

**SRI LANKA**

**ECONOMIC  
BLOCKADE**



A Tamil Information Centre Publication



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BLOCKADE**

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## Introduction

Denial of fundamental rights and freedoms since independence is the source of the sufferings of the Tamil speaking people of Sri Lanka. Discrimination and escalation of violence against Tamils led to demands for autonomy for the Tamil regions which was denied by successive governments. A negotiated settlement to the conflict was the desire of the Tamils, but talks with the majority community for over a period of 25 years proved fruitless. While violence against Tamils increased in intensity, Sri Lankan governments gave greater impetus to discrimination and sought to make Tamils a minority in their own areas by planned Sinhalese colonisation.

The Tamils resolved in 1976 to establish a separate state where their security would be secured and the development of the Tamil nation would become a reality. Despite the resolution negotiations continued, but again proved ineffectual because of inability of Sinhalese political leaders to rise above party politics in the interests of the nation. The situation inevitably led to an armed conflict which intensified after the 1983 genocidal massacre in which around 2,500 Tamils were killed islandwide.

The Sri Lankan government invited the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1989 for negotiations. The LTTE responded positively and several rounds of discussions were held in Colombo. The year-long talks were dead-locked and fighting broke out again between the security forces and the LTTE on 11 June 1990.

Since the war resumed, there has been a government-inspired unofficial economic blockade of the Tamil Homeland. In August 1991, however, the Sri Lankan government banned 42 items including medicines, fertilisers, chemicals

and fuel under the Emergency (Restriction of Transport of Articles) Regulations No. 1 of 1991.<sup>(1)</sup> (See *Appendix 1*). Although the announcement was only in respect of the North, the Sri Lankan army has banned several essential items to the East. The Jaffna District which is the main area affected by the economic and military blockade has an area of 1036.8 sq. kms with a population, according to the 1981 census, of over 738,000.<sup>(2)</sup> In the district 35% of the people were involved in agriculture and fishing, 28% in other industries, 12.1% in trading, 9.6% in professions, 4.9% as clerks and 0.7% in management. Over 159,000 persons in the district were gainfully employed.

The economic blockade, which is comparable to the Nigerian government's blockade imposed on Biafra in the 1960s, has caused great misery to the Tamil people of the North-East and has resulted in thousands of deaths. Between June 1990 and December 1992 only a fraction of the food requirements of the North was allowed by the government. Restriction on food continues in 1993. In addition to the economic blockade, civilian areas are regularly bombed from air and shelled from military camps and sea causing enormous destruction and hundreds of deaths. The aim of the government undoubtedly is to subjugate the Tamils by force and the economic blockade is an essential component of its strategy.

Much of the consequences of the deprivation of food, medicine and other essential needs of civilians in contravention of international law, remain unpublished because of the approach of appeasement by international organisations currently working in Sri Lanka and due to coercive censorship by the Sri Lankan government. The Colombo English press, including the independent newspapers, ignores the suffering of the Tamil people of the North-East and has failed in its duty to the community.

The economic blockade continues despite the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Sri Lanka and in spite of the clear provisions of the Geneva Conventions relating to treatment of civilians in an armed conflict. This report is an attempt to highlight the problems of the Tamils resulting from the Sri Lankan government's economic blockade.

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## MEDICINE, HEALTH AND SANITATION

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In the Jaffna peninsula there were 27 hospitals and 23 health centres with 2,425 beds. In the whole of the health service in the peninsula there were 139 doctors, four senior health officers, 20 dentists 315 nurses, 50 health inspectors and 106 assistant health officers. The health service in the peninsula was one of the best in the island. But the situation has changed with the economic blockade and the ban on vital medicine.<sup>(3)</sup>

Surgical instruments and life-support equipment are not allowed into the North.<sup>(4)</sup> Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are expected to follow a lengthy procedure to transport essential medicines to the North. But on most occasions permission is refused by the military's Joint Operations Command (JOC). Only one private firm has been authorised by the JOC to make medicine crates for transportation by ship and the firm charges exorbitant rates which discourages NGOs, particularly Sri Lankan NGOs making applications for transport of medicine.<sup>(5)</sup>

Drugs for typhoid, bone and joint infections, bronchitis, urinary tract infection, allergic and inflammatory disorders, hypertension and renal failure are not available in northern hospitals. There is an acute shortage of anti-bacterial, anti-microbial injections and anti-tuberculous tablets. Anti-coagulants for thrombosis (coagulation of blood in blood vessels) and Ischaemic attacks (reduction of blood supply to part of the body) are in short supply. Even drugs used for anxiety, psychosis and related disorders are unavailable. Intravenous nutrition, insulin and medicines used in prevention and treatment of bleeding after childbirth or abortion have run out. Anti-tetanus injection, polio vaccine and triple vaccine for the prevention of polio, diphtheria and whooping cough are also not available.<sup>(6)</sup> Pain-killers, medicines to treat minor injuries and bandages are among the banned items to the North.<sup>(7)</sup>

As a result of the ban or restriction on medicines, disease has become rampant in the North. Patients treated at the Jaffna General Hospital per day has increased to 1,200 and nearly 200 of them are admitted to wards for further treatment.<sup>(8)</sup> During 1991, 800,000 people sought treatment in the Jaffna hospital and of these 590,000 were in-patients. Most were victims of air-raids and shell attacks.<sup>(9)</sup>

