported to be critical.

**Mannar LTTE Commander killed:** June 10 - Lieutenant Colonel Mahenthi, an LTTE Commander in Mannar district, and three LTTE cadres, were killed in a Claymore attack on Vellankulam - Thunukkai Road, Saturday (10) morning, LTTE officials in Kilinochchi said. A civilian farmer, seriously wounded in a Claymore attack on the same day morning around 6 a.m., succumbed to his wounds at Kilinochchi hospital. Two employees of the World Bank funded North East Irrigated Agriculture Project (NEIAP) were wounded in a separate DPU attack in Nedunkerni. Claymore attacks by the Sri Lankan Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP), known as the Deep Penetration Unit (DPU), have escalated in LTTE controlled Vanni, LTTE sources said. The civilian farmer who succumbed to his wounds at Kilinochchi hospital was identified as Navaratnam Srinagathasan, 32. In another incident, a Sinhala driver and a trainee caretaker of Thummara Enterprise, a Southern contractor firm, were killed two days ago, when attackers targeted the Mannar Commander of the Tigers. Meanwhile, the breakaway LTTE group, led by Karuna, claimed that its deep penetration units had killed Mahendi, the commander of the mainstream LTTE in Mannar in North West Sri Lanka. The Karuna group's spokesman Thuyavan told Hindustan Times on Saturday. That Mahendi was killed by a claymore mine blast at Thunukkai at 6 am on Saturday. Thuyavan also said that at 6.30 am in Theeli, in an LTTE-controlled area in Batticaloa district, the Karuna group killed an LTTE cadre, Gangadharan, and four others. □

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### IN MEMORIAMs

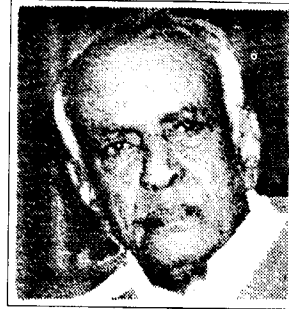
#### Seventh Anniversary Remembrance



**In ever loving and Precious memory of Mrs Rasathy Thirunavukkarasu, daughter of the late Dr. and Mrs Ambalavanar of Suthumalai, Sri Lanka on the seventh Anniversary of her Passing Away on 4.7.99. Sadly missed and fondly remembered by her beloved husband Thirunavukkarasu; daughters Vasuki and Dr. Vatsala; sons-in-law Pathmalingam and Suresh; grandchildren Thusan, Shivi and Thusi; brothers Dr. Ponnampalam (Melbourne, Australia), Sriharan (Jaffna) and their families.**

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#### Sixth Anniversary Remembrance



**In cherished memory of Mr. Chelliah Paramanathan (Mallie) on the sixth anniversary of his passing away on 3rd June 2000. Affectionately by his sons, daughters, daughters-in-law and grandchildren.**

#### In Loving Memory of Our Amma & Aiya



**Amma:  
Rattinam  
Selvanayaki  
Born: 04.09.1920  
Rest: 09.05.2001**

**Aiyah:  
Sayambunather  
Vyramuttu  
Rattinam  
Born: 30.03.1922  
Rest: 09.07.1997**

**Sadly missed and fondly Remembered by sons Pathmanathan, Ramathan and Loganathan; daughters-in-law Vasuki, Vijeyaladchumi and Thanaledchumi; grand Children Vijayaluxmi, Thevakumar, Senthoran, Delaney, Bhavan, Kugan, Asha- Vidhya and Sathian; great grand children Krishni, Vishala and Dhananjay.**

- 3 The Orchard, Wickford, Essex SS12 0HB

### Forthcoming Events

#### July

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Shashti  | 12. Highgate Hill Murugan Temple Vairavar Madai |
| 2. Aani Uththaram   | 13. Sankadakara Sathurthi                       |
| 7. Eekathasi  | 16. Aadippirappu                                |
| 8. Sani.Pirathosam; Shree Ghanapathy Temple Festival Commences-Koto Ettam | 18. Aadi Sevvai (1)                             |
| 9. Highgate Hill Murugan Temple Therth Thiruviha                          | 20. Karthigai; Eekathasi                        |
| 10. Highgate Hill Murugan Temple Theertha Thiruvizha; Full Moon           | 22. Sani Pirathosam                             |
| 11. Highgate Hill Murugan Temple Thirukkalyana Utsavam                    | 24. Aadi Amavasai                               |
|   | 25. Aadi Sevvai (2)                             |
|   | 28. Sathurthi; Aadi pooram & Veddai Thiruvizha  |
|   | 30. Shree Ganapathy Temple Ther Thiruvizha      |
|   | 31. Shree Ganapathy Temple Theertham Thiruvizha |

## OBITUARY

## Samuel Chandrarajan Sanders



Former Consultant Physician/Honorary Senior Lecturer, Gartnavel General Hospital, Glasgow (b1932;) Colombo University/Sri Lanka 1957 MBBS; DMJ (pathology), DMJ (clinical) London 1971; FRCP (Glasgow) 1985, died from metastatic cancer 1st April 2006.

