

# **WE WANT TO GO HOME**

**S. H. HASBULLAH** M.A., Ph. D.

**THE NORTHERN MUSLIMS' RIGHTS ORGANIZATION**  
**1996**



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## TO THE READER

This little booklet is a publication of the Northern Muslims' Rights Organization. Its aim is to set out briefly the background to the ethnic question in Sri Lanka in so far as it relates to the Muslim community in Sri Lanka and more particularly the Muslims who were forcibly evicted from their homes in the Northern Province.     >

These Muslims are now living as refugees in camps located in Puttalam, Kurunegala, Anuradhapura and other places. The booklet highlights some of the problems faced by the refugees. We wish to create an awareness of the problem and of its magnitude. We do not expect instant solutions. However, our people, our rulers at all levels and foreign governments and organizations must be made aware of the dimensions of the problems involved. The main task is to create the conditions for peace in our country. The Muslims are willing to forget past injustices and to work together with others for the prosperity of our country. The Muslims have an identity of their own and they cherish the values of their faith. The north is their home as well. The displaced Muslims yearn to return home as soon as conditions permit. This may not be possible in the near future. However, it is their wish to return to their original homes when peace returns.

Secretary  
Northern Muslims' Rights Organization.  
28th August 1996

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Published by  
Northern Muslims Rights Organisation  
19th August 1990



## WE WANT TO GO HOME

**S.H. Hasbullah M.A. Ph.D**

### **President of the Northern Muslims' Rights Organization**

(Presidential Address delivered at the public meeting organized by the Northern Muslims' Rights Organization on 30th October 1995 at the Colombo Public Library Auditorium to commemorate the fifth anniversary of the forcible expulsion of the Muslims of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka)

Bismillahirrahmanirraheem, In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

On behalf of the Northern Muslims' Rights Organization, I welcome the Honorable Deputy Minister of Media Al Haj S.A. Seyed Alavi Moulana, the Honorable Members of Parliament, the Honorable Chairman of the World Solidarity Forum the Reverend Yohan Devananda, the writer and poet Mr. V.I.S. Jeyapalan, the journalist and orator Janab As Sheik Lafir Mathany and the Honorable former Member of Parliament Janab M.N. Iyoob. I welcome all of you who have honoured us with your presence today.

Friends,

We are meeting here today to commemorate the fifth anniversary of a very sad event in our island story and in the story of the Muslim people in this beautiful island of ours, Sri Lanka or as it was known in days of old, Taprobane or Serendib.

The Muslim people, who had until five years ago lived and worked and looked after their homes, their fields, their gardens, their cattle, their pets and went to pray in their mosques in the Northern Province do not live there any more. The Muslims of the north followed different kinds of occupation. Many were traders and small

businessmen. Others were tailors or pedlars selling their wares on their bicycles. Some of them had land and houses. They owned radio and TV sets and their children went to school in the village or towns. They were good Muslims and they went to the mosque on Fridays and at other times. They observed the Ramazan fast according to the teaching of Islam. They celebrated the great festivals Ramazan, Hadji and the Prophet's birthday. Some of them went on pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Muslim people of the north did not depend on the charity of others. They were mostly independent people. Some were professional people. All were not wealthy. But they did their best to lead clean, decent lives and to bring up their children according to the teachings of Islam.

The Muslims of the north were a minority. The Tamil people were the majority while the Muslims and the Sinhalese were minorities in the north. The Muslims of the north got on very well with the Tamil people. Most Muslims spoke Tamil and Tamil was used at home and at school. There was no quarrel or trouble of any kind between the Tamil people and the Muslim people of the Northern Province.

One day five years ago, the blow fell on our people in the north. It was like a bolt from the blue. Without any warning and without any kind of charge or accusation against our people, the LTTE announced that every single Muslim man, woman and child must leave their homes and go out of the province. They were ordered to leave their possessions behind. All their money and jewellery and household goods had to be left behind. If anyone disobeyed the order, the penalty was to be death.

On the day the order to leave was given, it rained very heavily in the north. Children and old people and sick people would find it impossible to travel. So the Muslim people appealed to the LTTE to allow them to delay their departure till the heavy rains ceased. But this



appeal was rejected. The Muslim people, said the LTTE, must leave at once whatever the weather conditions may be. So the old and the sick and the very young infants had somehow to leave the province according to the LTTE order.