Currently there are three electricity generators at

the Jaffna hospital. In March 1993 one generator broke down and could not be repaired as spare parts were not available. Two other generators sent for repairs to Colombo have not been returned.<sup>(10)</sup> According to Jaffna hospital sources, the X-ray section which had been functioning in difficult circumstances without regular electricity supply, may have to be closed because of lack of X-ray films. Only 25% of the films required for the first quarter of 1993 were sent from Colombo. Doctors say each film is cut into six pieces and used only for urgent cases.<sup>(11)</sup>

Dead bodies can be preserved only for a short period as refrigeration is not possible without electricity. Refrigeration is also necessary for preserving some medicines, particularly anti-rabies vaccine.<sup>(12)</sup> In the first three months of 1992, 542 persons admitted to the Jaffna hospital died. Many died of malaria, cholera or diarrhoea.<sup>(13)</sup>

Between May and November 1992, 14,416 people were admitted to the hospitals in the Jaffna peninsula. In Jaffna 1,500 people died from malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal ulcers, hepatitis and heart diseases from January to November 1992, according to the Jaffna Regional Director of Health Services. Of these persons 1,049 died in the Jaffna General Hospital which is supervised by the ICRC and the others in the other divisional hospitals of the Jaffna peninsula, because of inadequacy of vital drugs for treatment. In the first eleven months of 1992, over 200 children died of typhoid or dysentery.<sup>(14)</sup> In the beginning of 1993 two professors of the Jaffna University died as a result of lack of medicine.<sup>(15)</sup>

Ambulances cannot be used in the North because of the ban on fuel. Reports say that in some areas of Jaffna even the ICRC is using bullock carts to transport patients. A number of patients died as a result of lack of proper transport.<sup>(16)</sup>

Only 2,500cc of anti-rabies vaccine is included in each monthly shipment of medicine which if received in Jaffna, is only sufficient for 48 persons.<sup>(17)</sup> Because of insufficient food, people of the North are unable to care for their dogs. In 1992 in Jaffna and Kilinochchi districts 1,933 persons were bitten by roaming stray dogs hunting for food and ten persons died because of inadequate anti-rabies vaccine. In December 1990 the ICRC reported that 18 people died of rabies in Manipay alone while Jaffna hospital authorities awaited the arrival of anti-rabies vaccine from Colombo.<sup>(18)</sup> In 1991, fifteen people died of rabies in the two districts according to Dr K T Sivapatham.<sup>(19)</sup> Reports in August 1991 said that six to ten people were dying of rabies every month at the Mannar Madhu refugee camp managed by the UNHCR.<sup>(20)</sup>

Many medical institutions have been destroyed by Sri Lankan airforce bombing in the North. In *Operation Whirlwind* in May 1992, the Tellippalai Cooperative Hospital, the Mallakam Rural Development Society building where various clinics of Tellippalai Government Hospital were held, the Vigneswara Dispensary and Surgery in Chunnakam and the Inuvil American Mission Hospital were bombed.<sup>(21)</sup> In the Jaffna city alone buildings, equipment and medicine belonging to the health sector estimated at Rupees 17 million (US\$377,000) was destroyed in 1991. The Myliddy TB hospital, Pannai chest hospital and the Tellippalai cancer hospital have been completely destroyed.<sup>(22)</sup>

Rupees 20 million (\$444,000) worth medicine is required for government and private hospitals in the North-East every month. For the ten-month period between June 1990 and April 1991, although the requirement was medicine worth Rs 220 million (\$4.9 million), only medicine for Rs 15 million (\$333,000), that is 7% of the requirement, was supplied by the government.<sup>(23)</sup> Reports from NGOs in the North in December 1992 said that there had been no regular supply of medicine for the previous five months.<sup>(24)</sup>

Chemicals such as malathion are also banned from being transported to the North. As a result preventive spraying has come to a standstill and malaria has become a major health problem. In the Jaffna peninsula 77,540 cases of malaria have been detected in the last three years.<sup>(25)</sup> Between July and September 1992, 3,978 persons had malarial fever in the Jaffna District and of them 311 had contracted the type of malaria that causes brain fever.<sup>(26)</sup>

There were 110 leprosy patients in the peninsula in 1991. Upto October 1992 the number had increased to 177. Reports say there is a danger of leprosy further spreading as a result of malnutrition and crowded conditions in refugee camps.<sup>(27)</sup> In the Puthur area, malnutrition has led to increase in the number of tuberculosis patients.<sup>(28)</sup>

A large number of people have sought treatment for malaria in the Pesalai Hospital in Mannar. Refugees in camps have no money and are unable to buy anti-malarial tablets. Refugees have also been affected by an epidemic of cholera on the Mannar Island and a number of children have died.<sup>(29)</sup> In the Batticaloa District in the East, a number of people were admitted to hospital in December 1992 with typhoid and malaria. During this month some children admitted to Batticaloa Hospital died of typhoid. Requests to spray malathion and chlorinate wells in the Batticaloa District have been turned down by the Health Department.<sup>(30)</sup>

In November 1992 the Jaffna Regional Director of Health Services Dr Ratnasabapathy said that the JOC had granted permission to transport only a fraction of the life-saving drugs to the Jaffna peninsula. The Regional Director had requested 58,000 Cloxacillin tablets, but only 14,000 were allowed by the JOC. Request was also made for 535,000 Amoxycillin tablets, but only 2,000 tablets were permitted. Although 1,970,000 Penicillin tablets were requested only 585,000 were approved. The amount of anti-rabies vaccine has also been cut down, according to the Regional Director.<sup>(31)</sup> Oxygen required by hospitals in Jaffna has not been supplied.<sup>(32)</sup>