Samuel Chandrarajan Sanders was one of the first overseas doctors to be appointed as a consultant to a University Hospital in Glasgow. Born in Vaddukodai, Jaffna in 1932, the second son of David Selvamanikam Sanders former Vice-Principal Jaffna College and Harriet. C. Sanders (nee Handy). Baba followed the family tradition and entered medicine. Following Medical School he gained wide experience working for the Sri Lankan Government from 1957-1970 in a number of sub-specialities including general medicine, general surgery, neurosurgery, public health and forensic medicine.

In 1970 he was awarded a scholarship in forensic medicine and clinical therapeutics which he undertook between Glasgow University, Guy's Hospital, London and the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. This culminated in him obtaining the Diploma in Medical Jurisprudence.

His career was shaped

by the civil unrest and political riots which subsequently led to many Sri Lankan Tamils never returning home. His first appointment in the United Kingdom was a 6-month post in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow in Geriatric Medicine. By doing this he found the area of medicine which was to become the greatest love of his professional life. He worked under the late Sir Ferguson Anderson in the first professorial unit of Geriatric Medicine in the UK. Having obtained the Membership of the Royal College of Physicians he was rapidly promoted through the ranks being appointed to Gartnavel General Hospital as a consultant in 1976.

He also excelled in teaching and many students of all disciplines, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other medical specialities were taught by him.

In 1993 he suffered a haemorrhagic stroke and entered retirement. Over the subsequent 13 years he guided and counselled his family. Under his tutelage his children's medical careers flourished.

Despite all these achievements he was a modest and humble man but above all he was a man of great Christian faith. The pleasure of his grandchildren's company meant more to him than any of his own personal triumphs. He faced death as he did life with irresolute dignity and died peacefully in his home surrounded by his family.

He leaves his beloved wife Mangai (Irene), 3 children (Consultant Eye Surgeon, Consultant Gastroenterologist, General Practitioner in the UK) and 5 grandchildren.

- David S Sanders

## Croydon Community Relief Foundation

Incorporating  
Croydon Tamil Community Centre -est-1998

Room No. 12 1st Floor, Cornerstone House,  
14 Willis Road Croydon CR0 2 XX

"OUR AIM: SERVICE TO COMMUNITY"

Croydon Community Relief Foundation inaugurated its Sri Lanka Branch Office at a public meeting held at 'Poompuhar' in Bálticaloa on Saturday 17th of September 2005 at about 4.p.m. The function was chaired by Mr. Pon Srinivasan, Organizer of the Foundation and conducted the opening ceremony.

The Officers of the organization participated at the ceremony and made the occasion a success. The services of this organization are being provided free to the public. They consist of free use of books and reading material, free classes to refresh the minds(counseling), including yoga training. Trained teachers conduct classes in Mathematics, Science, English, Dance, Music and Yoga.

Apart from this there are also cultural activities. Several gifts have been presented especially for "Deepavali". There were about a thousand gifts of sarees, sarongs, T-shirts, and for children, play goods and for Christmas. Children of a thousand refugees at the welfare camp at Thiraimadu received toys and were served refreshment, under the chairmanship of Rev. Fr. Jude, and financially assisted by Corn Fort Organization of UK and on this occasion Mr. Paramanathan, participated with his family members.

There were similar activities in the year 2006. For the celebration of "Thaipongal", there were about a thousand people and Mr Paramanathan distributed food items such as Raw rice, Green gram, Jaggery, sugar candy, pots etc.

This Organization is also assisting poor students who are doing higher education by rendering monthly incentive allowance. There are twenty-one students studying in University/School who are being assisted through this programme. Presently there are 7500 who have registered with this Organization for assistance. A Training Centre has been established at No-199, New Kalmunai Road, Kallady on 22nd April 2006 Under the leadership of Mr. Pon Srinivasan and several others including the Ramakrishna Mission Swamy, Mr. Anantharajah, Principal Shivananda Vidyalayam(National School), Mrs. Pushparajah Indrani Principal Vivekananda Vidyalayam(Girls School), Mr. Arulanantham President Be-Friends Welfare Association, its Treasurer Dr. Aruliah and Teachers of the Organization, participated in the office opening ceremony. They were all served with refreshment after which, they enjoyed a Games programme which took place and prizes were distributed. Mr. Mariyathan Muralithasan has been appointed Office-in-charge for this branch.

Training programme in Sewing, Dress making, Flower arrangement, cloth painting have been commenced at this branch office. The duration of the programme is six months, held in both sessions, morning and evenings and for each programme 104 people are participating daily.

The next programme is Counselling workshop that is being conducted by a physiologic specialist Ms. Susila Rajah along with 20 others in this workshop viz 9 women and 11 men. The duration of the work shop is 3months. On the basis of two classes held for each month. 6 classes will be held, lunch and refreshments will be served during the workshop period. The classes held from morning 09.00a.m to evening 04.00p.m.



The purpose of this training is to provide a relaxed service to those counseling clients, registered in our Organization.