The Muslims of the Northern Province are now living in Puttalam and in other areas in small huts made out of cadjan. These huts can catch fire at any time. Their occupation is gone. They have no earnings with which to feed their families. Their sense of dignity is shattered. They have to depend on assistance from various voluntary organizations which provide food items and some other forms of assistance. We are grateful to these national and international voluntary organizations which have come forward to provide assistance to these uprooted people.

I need not tell you that it is the desire of these people to go back once more to their homes in the north. The north is their home as well just as it is home to the Sinhalese people and the Tamil people. Let people never forget that the north is our home as well. We want to go back to our homes. This is our great desire. We have not abandoned our traditional home. No-one can deny our right to live with dignity and in security free from fear in our homes. We recognize the fact that we are a minority community in this region. We accept the fact that the Tamil people are the majority and that the Sinhalese and the Muslim people are minorities there. But we must have the human rights which all civilized people enjoy and which the United Nations has accepted in the Declaration of Human Rights. We insist that effect be given to the human rights stated in the Declaration of Human Rights: the right to life, the right to live and to work in our homeland in the north, the right to freedom from fear of violence.

Friends, one important point, I would like to stress here. There have been periods of great violence in recent times such as 1956, 1958 and 1983. After these violent disturbances, the affected people came back to their former areas to live and work. No attempt was made or

tolerated to prevent these people returning to their homes. No armed groups ever sought to deprive these people of their homes and the right to live there. A professor of anthropology, at Harvard University, a Sri Lankan has emphasized this point in an address to anthropologists from all over the world.

But with the Muslims, this has not been so. The Muslims were ordered to leave the Northern Province five years ago and still conditions are too unsettled for them to return to their homes. You will have noticed that the Government has appointed Presidential Commissions to investigate a number of individual and group violations of human rights during the time of the previous government. However, no official inquiry of any sort has been held to inquire into the causes of the forcible eviction of the Muslims, the losses they have suffered and the compensation which is their due for this loss. Five years have gone by and no statesman, no MP, no Minister has spoken in support of such an inquiry. This is a very important matter which we must take up with the leaders of our country, Her Excellency the President, MPs, Ministers and others.

We are Muslims of the Northern Province of this our island home. Five years have gone by since our forcible eviction. No-one has highlighted the plight of an innocent people like the Northern Muslims. What is strangest in this episode is that a group belonging to a community which is tireless in drawing attention to the erosion of human rights in respect of its own people thought it right to evict at gun point all our people in the north.

Friends, the north, we repeat, is our home as well and Inshaallah we intend to return to it one day. If we are united, there is much that we can do. Many people even in this island do not know about the forcible eviction of the Muslims of the Northern Province. We must do our best to make people aware of the facts. We must highlight the plight of the Muslim people in the north. It is not charity that we ask



for. I repeat, it is not charity that we ask for. We thank all the voluntary bodies for their help and assistance during our troubles. But our main desire is to return home. The north is our home as well. We want to go home. We want to go home. We want to go home.

Our children are our main concern. They must receive a good education in an Islamic background. They must be able to attend school in a free and peaceful atmosphere.