Infant deaths have increased dramatically in the North-East. According to Jaffna Hospital records, during the seven months between April and October 1992, 148 children died after birth in the Jaffna District and 135 were stillborn.<sup>(33)</sup> Professor Sivasuriyar of the Jaffna Hospital says rise in infant mortality rate is due to lack of food or lack of nutritious food for pregnant women and poor health facilities. Many children are born prematurely due to shock caused by bombing and other violent incidents.<sup>(34)</sup>

Mental disorders have increased manifold in the North-East. Social workers say a substantial number of the population has been traumatised by the war. Necessary drugs for mental treatment are not available. According to the Jonathan Spenser survey report there has been a high increase in the suicide rate among young persons between the ages of 15 and 35 in the East.<sup>(35)</sup> Almost 50% of those receiving treatment at the Outdoor Patients Department of the Jaffna Hospital are psychologically affected, according to Dr T Somasundaram of the Jaffna University.

Dr A Sangarapillai reported in May 1992 that most patients visiting the Kayts Island hospital suffered from mental disorders caused mainly by separation from families.<sup>(36)</sup> Research has revealed that large number of people suffer trauma as a result of deaths, loss of property, grievous injury and refugee situations. Counselling facilities in the North-East are totally inadequate for the large number of patients who need psychological treatment.<sup>(37)</sup>

At a seminar in the Jaffna University in June 1992, Professor V K Ganeshalingam revealed that bombing in the North had increased the incidence of cancer. He further said that many people have become deaf by explosions and extensive bombing caused such environmental damage comparable to the use of biological weapons.<sup>(38)</sup>

When Members of Parliament complained about the lack of medicine in the Tamil areas, Health Minister

Renuka Herath said in March 1991 that 95% of the needs of Jaffna, 85% of the requirement of Vavuniya, 95% of the needs of Amparai and 90% of the needs of Trincomalee and Batticaloa had been provided.<sup>(39)</sup> According to social workers the statement of the Minister was true only in the case of Amparai, where most Tamils have been driven out of the district.

In the Mannar base hospital providing services for 24,000 people there is a shortage of medical personnel. The hospital laboratory is closed and therefore blood tests cannot be carried out leading to poor medical care for the people. The X-ray machine frequently breakdowns and requests for replacement have not been considered by the government. As in the case of Jaffna, doctors complain that they are unable to provide adequate medical care as there is no regular supply of medicines.<sup>(40)</sup>

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## FOOD

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Restrictions on food supply to the North has resulted in malnutrition and starvation. A nutritional survey conducted by the Jaffna Medical Officer of Health in December 1992 revealed that 5.7% of the children were below 60% of the weight for age (third degree malnutrition) and 58% were below 80% of the weight for age (second degree malnutrition). The percentage of infants below 80% of the weight for age increased from 27% in December 1991 to 37% in December 1992, pre-school children between ages one and two years from 44% to 57% and pre-school children between ages three and four years from 54% to 66%.<sup>(41)</sup>

In refugee camps in Jaffna, among the 6,636 children surveyed 47.8% were malnourished and 8% suffered from third degree malnutrition. Almost all pregnant and lactating mothers in refugee camps were suffering from anaemia. Maternal malnutrition has contributed to low birth weights. In the Jaffna Hospital 19% of the children born in 1989 were below 2,500 grammes and in 1991 the number rose to 23% resulting in a 25% increase in low birth weights.

According to the survey, all data indicated a downward trend in the nutritional status of children, mothers and the general population. NGOs alone, the survey says, would not be able to arrest the downward trend.<sup>(42)</sup>

The food supply to the North has been deliberately reduced by the Sri Lankan government to starve the

population. Most of the food aid said to have been sent by the government has not reached the North. In December 1992 it was revealed that government officials were involved in reducing food to the North and large quantities of food sent by ships has been spirited away at mid-sea with the assistance of the navy.<sup>(43)</sup> A CID investigation team said prominent people were involved and arrests were imminent.<sup>(44)</sup> But after four months no arrests have yet been made. Instead Presidential Advisor Bradman Weerakoon and Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe have begun to say at press conferences that the LTTE have seized food sent to Jaffna, confirming suspicions that top level government officials may be involved. According to them food worth Rs 166 million (\$3.7 million) has disappeared.<sup>(45)</sup>

In a letter to former President Premadasa in early 1991, the Jaffna Citizens Committee gave details of food received for 29 weeks in 1990, from 11 June, when fighting broke out between the army and the LTTE.<sup>(46)</sup>

Food item	Percentage received
Rice	16.2
Wheat flour	27.2
Sugar	30.6
Dhal (split pulse)	21.5
Milk food	34.7
Cooking oil	0.9
Coffee	1.7
Pepper	8.6
Garlic	6.8
Tea	12.1
Coriander	0.3

Between 10.6.90 and 10.6.91, of the total requirement of 70,800 tonnes of rice within the Jaffna peninsula (local population of 850,000 and 150,000 refugees from Trincomalee and Batticaloa), only 20,590 tonnes was supplied. During this period 42,800 tonnes of wheat flour was required, but only 14,330 tonnes was supplied. Further, 28,200 tonnes of sugar and 7,080 tonnes of dhal (split pulse) were needed but only 6,330 tonnes and 1,830 tonnes were supplied respectively.<sup>(47)</sup>

Of the total of 148,080 tonnes of essential food required by the people of the Jaffna peninsula only 43,080 tonnes, was supplied. Reports say that, taking into account the drop in local paddy production, the shortfall was 115,000 tonnes which means only 17% of



the food required for a year was supplied.<sup>(48)</sup> Likewise in Mullaitivu District only 10% of the food required was provided in 1991.<sup>(49)</sup> Similarly in 1992, only a fraction of food required by the population was provided.

