

Donor roadmap to peace

The international community confirmed its support for the peace process in Sri Lanka by pledging \$4.5 billion in aid for reconstruction, at a conference held in Tokyo on 9 and 10 June. India was among 51 nations and 22 international agencies participating in the *Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka*.

Norway was named as co-chair of the conference along with Japan, the US and European Union (EU), but none of the Norwegian high-level team that was involved in the peace process turned up. The reason appears to be the decision of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to boycott the conference.

The Tigers are furious that they were left out of the 14 April pre-Tokyo pledging seminar on reconstruction in Washington. In May, the LTTE demanded the establishment of an interim administration for the north-east region with adequate legal authority. Senior Tiger leaders indicated in early June that only a definite response from the government on the interim administration would persuade them to take part.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe failed in his attempts to meet President Chandrika Kumaratunge before leaving for the conference. President Chandrika also refused a Japanese request for a message to be read at the meeting. Mr Wickremasinghe faced a noisy demonstration in Tokyo on 8 May, by suspected members of the People's Liberation Front (JVP), who accused him of conniving with the LTTE to divide Sri Lanka.

The \$4.5 billion aid will be spread over a four-year period between 2003 and 2006. In addition, there will be technical support. Japan and the Asian Development Bank have each pledged \$1 billion and \$800 million will come from the World Bank. The EU is expected to provide \$293 million. The opposition People's Alliance (PA) criticized the aid package, describing it as a 'debt trap' as 90% would be loans which must be repaid by the people of Sri Lanka.

Assistance by the donor community must be closely linked to substantial and parallel progress in the peace process towards the objectives agreed upon by the parties in Oslo.

Tokyo Declaration 10 June 2003

Spokesman Sarath Amunugama said that the PA will reject World Bank development models and adopt alternative plans.

The Tokyo Declaration of 10 June says that the North-East Reconstruction Fund, administered by the World Bank, will be an important channel for assistance. The Declaration emphasizes that assistance by the donor community must be closely linked to substantial and parallel progress in the peace process towards fulfilment of the objectives agreed by the parties in Oslo. In December last year, the government and the LTTE agreed at Oslo 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 Declaration adds that the peace process would need the expeditious development of a roadmap towards a political solution. It indicates several milestones, including effective delivery mechanisms for development activity in the north-east, participation of a Muslim delegation in peace talks, solutions for those displaced and effective promotion and protection of human rights. The international community intends to review and monitor the progress of the peace process closely. The task of undertaking consultations to establish modalities for periodic reviews were given to Japan, the US and EU.

At the conference, the US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and others urged the LTTE to return to the negotiating table. At a meeting with Norwegian special envoy Erik Solheim in London on 23 June, LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham again insisted that the Sri Lankan government must submit proposals for an interim administration if the Tigers were to return to talks. Mr Balasingham expressed fear that involvement of powerful extra-territorial forces might complicate the peace process and upset equal partnership. Observers believe that the Tiger leader was referring to the US.

As diplomats continued to visit Kilinochchi for talks with the LTTE, an incident on 14 June threatened to further destabilise the peace process. The Sri Lankan Navy attacked and sank the Tiger ship *MT Shoshin* off the coast of Mullaitivu District, killing 11 *Sea Tigers*. The LTTE say that their vessel carrying diesel was 265 nautical miles off the coast in international waters, but the Navy claims that it was within 175 miles. The Exclusive Economic Zone extends upto 200 nautical miles and Sri Lanka has sovereign rights within this zone.

Press reports suggest that the President ordered the sinking of the ship and that Defence Minister Tilak Marapane was informed only after the incident. However, Mr Marapane says there is reasonable suspicion that the vessel was carrying ammunition. He told Colombo newspaper *Sunday Observer* in late June that in case of reasonable suspicion, the Navy should stop the vessel for the purpose of investigation.

Another LTTE ship was sunk by the Navy off Mullaitivu in March. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has concluded that the Navy had the right to inspect the LTTE vessel according to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Tigers violated the Convention by failing to fly an appropriate flag. The SLMM has called on both parties to reach agreement as soon as possible on measures to prevent clashes at sea.

Colombo

Mass arrests in the capital

CORDON and search operations by security forces and mass arrests resumed in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo in late June. Colombo's Kochchikade suburb was searched on the night of 23 June. The following day, Dehiwela was targeted. In a major operation on 28 June in Wellawatte, Dehiwela, Mt Lavinia, Ratmalana and Moratuwa, Tamil houses, shops and vehicle were searched. The police have also set up 14 checkpoints.