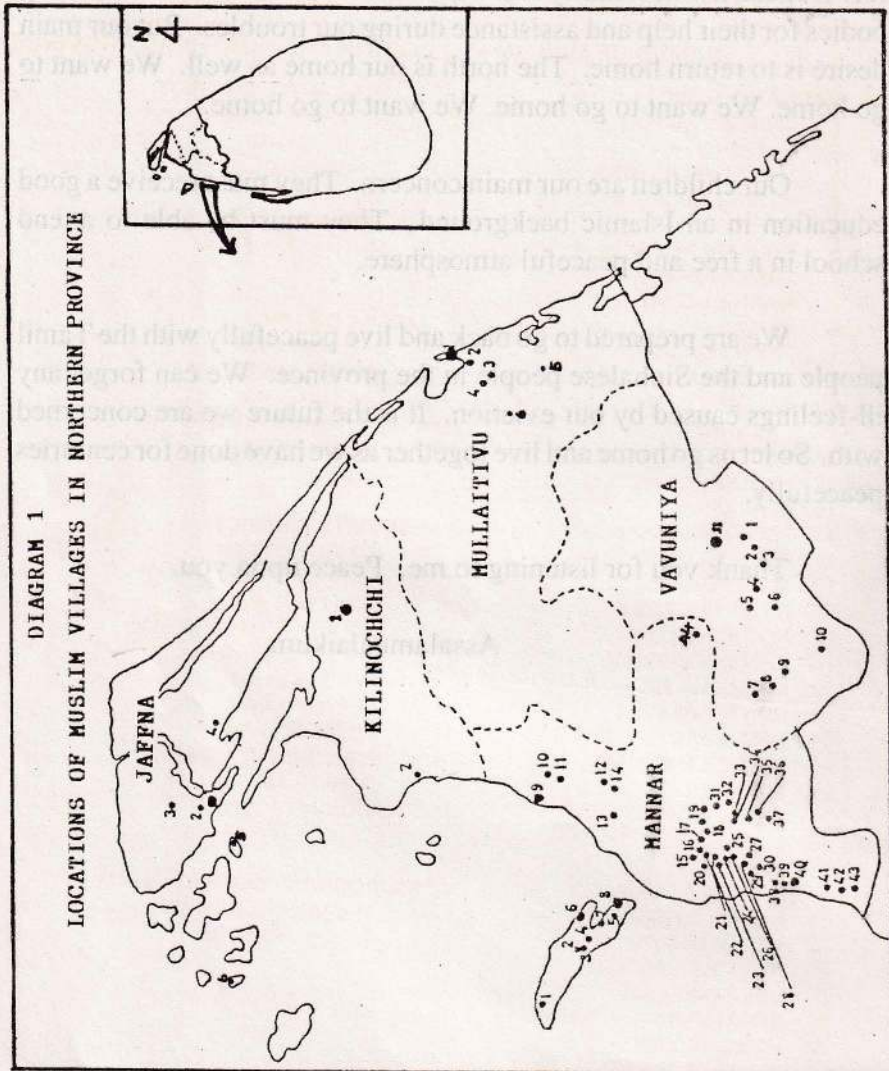
We are prepared to go back and live peacefully with the Tamil people and the Sinhalese people in the province. We can forget any ill-feelings caused by our eviction. It is the future we are concerned with. So let us go home and live together as we have done for centuries peacefully.

Thank you for listening to me. Peace upon you.

Assalamualaikum.



DIAGRAM 1  
 LOCATIONS OF MUSLIM VILLAGES IN NORTHERN PROVINCE



## NAMES OF MUSLIM VILLAGES IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE

### MANNAR DISTRICT

- 1 TALAIMANNAR
- 2 KARISAL
- 3 THULLUKKUDIYIRUPPU
- 4 PUDUKKUDIYIRUPPU
- 5 KEERI
- 6 ERUKKALAMPIDY
- 7 THARAPURAM
- 8 MANNAR TOWN
- 9 VIDALTIVU
- 10 PERIYAMADHU
- 11 MINUKKAN
- 12 ANDANKULAM
- 13 VILLANKULI
- 14 VADDAKANDAL
- 15 RASOOLPUTHUVELI
- 16 ALAVAKKAI
- 17 PUTHHIRARKANDAN
- 18 POOVARASANKULAM
- 19 MURUNKAN
- 20 ILANTHAIMODDAI
- 21 NOCHCHIKULAM
- 22 ILANTHAIMODDAI
- 22 MANALKULAM
- 23 ILANTHAIKULAM
- 24 PANDARAVELI
- 25 POONCHIKULAM
- 26 SIRUKKULAM
- 27 PUTHUVELI
- 28 MUSALI
- 29 VARIVELI
- 30 KOOLANKULAM
- 31 4TH MILE POST
- 32 VELLANKULAM
- 33 PICHCHAIVANIYAN
- 34 VEPPANKULAM
- 35 POTKERNY
- 36 VANNAKULAM
- 37 AHATHIMURIPPU
- 38 THAMBATTAMUDALI
- 39 CHILAVATURAI
- 40 KONDACHCHI
- 41 KARADIKKULI
- 42 PALAIKULI
- 43 MARICHCHIKADDY
- 44 KAKAIYANKULAM