The Sri Lankan army has prohibited several food items to the North including sweets and chocolates. On 10 May 1992 people were told by the army that they were not allowed to take glucose and eggs beyond Vavuniya.<sup>(50)</sup>

Fishing has been one of Jaffna's main industries and fish is the main source of protein for the people. Some 200,000 people depend entirely on this industry. Because of restrictions on fishing the annual production has fallen from 104,300 tonnes to 1,094 tonnes. Annually 6,605 tonnes of fish is required for local consumption and the catch is only 16.6% of the fish needed.<sup>(51)</sup>

The supply of food to the Jaffna peninsula has been further affected because of government neglect of facilities needed for the transport of food. Food is unloaded from ships at the port of Point Pedro, north-east of the peninsula. Earlier, 700-1,000 tonnes of food was unloaded at the port each day, but currently only 100 tonnes are unloaded. The pier has not been repaired and maintained regularly which is the responsibility of the Commissioner of Essential Services and the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction.

Ships cast anchor a quarter mile away from the port and food is brought ashore in boats. Of the five boats used earlier, two boats have sunk and the other three are in need of urgent repairs. These three boats are currently using water pumps to keep them afloat. Representations made to the government by Jaffna government officers have been ignored.<sup>(52)</sup>

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## FUEL

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Electricity supply to the North was cut off by the Sri Lankan government in June 1990.<sup>(53)</sup> The electricity generator at Chunnakam in the Jaffna peninsula was knocked out in August 1990 by airforce bombing.<sup>(54)</sup> All types of batteries are banned from being transported to the North and there is a restriction on candles and matchboxes. Civilians travelling North undergo thorough search at the Thandikulam checkpoint in Vavuniya District. A number of persons have been arrested for taking banned items or quantities above the limit imposed. As a result of these government restrictions whole of the North plunges

into darkness after 6pm.

In December 1992, Jaffna Government Agent K Manickavasagar applied for permission to the JOC to transport 500,000 matchboxes to the Jaffna peninsula. However, only 100,000 matchboxes were allowed by the JOC.<sup>(55)</sup>

An embargo on most kinds of fuel is in force. The Jaffna District alone requires 800,000 litres of kerosene (paraffin), two million litres of diesel and 900,000 litres of petrol every month.<sup>(56)</sup> The five northern districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya need 4.5 million litres of petrol, 9 million litres of diesel and 7.8 million litres of kerosene for transport, industrial and agricultural purposes and for domestic use each month.<sup>(57)</sup>

Currently only a small quantity of kerosene is allowed by the JOC. Kerosene is a vital all-purpose fuel for the people of the North-East and is used in water pumps, cookers, lamps and for a variety of other purposes, including, currently for vehicles in the absence of petrol and diesel. Because of the restriction on fuel, in some areas of the North people have to walk 20 kms to fetch firewood. People are also forced by circumstances to cut down trees for fuel which has resulted in the degradation of the environment.<sup>(58)</sup>

Upto October 1992 each government-authorised dealer in fuel was allowed to take 450 barrels of kerosene per month (ten lorryloads) to areas under LTTE control including the Jaffna District. In November 1992 the Sri Lankan government drastically cut the kerosene quota. Vavuniya dealers were allowed only 225 barrels, Kilinochchi businessmen 135 barrels, Mullaitivu traders 90 barrels and Mannar dealers 45 barrels. The supply to the Jaffna District was completely halted.<sup>(59)</sup> As a result, the price of a bottle of kerosene in Kilinochchi rose to Rs 100 from Rs 30 per bottle and to Rs 250 in the Jaffna District. In Colombo the price of kerosene is only Rs 8 per litre.

In November 1992, forty lorries carrying the authorised quantity of kerosene from Colombo were stopped at Medawachchiya army checkpoint, 16 miles south of Vavuniya and were held there for over a month. The lorries then returned to Colombo and sought permission from the JOC which was refused.<sup>(60)</sup> Lorries to the North have been held at Medawachchiya or Vavuniya on several occasions ostensibly for checking. Lorries from the North are also similarly held and after several weeks of delay perishable food has to be often dumped.

Vehicles to the North are allowed to carry only 40 litres of fuel in the fuel tanks. Excess fuel is drained

by the army at Medawachchiya. Batteries of diesel vehicles are also removed at Medawachchiya or Vavuniya and given back only on the return journey. Lorries carrying essential food often get stuck on the way without fuel and the batteries. The army alleges that these measures are necessary to prevent batteries and fuel falling into the hands of the LTTE.<sup>(61)</sup>

The Mannar town receives electricity supply only for two hours in the nights, as the 850k generator in Sunny Village is broken down and the Electricity Board has failed to effect repairs. Around 18,000 litres of diesel per month is required in Mannar for essential services and 3,000 litres for other services. In addition five barrels of petrol, five barrels of engine oil and two hundred barrels of kerosene are needed. Only a fraction of the kerosene needed is provided.<sup>(62)</sup>

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## STUDENTS AND EDUCATION

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In the Jaffna District there were 561 government schools and five private schools with 6,700 teachers and 206,800 students. Over 75 schools taught for GCE (Advanced Level) students.<sup>(63)</sup>