According to Inspector General of Police (IGP) TE Anantharajah, over 500 Tamils were taken into custody. Police reports say most people were released within 24 hours, but 18 were detained. Tamil houses, shops and lodges in Piliyandala were searched on 29 June and 22 Tamils were held. On 1 July, 27 Tamils in the Colombo suburbs of Ginthupitiya and Fort were taken into custody. Two days later, 34 Tamils were arrested in various parts of the capital.

Addressing a press conference in early July, Defence Minister Tilak Marapane said that the arrests are taking place under normal law and not the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). He sought to assure that the Tamils need not fear. But the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has condemned the targeting of Tamils as a violation of human rights.

The security force search operations followed the killing of police Inspector Sunil Thabrew of the Terrorist Investigation Division (TID) in Dehiwela on 23 June. Mr Thabrew was shot dead in his quarters near Dehiwela police sta-

tion. The police have arrested LTTE suspect 24 year-old Selvathurai Kirubakaran. He was well acquainted with the Inspector who had found him a job as a shop assistant.

The LTTE is accused of killing a number of members of Tamil groups and intelligence officers. On 10 June, a Tiger suspect consumed cyanide when he was arrested by police in Wellawatte. He was admitted to hospital in a critical condition. Following the incident, the police searched the lodge where he lived, and arrested 16 Tamils detaining five.

The Peace Secretariat in Colombo has complained to the SLMM accusing the Tigers of ceasefire violations. The north-east security chiefs told President Chandrika on 17 June that powers under normal law were insufficient to counter the security threat posed by the LTTE and insisted that Emergency powers are necessary. The deteriorating security situation was the main topic of discussion when the President and Prime Minister met on 20 June and at a meeting of the National Security Council on 25 June.

Parliamentary opposition parties held a demonstration in Colombo on 4 June against the killing of Southern Provincial Council minister R Ranjit in May. Police have arrested three suspects. On 16 June, People's Alliance member and Western Provincial Council advisor Sunil Mendis was shot dead in Kandana. Former WPC United National Party (UNP) organiser Edward Silva has been arrested in connection with the murder.

Postponed

North-east local elections scheduled for 25 June were postponed to 24 January 2004 after the Supreme Court declared that amendments sought by government to election laws to call for fresh nominations, instead of papers submitted last year, was contrary to constitutional provisions on equality.

Festival

Huge crowds participated in the *Pongu Thamil* (Tamil Effervescence) festival on 28 June at Suthumalai in Jaffna. A festival declaration urged a north-east interim administration under the LTTE recognized by the government.

Strike

An island-wide strike launched on 10 June by the Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) was called off on 20 June. The doctors are demanding salary reform.

Denied

Colombo High Court denied bail on 18 June to former Defence minister Anuruddha Ratwatte and 14 others, accused of involvement in the murder of 10 Muslims during 2001 elections. The court accepted the argument that they posed a threat to witnesses.

Appointed

Radika Kumarasamy was appointed head of the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission in June. Ms Kumarasamy earlier served as UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women.

Jaffna & Mannar

EPRLF leader killed in Jaffna

SENIOR member of the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) Thambirasa Subathiran, 47, was shot in Jaffna on 14 June, while exercising in his office and later died in hospital. Mr Subathiran was deputy leader of the EPRLF faction led by Varadaraja Perumal, who was Chief Minister of the north-east in 1989. The LTTE is suspected to be behind the killing.

Although security was tightened in the aftermath, security forces agreed to grant permits to people attending the festival of the Nagapoosani Amman Hindu temple on Nainativu Island scheduled for early July. Permits must be obtained at the Navy checkpoint at Kurikadduvan on Punkudutivu Island. Devotees from

Jaffna peninsula will be issued permits at the Allaipitty checkpoint. People can use only boats that have been issued permits by the Navy.

Jaffna government secretariat says around 8,800 internal refugees have been resettled in western Valikamam region, but 92,000 are unable to resettle because of high security zones (HSZ). After the February 2002 ceasefire, until the end of May, 271,267 people returned home to Jaffna. In southern Thenmaratchy, 81,771 have returned. But 1,500 families are unable to resettle because of HSZs in six *Grama Sevaka* (Village Headman) divisions - Eluthumadduval South and North, Karampagam, Thanankilappu, Kaithady and Navatkuli.

In Mannar District, security forces have agreed to allow resettlement of refugees beyond 100 metres from the naval base on Talaimannar Island, Government Agent V Visvalingam says. Landmines are a threat in 21 villages in the district and 20 other villages have been declared HSZs. As a result, some 2,500 families are unable to resettle.

Further south in Anuradhapura and Puttalam, dry rations to refugees have been delayed. In Puttalam, refugees in camps have not received dry rations since April although the Rehabilitation Ministry allocated Rs 61.2 million for the first six months of 2004. Anuradhapura refugees were allocated Rs 13 million but received dry rations only in January.

