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## IPKF propaganda offensive preludes election announcement

THE PROSPECT of a peaceful solution to the conflict in northern Sri Lanka receded still further as 20,000 troops of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) threw a cordon around the Vanni jungles in early August, in an all-out attempt to smash the leadership of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Indian Intelligence sources claimed LTTE leader Prabhakaran and 25-30 of his closest supporters were holed up in jungles south of Mankulam and Odduchudan.

The talking clearly appeared to be over as 154 LTTE activists in Tamil Nadu were detained under the National Security Act, in pre-dawn raids on 8 August. Police also closed down 12 LTTE offices and seized an unspecified quantity of arms.

External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh told the Indian parliament on 11 August that informal talks with the LTTE had been suspended due to the group's "continuing recalcitrance".

Two days later terrorist action blew apart the Colombo-Jaffna railway line south of Mankulam forcing the newly-restored Yal Devi service to return to Vavuniya. Seven Indian soldiers on patrol died in the blast.

Fresh IPKF offensives launched in the Allampur area in mid-month and around Omanthai and Nedunkulam in Vavuniya District, produced widespread dislocation and fear among the population.

Over 300 terrorist suspects were rounded up in Omanthai alone, and as IPKF operations intensified Citizens Committees and relief organisations made a desperate appeal to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Colombo to act on behalf of thousands of displaced people sheltering in temples and schools throughout the Vanni area.

After LTTE attacks on IPKF camps in the Nedunkerni area of Mullaitivu, large-scale air surveillance and cordon-and-search operations were introduced throughout Vadam-aradchchi to prevent armed militants filtering back into the Jaffna peninsula.

Other operations were to follow around Kankesanthurai and Palaly as unconfirmed reports circulated of large quantities of arms entering the peninsula by sea.

In the Vanni, heavy concentrations of IPKF troops brought many areas to a standstill and 24 hour curfew shut down Mullaitivu for days on end. Vague and conflicting reports of troop movements and clashes with militants surfaced irregularly in the press.

Then towards the end of August, fierce fighting was reported in Neethikaikulam, 31 miles north of Vavuniya town, where IPKF operations claimed to have uncovered an important network of Tiger bases and to have seized large quantities of explosives and medical equipment. Five militants

were reported killed and over 100 civilians taken into custody.

All India Radio seemed certain of the overall success of *Checkmate Three* as the month-long operation came to be called, and on 2 September announced that conditions were now suitable for Provincial Council (PC) elections in the North and East.

A full-blown 15 day battle around Neethikaikulam had resulted in the back of LTTE resistance being broken, IPKF second-in-command Lt Gen A S Kalkat told press correspondents in Trincomalee the same day. Over 100 LTTE personnel had been killed and significant numbers captured, he claimed. Sri Lanka's *Rupavahini* TV network also carried footage of the operations showing IPKF troops taking possession of large quantities of arms and ammunition.

Other IPKF officers were more sceptical in evaluating the operation's lasting impact. Alternative figures indicated less than 20 Tigers killed.

Subsequent skirmishes in the following days have suggested that the hit-and-run war is far from over in the North.

Both the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments now seem increasingly anxious to promote the idea that conditions in the Tamil areas will allow PC elections to take place before Presidential elections around the end of the year create a log-jam of new uncertainties.

## Why the North needs a lifeline to the world

### *Jaffna: casualty of peace*

As the war between the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and the Tamil militants drags itself into another month of mounting casualties, the economic infrastructure and the public health facilities of the Northern and Eastern Districts continue to deteriorate.

Reports of unmanned hospitals, lack of medical supplies and growing malnutrition in some of the affected areas have cast serious doubts on government claims that conditions are returning to normal. Where the civil administration and banks function, they do so intermittently - and only as part of the continuing battle of wills between the Indian army and the Tigers.

Jaffna, the historical epicentre of Tamil insurgence retains all of the attributes of an occupied city. For its occupants, curfew, hartal, violent incidents and insecurity are still part of daily life.

FRSS, the consortium of aid agencies working in the peninsula reports a steady increase in those seeking assistance at its 139 supplementary feeding centres where close on 13000 people attend daily.

Voluntary agencies continue to supply around 1000 relief packs of dry rations, clothing, soap and milk on a monthly basis to families whose breadwinners have been killed or incapacitated. In its first year of operation in Jaffna the Jaipur Foot Workshop has fitted some 200 people with artificial limbs.