Students of the North have been badly affected by the economic blockade. Writing paper, exercise books and school bags are prohibited into the North.<sup>(64)</sup> The JOC has also refused permission to transport furniture for schools in the North.<sup>(65)</sup> Many schools have been commandeered by the armed forces.<sup>(66)</sup> Because of the lack of electricity and restrictions on fuel most students are unable to study after 6pm. Many students have been thus forced to give up studying and reports indicate that the student population in the North is falling rapidly.<sup>(67)</sup> According to the Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union over 2,000 teachers, that is 10% of the Tamil teachers in the whole of Sri Lanka have been forced to retire as a result of the war.<sup>(68)</sup>

North-East schools are often searched by the Army and students taken into custody. Various restrictions have been imposed on students. Students in private tutorials in the Batticaloa District were ordered in February 1993 to obtain special identity cards issued by the police. Tutor owners are required to submit a list of students to the nearest police station.<sup>(69)</sup>

Government examinations are generally not conducted in the North.<sup>(70)</sup> Even when examinations are held, question papers often arrive late or do not

arrive at all.<sup>(71)</sup> The GCE (Advanced Level) Examination scheduled for August 1990 was called off following clashes between the LTTE and government forces. Later, the government with the concurrence of the JOC agreed to hold a special examination in April 1991, but when the examination was about to commence, curfew was imposed on the very same day and massive military operations were begun in Jaffna, Mullaitivu and Mannar.<sup>(72)</sup> The examination could not be held.<sup>(73)</sup>

Many students had travelled to Colombo for the examination. In an attempt to restrict the number of Tamil students entering the universities, the minimum marks required to qualify for university admission (cut-out marks) was increased from 280 to 300 for the special examination.<sup>(74)</sup>

The GCE (Ordinary Level) Examination scheduled for December 1990 was postponed and no effort was made to conduct the examination. In Batticaloa District the examination was held in December 1990. The prevailing situation prevented many students from attending the examination. Teachers said that the syllabus for the year had not been completed and the students were unable to study in the previous six months because of army operations.<sup>(75)</sup>

Many schools have been bombed by the Sri Lankan airforce and school buildings destroyed. By July 1991, 212 schools in the Batticaloa District and 79 schools in the Jaffna District had been badly damaged. On 5 June 1991 a school in Kilinochchi was bombed seriously injuring a student. <sup>(76)</sup> K Rajakumar, a 27 year-old lecturer at the Jaffna University was killed when a shell fired from the Elephant Pass army camp hit his house in Chavakachcheri on 14 July 1991.<sup>(77)</sup>

There is a ban on chemicals into the Jaffna peninsula. The JOC earlier refused permission for the Jaffna University to transport chemicals.<sup>(78)</sup> Later, chemicals required for the Medical Faculty of the Jaffna University were transported under a special permit. But in July 1992, the JOC imposed a total ban on chemicals.<sup>(75)</sup> The ban has affected the University and schools teaching science. Even equipment sent to the Jaffna university by donor agencies from abroad have not been allowed into Jaffna.<sup>(80)</sup>

In late October 1992 Jaffna University Teachers Union President Professor A J V Chandrakanthan met Higher Education Minister A C S Hameed in Colombo and informed him that the Jaffna University should have electricity supply for at least five hours a day or kerosene generators should be supplied if the University was to function in the proper manner and until such arrangement was made kerosene should be supplied at a reasonable price to facilitate preparation

of lessons. It was also brought to the notice of the Minister that University officials were unable to attend local and international seminars which was vital for raising educational standards and request was made for reservation of at least two seats for University staff in ships plying between Jaffna and Colombo.<sup>(81)</sup> Although the Minister promised to take action nothing has been done.

Over 100 schools in the army-occupied areas in the North are not functioning and thousands of students from these areas have been compelled to seek admission to other schools in different areas. In such schools because of the large number of new students classes are conducted in open ground and under trees. Classes come to an end when rains come down.

Jaffna University students say as a result of restrictions on communication they are unable to keep pace with the latest developments in educational issues and co-operation with other universities both local and foreign has been disrupted. Most Students among displaced people are unable to continue their education.<sup>(82)</sup>

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## TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

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Restrictions on fuel has consequently affected transport in the North. Public transport has ground to a halt. A few vehicles that are in use run on a mixture of diesel and vegetable oil and most people have to walk or use bicycles. Some people in the Jaffna peninsula cycle 40 kms daily for work and become so tired they are usually unable to perform their duties in office. The prices of bicycle spare parts have risen sharply.<sup>(83)</sup> In December 1992 the army banned transport of new bicycles to the North beyond the Thandikulam checkpoint in Vavuniya. Spare parts for bicycles and other motor vehicles are also not allowed into the North.

In January 1993 the General Secretary of the Union of Tamil-Speaking Grama Sevakas (Government Village Headmen) VT Kathirkamanathan wrote to the JOC requesting permission to transport new bicycles for the Grama Sevakas of the Jaffna District, to enable them to carry out their duties. Permission was refused by the JOC.<sup>(84)</sup>

There are no train services in the North beyond Vavuniya. The Palaly airport in Jaffna is currently being used as a military base and is closed to civilians. High officials from the Jaffna secretariat

and other government officers were allowed urgent trips to Colombo from Palaly airport. In February 1992 the army announced that such officers too would not be allowed to travel from Palaly. Ships or boats cannot be used to travel from the Jaffna peninsula to the south by sea because of navy presence. The islands west of the peninsula are occupied by the army and the Elephant Pass road connecting the peninsula and the mainland is closed and heavily mined by the LTTE to prevent troops being rushed into the peninsula.<sup>(85)</sup>

The only way people could travel to the south is by crossing the Jaffna lagoon. People crossed in boats between Kilali in the Jaffna peninsula and Nallur on the mainland in the Kilinochchi District, the trip taking four to six hours. People were also able to take small amounts of food, fuel and other essential goods across this vital lifeline to the peninsula.