### MULLAITIVU DISTRICT

- 1 MULLAITIVU TOWN
- 2 HIJRAPURAM
- 3 THANEEYUTU
- 4 NEERAVIPITTI
- 5 THANNIMURIPPU
- 6 MUTHAYANKADDU

### JAFFNA DISTRICT

- 1 JAFFNA TOWN
- 2 MOOR STREET
- 3 CHUNNAGAM
- 4 CHAVAKACHERI
- 5 MANKUMBAN
- 6 NAINATIVU

### VAVUNIYA DISTRICT

- 1 POONTHOTTAM
- 2 PATTANICHUR
- 3 PULIYANKULAM
- 4 SOODUVENTHAPULAVU
- 5 CHALAMBAIKULAM
- 6 PAWATKULAM
- 7 NERIYAKULAM
- 8 CHEDDIKULAM
- 9 ANDIYAPULIYANKULAM
- 10 MANKULAM
- 11 VAVUNIYA TOWN

### KILINCHCHI DISTRICT

- 1 KILINCHCHI TOWN
- 2 NACHCHIKUDA



## DIAGRAM 2

### ROUTES TAKEN BY MUSLIM REFUGEES, OCTOBER 26-30 1990

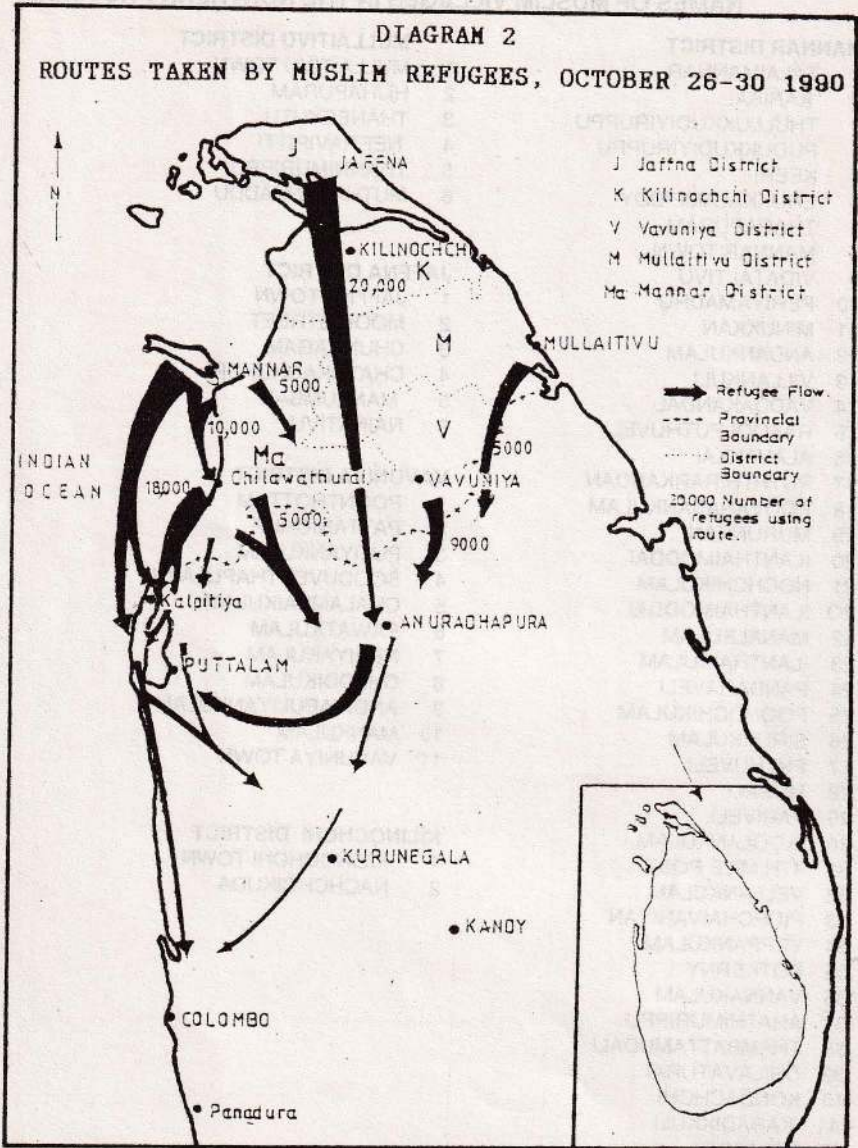
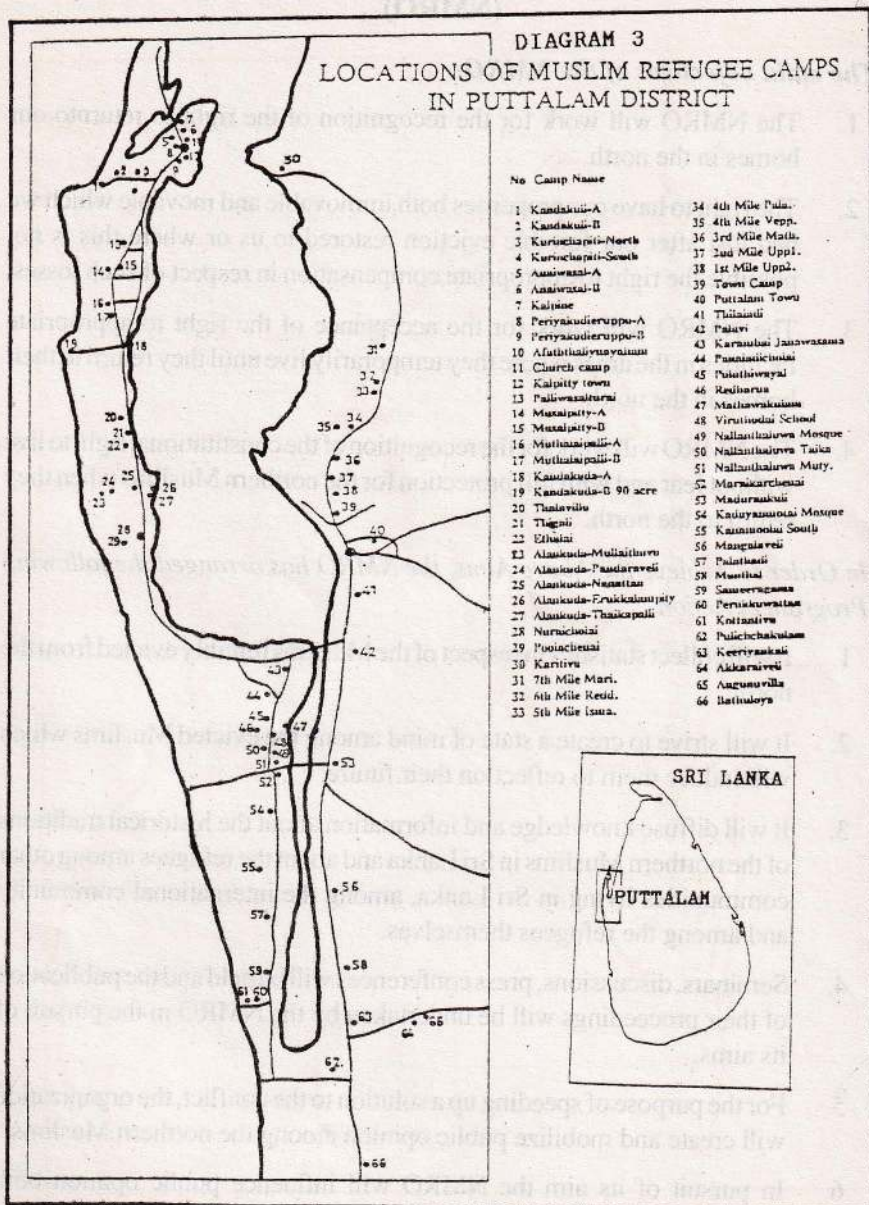
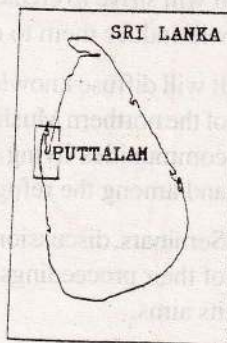