There are increasing fears of a major epidemic of scabies throughout the peninsula following the enforced congregation of most of the population in makeshift refugee camps during the IPKF assault on Jaffna in October 1987. The Regional Director of Health Services, Jaffna estimates that 70-80% of the population will have to be treated if the disease is to be eradicated.

A chronic shortage of ambulances, trained medical personnel and appropriate drugs increase the scale of the health problem day by day.

Power cuts render vital vaccines useless while curfew and cordon-and-search operations deny people access to emergency assistance sometimes with fatal consequences.

Jaffna Red Cross Society have expressed fear that medical aid already donated by European agencies may have vanished into Colombo's political bottleneck.

They also worry that Jaffna has no lifeline to the outside world - no telephones, no foreign correspondents, no expatriate agency staff, no independent observers.

There is a growing sense of isolation among people here - and of anxiety and anger.

They believe that the civilian population will continue to be squeezed into some kind of spurious submission, as much by impoverishment and epidemic as by the IPKF cordons.

#### Refugee reprieve

Peter Arbenz, Swiss Delegee for Refugee Affairs, after a two-week fact-finding mission to Sri Lanka announced in Zurich on 27 July that the Swiss Government would maintain its policy of no forcible return to Sri Lanka for Tamil refugees.

#### Jaffna Police chief slain

Jaffna Superintendent of Police, P Rajeswaran and his driver were shot dead by Tamil militants on the afternoon of 7 August at Moolai, nine miles from Jaffna fort.

#### Call for ceasefire

Former Indian Foreign Secretary A P Venkateswaran speaking at a function in Madras on 11 August said that in the wake of continuing claims that LTTE military resistance had been crushed, there was no justification for New Delhi refusing to order a ceasefire in Sri Lanka.

#### JVP detainees

Sri Lankan Inspector General of Police Ernest Perera talking to the press in Colombo on 16 August said that around 900 members of the Marxist southern-based Peoples Liberation Front (JVP) - who have been blamed for 419 killings since August 1985 - were currently in detention. Another 100 suspected JVP subversives were rounded up in police raids on Walawewatte in the deep south on 23 August.

#### Refugee returns

A further 538 refugees were scheduled to arrive by ship at Kankesanthurai, Jaffna on 27 August bringing the total of refugees returned from south India since the beginning of the year to over 23,000.

## Stagnation in southern universities breeds

THE UNIVERSITIES in the south of Sri Lanka which have been closed down since mid-1987 will be re-opened on 12 September, the Government announced in late August. The re-opening has been postponed on two or three occasions in the last weeks. Responding to the announcement, student leaders made it clear that they would not attend lectures until all students held in police custody were released.

A number of hurdles remain for the Government to successfully negotiate, from the recognition of the Colombo South Medical College - which is opposed by many university students - to the glaring inequalities of the present admission system. In the recent past violence has become a feature of campus life and the Government places the blame squarely on the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

Prominent academics however say Government measures - which have increasingly

### subversion

eroded the independence of universities and brought them under what is effectively political control - are the real cause of the unrest.

The abolition of student unions has ended any illusion of democratic consultation. Student leaders allege that the Government dissolved the student unions following the defeat of United National Party-controlled unions at student elections.

Within the last year large numbers of university students have been arrested and held without trial. Charges against seven of those held were instituted only recently and others have obtained their release only on the recommendation of a committee headed by Defence Minister A C S Hameed. During August more were released following extensive talks between the Minister and the Inter-Union Students Federation.

A new and disturbing trend is the participation of high school students in demonstrations. Government response has been often harsh and unpredictable. A number have been arrested and in June Security Forces fired on a demonstration in Dikwella, killing a 19 year old high school student and injuring others.

Observers believe that such measures can only drive more and more students towards violent protest and ultimately extend the recruiting ground of the JVP.

Meanwhile the Government has invited a World Bank team to recommend ways to reorganise the education system and make it more cost-effective and employment oriented.

Ruhuna University Teachers Association have launched a campaign to establish the whereabouts of lecturer Sathyapala Wannigama, arrested by police in November 1987.

## A harder lesson than learning

THE NORTH AND EAST

ONE of the legacies of violent social upheaval in the North and East has been the disruption of the education system. Bombardment, curfew, intimidation and hartal have all taken their toll on one of the Tamil community's most cherished institutions. Empty classrooms have been the inevitable result.