In June 1992 the Sri Lankan government announced that all routes to the Jaffna peninsula had been sealed off. Combined security forces blocked other crossing points at Uriyan and Kombadi.<sup>(86)</sup> Soon after the government's announcement, shelling of civilian boats in the lagoon from the Elephant Pass army camp and naval attacks began.

On 16 July a helicopter strafed boats carrying civilians and twenty people went missing after the attack.<sup>(87)</sup> Navy gunboats from the Nagathevanthurai naval base shot dead seven Tamils, including two women who stood with raised hands in the glare of a spotlight, in October 1992.<sup>(88)</sup> In the same month another eight Tamil civilians, including a nine year-old girl were killed by the navy.<sup>(89)</sup>

Naval killings continued in November and December and on 2 January, thirty nine civilians were killed when naval gunboats once again in the full glare of a spotlight fired on seven boats. Only 25 bodies were recovered and those killed included a retired government education officer and four teachers.<sup>(90)</sup> According to eye witnesses, boats were towed away by the navy with several civilians who have since disappeared.

Jaffna medical student Wilson Nicolas was killed on 24 March 1993 when a navy gunboat again fired on passengers waiting at Kilali to cross the lagoon. Two other students on their way to receive government Mahapola scholarships in Vavuniya were seriously injured.<sup>(91)</sup> The government has ignored requests by Tamil members of Parliament to hold inquiries into the Kilali killings. Rev D J Ambalavanar of the Church of South India wrote to President Premadasa in March 1993 explaining the reasons for the need of the people to travel to Colombo and other areas in

the south and urging that civilians be permitted to exercise their right to freedom of movement.<sup>(92)</sup> This and other appeals have fallen on deaf ears.

As said earlier, vehicles transporting food and other essential goods are often held at the Eeratperiyakulam army camp or the Thandikulam checkpoint in Vavuniya. In mid-October 1992 over 300 lorries in Jaffna and 200 lorries in Vavuniya were held for several days as a result of army restrictions.<sup>(93)</sup> In late March 1993 over 300 lorries carrying food were held for over two weeks at the Eeratperiyakulam army camp.<sup>(94)</sup> People travelling North are often held, sometimes for several days, at Thandikulam as a result of military operations and there is no shelter for the people to rest at Thandikulam.<sup>(95)</sup>

Army restrictions have also affected transport of patients to hospitals. Twenty year-old Ravichandran Saraswathy was sent by the Sri Lanka Red Cross in an ambulance from the Kilinochchi hospital in mid-March to the Vavuniya hospital for urgent treatment because of lack of facilities and shortage of drugs in the Kilinochchi hospital. There were also other sick patients in the ambulance. Soldiers at the Nochchimoddaï army check-point refused to allow the ambulance into Vavuniya town, despite the pleas of Red Cross officials. The ambulance was forced to return and Saraswathy died on the way to Kilinochchi. On 11 March 1993 patients from Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu hospitals were again held at the Nochchimoddaï checkpoint from 8 am to 2 pm despite the screams of a pregnant woman.<sup>(96)</sup>

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## COMMUNICATION

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Telephone connections to the North were disconnected by the Sri Lankan government in 1986 to ensure that information on human rights violations and atrocities of the security forces are not conveyed to the outside world. Consequently telefax facilities in the North also cannot be used.

Newspapers from the North are not allowed into the South and newspapers, magazines and books from the South are prohibited from being taken into the North. Some information reaches South when people manage to travel from the North. Thus it takes a long time for even urgent information to reach the other parts of the country and abroad. In many instances Tamils living abroad have received news about deaths of family members in the North after many weeks. Tamils in the South are usually unable to attend funerals of family members and

other important family occasions in the North because of delays in receiving information and the length of time needed for travelling.

As a result of the ban on paper, the printing industry has virtually ceased to exist. Newspapers are printed on cardboard, file covers or on the back of used computer print sheets.<sup>(97)</sup> In the North radios and televisions cannot be used because of lack of electricity and the ban on batteries. A Jaffna resident writes: "Because we have no news, no communication and no entertainment whatsoever, we are being pushed into becoming an insane community".

Northern Tamils have great difficulty in sending out letters. Post offices have been destroyed or are not functioning and in most places postal stamps are not available. Many letters from the North and to the North from southern Sri Lanka and abroad do not reach their destinations. After June 1990, postal services within northern areas and between North and South was completely disrupted. Later, the ICRC undertook to transport letters to the North by ship and make arrangements for distribution. Letters were transported to the North once or twice a month in the ship *Kumana*.