Trincomalee & Hill Country

EPDP target

SUSPECTED LTTE gunmen shot dead EPDP member Ramasamy Vijayanathan in Trincomalee town on 7 June. On the same day, Thambalagamam Grama Sevaka S Kirubananthan suffered serious injuries in a grenade attack. In Varodayanagar, S Vijayasekaram was shot and wounded. The office of EPDP on Inner Harbour road came under grenade attack on 11 June and PLOTE's office at Arasady was damaged with a grenade on 1 July.

The security forces continued to carry out cordon and search operations in Trincomalee town and surrounding areas in June. Thirty four people were arrested in Sirimapura on 6 June. Police say guns and explosives were found in the area. A

number of people were taken into custody during a house-to-house search operation in Trincomalee town the following day, but all were released.

The Navy arrested LTTE cadre Kogulan, 15 and *Suvendrarakah*, 16, in early June at Palampotaru. They are accused of entering an Army-controlled area with weapons. Tiger member V Manojkumar was taken into custody by the Navy the following day at Nilaveli and handed over to the police who say that he had a T56 rifle and three grenades at the time of the arrest.

The LTTE say that their member Gurunathan, arrested by the Navy several months ago, must be released if they are to release a naval officer taken into cus-

tody on 13 May. Two Tamil youths have complained to the SLMM that they were severely beaten up by the Navy at Muthur on 11 June.

In the Hill Country, 30,000 tea workers in Maskeliya and Upcot areas staged a strike on 7 June over police attitude towards the attempted abduction of a 13 year-old student. The girl was on her way to school from her home on Brunswick Estate in Maskeliya when the attempt was made. A number of abductions and rapes have taken place in the Hill Country and the police are accused of turning a blind eye. It is also alleged that the police are harassing people who raise this issue in public.

On 8 June, over 3,000 people demonstrated before the police station in Maskeliya and a petition demanding action against the gangs involved in criminal activities was submitted to the Superintendent of Police in Hatton. Students in a number of schools staged demonstrations in several areas of the Hill Country and in Colombo.

Over a 1,000 people participated in another protest in Nuwara Eliya, organised by the Hill Country political party and trade union, the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) on 23 June. The CWC is part of the ruling United National Front coalition, but opposes government plans for a hydropower dam in Kotmale. The CWC says that large areas will be inundated under the scheme, affecting the homes of thousands of tea workers and their livelihoods.

Report on landmines

Responsibility

IN a report dated May 2003 and titled *Explosive remnants of war in Sri Lanka*, Landmine Action says that users of munitions that create explosive remnants of war should continue to be responsible for clearance or the provision of financial, technical and practical assistance. The London-based agency has called on the parties to act more proactively in providing maps of landmines and information to institutions involved in mine clearance. The report says that explosive remnants are impeding peace efforts, delaying resettlement and reconstruction and hampering humanitarian and development initiatives. Children make up a significant proportion of landmine victims in north-east Sri Lanka. There were 65 incidents of injuries and deaths in Jaffna peninsula by explosive devices in 2002 and 30% of the victims were children. In the Vanni, there were 26 incidents between January and August 2002 and 38% were children. Death or injury has serious economic implications for households that may have

already been torn apart by the effects of war, particularly where the principal breadwinner of the family has been killed or unable to return to work.

These families need long-term rehabilitation services such as vocational training and micro-credit schemes. Even though women are less likely to be victims of explosive remnants of war, such incidents still have a long-term effect on their lives. As a result of the conflict, there is a higher proportion of female-headed households in the north-east. The burden for female heads of households is doubled if their children are disabled by landmines as they have to care for them for the rest of their lives with limited support from social services. Landmine Action has called for sustained funding from the international community for clearance and other mine action initiatives.

Bindunuwewa

Death sentence

TWO police officers were among five persons sentenced to death by the Colombo High Court on 1 July in the Bindunuwewa case. The gruesome massacre of 27 Tamils at the Bindunuwewa rehabilitation centre in Bandarawela on 25 October 2000 caused international outrage. The Attorney General filed indictment against 41 people but only 18 faced trial. Thirteen of them were also freed due to lack of evidence.

The police officers sentenced to death were Inspector Senaka Karunasena who was officer-in-charge (OIC) at the Bandarawela police station and Sub-Inspector Tyrone Ratnayake of the Diyatalawa police station. The other three are villagers of the area.

According to evidence by witnesses in court, a boy was hacked to death by policemen and civilians belonging to a Sinhalese nationalist group, even as he begged a senior police officer to spare his life. Four Tamils were burned alive and another's head was severed with an electric hacksaw.

A large number of policemen were present at the scene of the massacre. The court said that the police failed to prevent the killings thereby colluding with the civilians involved. Judge Sarath Ambepitiya said that the killings could have been avoided if not for the complicity of the police officers and condemned the police for shooting at victims who sought protection from them.