A programme is now being arranged for children between the age group 04 to 10 years every Saturday between 09.30a.m to 12.00noon. There are at present 38 children participating in this service. They are being provided with playing materials and soft drinks and to motivate and encourage them, prizes are also awarded.

Our Organization's aim is to continue with similar programmes and we are expecting many helpers to join us. In the future this Organization will expand by opening several branches for the benefit of the people of other areas and for the development of the Society.

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### Wedding Bells

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

**Lambo**, son of Mr. & Mrs Elaguppillai of 30, Horsenden North, Greenford, Middx UB6 0PA and **Yalini**, daughter of Mr & Mrs Maheswaran of 84 Gleblands Avenue, Newbury Park, Ilford, Essex IG2 7DC on 28th May 2006 at Sangam Community Centre, Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware Broadway.

## Australian Newsletter

Tamils in Australia and New Zealand joined the Tamils around the globe on May 29 to publicly demonstrate their solidarity with the sufferings of North East Tamils and participated on a one-day protest activity in Canberra, Auckland and Wellington.

Yarl Thirumarai Kala Manram (Centre for Performing Arts) launched an audio CD on Maikanda Thevar's "Unnmai Vizzhakam" and it was publicised in a small but colourful ceremony in Australia recently.

Vaikasi Viskam was celebrated with special rituals in temples across Australia and New Zealand. Lately there has an upsurge of religious personalities visiting major centres on the east coast of Australia and New Zealand and interestingly large numbers of those stars are not necessarily operating out of sub continent, but from East Asia and North America and superficially become pointers of Hinduism today.

Gangai Amaran, a popular Tamil film personality of yester-years was in Melbourne along with prominent artiste Harish Ragavendra, Srilekha to participate in a grand light music event in Melbourne. Auckland classical music circle were recently charmed by the melodious performance of Ilangai Tamil Artiste Mr Yadavan Yoganantham.

New Zealand is part of the Asia-Pacific "Ring of Fire" and one of the most vulnerable countries being Indonesia with at least 129 active volcanoes faced a massive earthquake in the recent weeks and now facing the eruption of a massive volcano on Mount Merapi, in Central Java, which is beginning to erupt shooting out black smoke, volcanic ash and lava. One of its deadliest eruptions was in 1930, when about 1,300 people were killed and a gas cloud from the last eruption in 1994 killed about 100 people.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

## Rare film on Gandhi

'Gandhi: Twentieth Century Prophet', a film on the life and struggle of the Mahatma, written by Tamil writer and journalist, A K Chettiar and believed to have been lost for more than 40 years, was screened Wednesday at the Gandhi Study Centre, T Nagar. In association with the Gandhi Museum in Madurai, the documentary film showcase A K Chettiar's stupendous effort of travelling thousands of kilometres across the globe to collect 50,000-feet of film shot on Gandhi. He edited them into a 12,000-feet documentary and released it for public to see in 1940. He re-edited the film in Hollywood, with an English commentary and screened it in the U.S. in 1953. The film include footages of the Mahatma's venture in South Africa and Europe.

Poignant scenes clearly signifying the Mahatma's belief on nonviolence, satyagraha and passionate humanism was well laid out. Flashes of the Mahatma's funeral, the United Nations flag lowered as a sign of respect and millions of people shed tears, only one question was raised, Who is this man and why is the world mourning for him? A man devoid of power, wealth or gun.

Flashing back, scenes that followed showed a rundown of Gopalakrishna Gokhale's visit to South Africa in 1912, with Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in tow, dressed nattily in a suit. Events that came next, was a documentation of how Gandhi decided to shed the western influence in him and be with his people in his motherland whom he led at the Dandi march when he was 61. With a purpose of gathering salt for the nation, the Mahatma was first accompanied by 79 of his followers that swelled into thousands welcomed by the chanting of satyameva jayate (hail the truth) in every village they went through.

The film's narration emphasises on Gandhi's tenet of nonviolence which he calls as a great force with its own law, that should be used scrupulously. A scene that featured Nehru spinning the charka was described, by the narrator, as a way of binding the country, as one. This scene segue to the highlight of the film - the mass-spinning sequence shot by Chettiar in Tirupur. Two thousand women is seen spinning the charka as the music 'Aadu Ratte' (Let the spinning wheel turn) was sung by Carnatic singer D.K. Pattammal. The song was derived from a patriotic poem in Tamil, written by freedom fighter Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai.

A K Chettiar, a native of Kottaiyur near Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu, was a great admirer of the Mahatma. He was greatly influenced by the Gandhian philosophy. A simple, self-effacing man who never sought the limelight. He trained in photography at the Imperial College of Photography, Tokyo, and the New York Institute of Photography. He was the founder-editor of a Tamil monthly magazine, Kumari Malar (1943-1983), in which he gave prominence to articles on Gandhian tenets such as wearing of khadi, combating untouchability and establishing Dalits' right to enter temple.

A K Chettiar was 72 years old when he died on September 10, 1983.

Rare moments on the life of the Mahatma, caught in camera and brought to life in the film titled "Gandhi: Twentieth Century Prophet" is a must-see for every Indian citizen.

(Chennai, Apr 28, 2006,  
News Today)

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