In February 1993, Colombo Ports Authority demanded Rs 5,000 from the Postal Department as handling charges for 87 postal bags which arrived from the North. The Postal Department denied that it was obliged to pay as ICRC ran the service free of charge. The dispute has led to the postal bags lying at the Colombo Port for several months.<sup>(98)</sup>

Colombo postal officers have used the difficult situation in the transport of letters to commit fraud and theft. In February 1993 it was revealed that a postal employee had used postal seals belonging to the post office in the army-controlled Kayts Island (west of the Jaffna peninsula) to change money orders worth many thousand rupees.<sup>(99)</sup> Another employee was arrested on 6 March while attempting to remove a postal bag to the North containing over 2,000 letters.<sup>(100)</sup>

In February 1993 it was also revealed that letters, including registered letters, to the North had been opened en route and postal and money orders stolen. Although this was reported to the Colombo postal authorities by the Jaffna Deputy Postmaster General, unauthorised opening of letters to the North and theft continue.<sup>(101)</sup>

The navy began checking letters to the North in October 1992 alleging that these letters contained currency notes. The checking has caused considerable delay in the delivery of letters and has also led to

thefts. In early March 1993, over 1,000 postal bags destined for the North lay in the Colombo General Post Office.<sup>(102)</sup> After four months delay, in mid-March 1993, 220 of these postal bags were taken to Jaffna in the ship *Kumana*. Postal officers in Jaffna found that over 75% of the letters had been opened, torn and currency notes where included were stolen.<sup>(103)</sup>

In a letter to President Premadasa in March 1993, Jaffna MP K Navaratnam explained the reasons for persons abroad sending currency notes in letters to family members. Deprived of employment and all sources of income and crushed by the severe difficulties caused by the economic blockade, people of the North have depended for the past three years on money sent by relatives from abroad. Cash could be immediately used, whereas money orders and postal orders have to be encashed in the first instance, which is almost impossible with all communication to the south cut off and post offices and financial institutions destroyed or unable to function.<sup>(104)</sup>

Sri Lanka is a signatory to international postal agreements which are against delaying or opening of letters. These agreements emphasise that letters should be handled with due care and responsibility and delivered to the addressee.<sup>(105)</sup> Sri Lanka is clearly in breach of these international agreements.

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## AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT

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In the Jaffna District 64,000 acres of land was under cultivation in the 1980s and 107,500 tonnes of food worth over Rs 700 million was produced in the Maha (great) season in one year.<sup>(106)</sup> Apart from rice, other crops such as chillies, onions, maize, nuts and pulses were also produced. Vast areas of the other parts of the North and the East were also under cultivation. The economic blockade and military operations have paralysed agriculture causing a steep slump in agricultural production. In the whole of the North-East the 757,425 acres of paddy cultivated in the pre-1983 period has now dwindled to 49% of that acreage.<sup>(107)</sup>

In the 1980s over 5,800 tons of fertiliser were used in the Jaffna District alone each year.<sup>(108)</sup> Urea and all other fertilisers containing nitrogen were banned to the North in March 1991.<sup>(109)</sup> The ban has adversely affected agriculture. Farmers are unable to use tractors for ploughing and other agricultural

purposes such as harvesting and transport of crops, because of the ban on diesel and petrol. In many army-controlled areas, soldiers have commandeered the tractors for military use. Army officers say tractors are more useful in the kind of terrain in the North-East than military vehicles.

In the Mannar District usually around 6,000 acres of land is cultivated during the Yala (lesser) season. On 30 September 1992 the army launched a major operation in Mannar and advanced 16 kms east from the Thallady army camp to Andankulam and Adampan on the banks of Giant's Tank.<sup>(110)</sup> People fled the area leaving 1,800 acres of Yala crop at the time of harvest.<sup>(111)</sup> Reports say that civilians are prohibited from the area and the troops are now cultivating the fields.

In Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts the army has terrorised the farmers and has taken over farming areas for its own purposes. Livestock has been killed by soldiers for meat and harvested paddy robbed or destroyed.

In February 1992, fourteen farmers from Kiran in Batticaloa District were arrested by the army while harvesting. These farmers have since disappeared.<sup>(112)</sup> Ten farmers were shot dead by the army on 26 June 1992 in Nellikadu and their bodies were burned in the fields.<sup>(113)</sup> In July 1992 soldiers robbed 137 head of cattle from five farmers in Batticaloa.<sup>(114)</sup> On 3 August 1992 the army arrested 26 Tamil villagers working in the field in Batticaloa. Later six of them were admitted to the hospital with gunshot injuries and the others have disappeared.<sup>(115)</sup> Large amounts of harvested rice has been destroyed by the army in the Central Camp area in the Amparai District.<sup>(116)</sup>

In Batticaloa District the army has imposed restrictions on the transport of rice. Written permission from the army officer in charge of the camp in the area must be obtained by submitting the land ownership deed.<sup>(117)</sup> People transporting rice complained in February 1993 that soldiers at checkpoints levied a charge for each bag of rice brought into the Batticaloa town.<sup>(118)</sup>

According to Jaffna University lecturer Dr W Nithianandan, in Jaffna, 54,275 people have lost employment in the paddy sector since war broke out in 1990. Fifty three factories have been destroyed in aerial bombing and machinery at the two cement factories have been damaged. Around 40,000 people in industry have lost their jobs. Annual banana production once in the region of 600 tonnes has been abandoned.<sup>(119)</sup> In the Jaffna District there were boat construction factories, spinning and weaving mills, textile factories, ice making factories, fish products,

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## DISPLACED PEOPLE

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glass and soap factories, a waterpump manufacturing factory, a fishing net-making factory, a cement factory, a grape juice factory, an animal food factory and a soft drinks factory. Other industries included food manufacture, leather products, plasticware, chemicals, machinery spare parts and metalware production. All these factories are closed because of lack of electricity. Tobacco production was also a major industry in Jaffna. But this too has come to a standstill without electricity and chemicals for spraying.