Military operations disrupt examination schedules and demoralise students - the GCE (Advanced Level) examinations in the North and East this year, were held only in July some six months late.

Interference and alleged intimidation and assault by Indian troops and militant groups pose a constant threat to teachers and students alike.

Jaffna University Vice Chancellor S Vithyanathan recently resigned after being

assaulted for refusing to close the University during a militant hartal.

One of his students T Wimalaswaran was shot dead in July - allegedly by the LTTE - after condemning the killing last year of non-violent student leader Vijitharan.

Jaffna undergraduates this month boycotted lectures in protest at the continued detention of growing numbers of students by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). A group of 500 students marched to the IPKF camp in Jaffna demanding their release.

Education for the Tamil community has always been a tradition as well as a social asset - to be revered as well as respected. Its disintegration will mean the demise of a generation's hopes and aspirations.

## Curfew and killings curb rehabilitation

UNOFFICIAL curfew was re-imposed on Batticaloa in early August, following reported attacks by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on military camps belonging to the Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO).

The LTTE are said to have killed some 40-50 civilians in

the last month for a variety of offences ranging from giving water to Indian troops, to refusing to make financial contributions to the militant cause. A number of former LTTE personnel are said to be among the dead.

Six Indian Army personnel on routine patrol on the Batticaloa-Badulla road were killed on 3 August when a landmine hurled their vehicle into the air. Subsequent cordon-and-search operations around Kopaveli, 15 miles outside Batticaloa yielded little result.

A widely predicted major offensive by Indian troops against LTTE units in the Batticaloa area during August did not materialise, despite heavy reinforcements from Trincomalee and India.

Two high-ranking LTTE members *Zimbo* and *Chuti* escaped from IPKF custody at Pavatkodichenai, 15 miles west of Batticaloa, while two other Tigers were reported killed by rival groups in separate incidents on 14 August.

All relief and rehabilitation work in Batticaloa remains under suspension following the killing of Fr Chandra Fernando and the abduction of Mr K Kanthasamy. The situation was not improved by the killing of another social worker Mr Murugesu Anandarajah on 2 August, on his way to his father's funeral.

There is increasing pressure on hospital services in the Batticaloa area due to shortage of trained medical personnel, ambulances and drugs. Despite a series of representations from community groups, the situation continues to deteriorate.

The SRI LANKA MONITOR is part of an information processing service set up by the British Refugee Council to keep Sri Lankan refugees in Britain, Europe and elsewhere, informed about the current situation in their home areas.

If you have any information you wish to share, or any enquiries you wish to make regarding developments in Sri Lanka, contact:

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Supported by the London  
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## Trincomalee

AFTER a bomb explosion in Trincomalee's bazaar district on 16 August, which killed ten people and injured 20 others, an exclusive *Security Zone* - surrounded by Lankan police and Indian troops - was established to protect the area's 1,500 Sinhalese residents.

The move followed continued demonstrations demanding the deployment of Lankan troops after the deaths of over 20 Sinhalese in terrorist attacks in August.

Tamil civil servants in the town were already on strike, in defiance of emergency regulation, claiming they were under threat from the heavy concentration of Sinhalese refugees settled near the *kachcheri* in the Fort Frederick area.

Visiting Home Minister K W Devanayagam gave assurances that government officers would be fully protected and Indian Army patrols were stepped up as communal tensions continued to rise.

Trincomalee Government Agent D M Ariyaratne was summoned to Colombo on 25 August, to discuss the current security situation in the district with high-ranking government officials.

## Ampara

REINFORCEMENTS of the Special Task Force (STF) are to be moved to Ampara from the south to deal with the deteriorating security situation in the area, said STF commander Superintendent L Karunasena in early August.

Armed terrorists have increased attacks on police and IPKF patrols in the district over the last month. Ten Sinhalese villagers gathering firewood were ambushed and killed by suspected Tamil militants in the remote Marawela area. STF camps have already been established at Pottuvil and Lahugale to protect surrounding villages.

Discussions held in Trincomalee in mid-August between government officials, IPKF officers and detainees recently released from Boosa and other detention camps, have resulted in an extra Rs2,000 being promised to the former prisoners by the Ministry of Rehabilitation.

Representations were also made concerning individuals who remain in detention, some of whom have been held for more than two years.