Tamil group killings continue in the east

Arrest under CPC

People in the Eastern province say that unmarked white vans are back in action, creating fear among the population in the districts. Such vans were the hallmark of military death squads before the ceasefire of February 2002. Complaints have been made to the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission that two youths were taken away in a white van on 4 June. Relatives believe George Chandramohan and Jesuthasan Ajanthan were forced into the van at Kallady in Batticaloa District by intelligence officers from Colombo.

The relatives of the youths have not been given any information and their whereabouts remains unknown. According to reports, another person was also similarly arrested. On 18 June, S Nanthakumar was abducted in a white van at Madathady in Trincomalee District. Tamil MP Joseph Pararajasingham brought the new development to the notice of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe when they met in Colombo on 12 June.

Before July 2001, when Emergency was in force, Presidential Directives under Emergency regulations provided for the issue of arrest receipts and security forces were required to provide relatives information on the reasons for arrest and the place of detention. Thereafter, arrest and detention of LTTE suspects continued under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The ceasefire agreement of February 2002 provides that arrests will take place under normal law and not under the PTA. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure Act (CPC), there is no obligation for police to provide any information to relatives.

In terms of the CPC, a suspect must be produced before a Magistrate's Court within 24 hours, excluding the time necessary for the journey from the place of arrest to the Magistrate. But the CPC does not say that the suspect must be produced before the Magistrate's Court having jurisdiction over the area where the arrest took place. Some people arrested in the north-east are produced before the Magistrate's Court in Colombo after several days and the police often claim that time was spent on travel.

Tamil killings in the east continued in June. The LTTE are suspected to be behind the killings, but the Tigers have

Before July 2001, Presidential Directives under Emergency regulations provided for the issue of receipts to relatives of the arrested person. Currently, police have no such obligation.

again denied involvement. On the night of 6 June, Sinniah Samuel and his 18 month-old daughter Abisha were killed in a grenade attack at Arayampathy, three miles south of Batticaloa town. By-stander Sivagnanam Libina, 8, was wounded. Mr Samuel had worked for Tamil groups EPDP and EPRLF. The EPDP have complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) that their cadres Samsudeen Asmin and Nallathamby Varathan were threatened with death by armed LTTE cadre in early June in Batticaloa.

As the Army and police intensified security operations, EPDP's Ponniah Ramachandran was shot dead in Kallady on 15 June. Three others, including Yogaratnam Jilomi, were wounded in a grenade attack in the same area. The

security forces re-introduced checks on roads leading to LTTE-held areas at Valaiyiravu, Chenkalady, Karuthapalam and Paddiruppu on 16 June.

Former EPRLF cadre Pakiyarasa Kumaranathan was shot dead at Veeramunai in Amparai District on 23 June. Four days later, EPDP supporter Nadesan Sutharsan was killed by two gunmen. Former Army intelligence officer Veerapathipody Punniamurthy is missing from 23 June. His wife has made complaints to the ICRC and the SLMM. The EPDP office in Batticaloa came under grenade attack on 3 July, but no one was injured.

A *hartal* (general strike) took place in the Tamil areas of Batticaloa and Amparai districts on 12 June against continuing security force harassment and arrests. Observers in Batticaloa say that the LTTE-inspired *hartal* was launched mainly to demand the release of three Tiger members, including Thimilaitivu area political leader D Sathiyaraj. Schools and shops were closed and there were no bus services.

Mr Sathiyaraj was arrested on 5 June in connection with the murder of Razik Group member Kathirgamathamby Navasooriyam on 19 May. He was produced before the Batticaloa Magistrate's Court and remanded. In retaliation, the LTTE abducted policemen AGN Senadheera and DS Nihal on 10 June in Chenkalady and say that they will be held until Mr Sathiyaraj is freed.

T Soundararajan was seriously wounded in an attack by the police Special Task Force (STF) on eight Tamil youths in Mandur on 12 June. The youths were on their way to Vellaveli to collect things for Navithanveli Kannagi Hindu temple. They were attacked after refusing to work in the STF camp in Mandur. Amparai MP Chandraneeru has complained to the Defence Ministry demanding action against the offenders.

When *hartal* was observed in Tamil areas on 12 June, a grenade was thrown on a Muslim shop in Valaichenai town wounding four. M Hanifa, 41, and A Meerasaibu, 60, were seriously injured. In another grenade attack on 15 June, seven Muslims, including Atham Lebbe, 55, sustained injuries. A third bomb in Valaichenai town damaged a Muslim-owned shop on 26 June.

THE SRI LANKA MONITOR is part of an information 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. The Sri Lanka Monitor for a particular month may contain information relating to events of previous months or the early part of the following month.

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ISSN 0955-5943