DIAGRAM 3  
LOCATIONS OF MUSLIM REFUGEE CAMPS  
IN PUTTALAM DISTRICT

No Camp Name

- |    |                       |    |                       |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1  | Kandakudi-A           | 34 | 4th Mile Pala.        |
| 2  | Kandakudi-B           | 35 | 4th Mile Vepp.        |
| 3  | Kurichappai-North     | 36 | 3rd Mile Math.        |
| 4  | Kurichappai-South     | 17 | 2nd Mile Uppi.        |
| 5  | Anaiwatal-A           | 38 | 1st Mile Uppi.        |
| 6  | Anaiwatal-B           | 39 | Town Camp             |
| 7  | Kaipise               | 40 | Puttalam Town         |
| 8  | Periyakudieruppu-A    | 41 | Tilainali             |
| 9  | Periyakudieruppu-B    | 42 | Palai                 |
| 10 | Afathalaiyuvayinnu    | 43 | Karambai Jaanwazama   |
| 11 | Church camp           | 44 | Paanaiyinnu           |
| 12 | Kaipity town          | 45 | Palaithiruvai         |
| 13 | Paliwatalurai         | 46 | Rediarua              |
| 14 | Masalapity-A          | 47 | Mathavakulam          |
| 15 | Masalapity-B          | 48 | Viralindai School     |
| 16 | Muthalaipali-A        | 49 | Nallanthalaiva Mosque |
| 17 | Muthalaipali-B        | 50 | Nallanthalaiva Taika  |
| 18 | Kandakuda-A           | 51 | Nallanthalaiva Muty.  |
| 19 | Kandakuda-B 90 acre   | 52 | Marsakarcennai        |
| 20 | Thalavali             | 53 | Masurankudi           |
| 21 | Thennai               | 54 | Kaduyannalai Mosque   |
| 22 | Elthani               | 55 | Kannunthai South      |
| 23 | Alankudi-Mullaitivu   | 56 | Mangalaveli           |
| 24 | Alankudi-Paadiraveli  | 57 | Palanthai             |
| 25 | Alankudi-Nemattan     | 58 | Muthalai              |
| 26 | Alankudi-Erakkalampai | 59 | Sauverragama          |
| 27 | Alankudi-Thakappali   | 60 | Periakkalattai        |
| 28 | Narucholai            | 61 | Kottanave             |
| 29 | Puolichennai          | 62 | Pulichchakulam        |
| 30 | Kariva                | 63 | Keeriyakudi           |
| 31 | 7th Mile Mari.        | 64 | Akkaraveli            |
| 32 | 4th Mile Reid.        | 65 | Anguvavilla           |
| 33 | 5th Mile Isua.        | 66 | Ilatiyoora            |



## THE NORTHERN MUSLIMS' RIGHTS ORGANIZATION (NMRO)

### *The main objectives of the NMRO:*

1. The NMRO will work for the recognition of the right to return to our homes in the north.
2. The right to have our properties both immovable and movable which we had lost after our forcible eviction restored to us or where this is not possible the right to appropriate compensation in respect of such losses.
3. The NMRO will work for the acceptance of the right to appropriate facilities in the areas where they temporarily live until they return to their homes in the north.
4. The NMRO will work for the recognition of the constitutional right to live without fear and with full protection for the northern Muslims when they return to the north.

### *In Order to Achieve the Above Aims, the NMRO has arranged the following Program of Action.*

1. It will collect statistics in respect of the Muslims forcibly evicted from the north.
2. It will strive to create a state of mind among the evicted Muslims which will induce them to reflect on their future.
3. It will diffuse knowledge and information about the historical traditions of the northern Muslims in Sri Lanka and about the refugees among other communities living in Sri Lanka, among the international community and among the refugees themselves.
4. Seminars, discussions, press conferences will be held and the publication of their proceedings will be undertaken by the NMRO in the pursuit of its aims.
5. For the purpose of speeding up a solution to the conflict, the organization will create and mobilize public opinion among the northern Muslims.
6. In pursuit of its aim the NMRO will influence public opinion both nationally and internationally.

**‘ The North is Our Home as Well ’**

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