In the Jaffna peninsula there were 130,000 cattle, 96,370 goats, 15,000 sheep and 581,700 chicken, which produced milk and eggs needed by the population. The lack of animal food and displacement of people have brought animal farming to a virtual end. In army-occupied areas all animals have been killed for meat.<sup>(120)</sup>

The fishing industry has also been badly affected due to army restrictions. In 1984 the Jaffna District marketed 17.7 million kgs of fish which was 10.4% of the fish produced in the whole of Sri Lanka. Over 1,270 motor boats and 2,940 row boats were used by over 12,000 fishermen. There were 307 boat construction centres in the district and 23 fishing ports in various parts of the district were used as fishing ports.<sup>(121)</sup> Fishermen in some areas are allowed to go only few miles from the shore and in other areas fishing is prohibited. In Mannar for example fishermen are allowed to fish only within three miles of the shore and night fishing is prohibited. In June 1992 the navy banned all fishing activities from Mullaitivu coast right upto Talaimannar to facilitate military operations in the North.<sup>(122)</sup>

The security forces have on many occasions destroyed fishing boats and equipment. In November 1990 shelling from the Thallady army camp destroyed over 50 boats on the Mannar shore.<sup>(123)</sup> From Mannar around 35,000 kgs of fresh and dry fish was sent to southern Sri Lanka every day. In 1990 many fishermen were affected by military operations and fled in their boats to India. Under an Asian Development Bank programme Rs 23 million (\$510,000) was allocated for loans for Mannar fishermen. But the local banks have refused to provide loans to the fishermen citing the reasons as inability of the fishermen to go deep sea fishing and the lack of refrigeration facilities for preservation of fish because of lack of electricity.<sup>(124)</sup>

Over one million people, 95% of them Tamils, were displaced in the North-East after fighting broke out between government forces and the LTTE in June 1990. There were over 350,000 displaced people in the Jaffna peninsula alone, many having fled from Trincomalee and Batticaloa.<sup>(125)</sup> Around 120,000 Tamils fled to India increasing the total number of Sri Lankan refugees in the southern state of Tamil Nadu to 220,000.<sup>(126)</sup> Since 1983 around 400,000 Tamils have sought asylum in Europe and North America.

According to figures released by the Sri Lankan government in March 1993 around 514,000 people are displaced in the North-East (*See Appendices 2A and 2B*). Sri Lankan NGOs estimate that the number of displaced people remains over one million. In the last four months a further 100,000 Tamils have been displaced in major military operations in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar and Batticaloa. Another 100,000 Tamils have fled the North-East to take refuge with friends or relatives in Colombo and the suburbs.<sup>(127)</sup> There are also around 12,000 Tamils in refugee camps in Colombo. This means nearly 60% of the Tamils of Sri Lanka are displaced within the country or have fled abroad.

Displaced Tamils are being subject to further harassment by the state security forces. A large number of Tamils have been abducted from refugee camps by the army or the Home guards and have disappeared. Referring to refugees in Trincomalee the February 1991 issue of the British Refugee Council's Sri Lanka Monitor said: "New Eastern Commander Brigadier Siri Peiris boasts openly of the 5,000 people he killed in Matara during the JVP insurrection and the 10,000 Tamil refugees in Clapenberg and Thambalakamam camps are a pool of potential victims for the violent reprisals that follow LTTE attacks in the District". The March 1992 issue of the Sri Lanka Monitor added that 'Army roundups continue in Batticaloa and Amparai with refugee concentrations particularly vulnerable.

In 1990, of over 80 Tamils detained in Trincomalee after army sweeps on refugee camps around Nilaveli, only 45 were accounted for.<sup>(128)</sup> In May 1991 Tamil MP Mavai Senathirajah said in a letter to President Premadasa that a number of young women abducted by the military from a refugee camp near Trincomalee had disappeared.<sup>(129)</sup> Sixty men were taken for questioning by the army on 9 January 1992 from a

Tamil refugee camp in Kalmunai. Only 58 of them returned.<sup>(130)</sup> On 14 January 1992 nine Tamils disappeared in an army night raid on Clappenberg refugee camp in Trincomalee. The Karaitivu camp in Amparai District has been raided by the Special Task Force (STF) on a number of occasions and those arrested have mostly disappeared. Fire swept through this camp on 11 February 1993 killing two children and destroying 15 houses after the STF arrested over 300 Tamil men in the camp. The fire destroyed the meagre possessions of the refugees. A request by Tamil MPs for an inquiry into suspected arson by the STF has been denied by the government.<sup>(131)</sup>

Apart from regular raids in camps by the army and disappearances, Tamil refugees have continually suffered from lack of food and medical and sanitary facilities. Relief convoys to rural areas are under tight army control in an effort to starve the population into moving into larger refugee camps where they could be dealt with more easily.<sup>(132)</sup> In April 1991 Brigadier Siri Peiris suspended rations to refugee camps in Trincomalee and cut off rations to those on food stamps.<sup>(133)</sup> In February 1993 maintenance of refugee camps north of Manmunai area where 90% of the Batticaloa Tamil refugees live, was suspended, because of government failure to allocate funds for such maintenance, leading to spread of disease.<sup>(134)</sup>

The army has also sought to terrorise aid agencies to prevent them providing relief to refugees and others. In May 1991, a relief convoy to the North organised by international refugee agency UNHCR was fired on at the Thandikulam checkpoint and a driver was injured. During the same month, four members of a medical team from French agency Medecines Sans Frontiers (MSF) were injured when their vehicle was strafed by the Sri Lankan airforce at Puthukulam junction in Vavuniya.<sup>(135)</sup> Although the MSF had permission from the army to travel, a puppet commission appointed by the Sri Lankan government decided that the MSF was at fault.<sup>(136)</sup>

The Treasury issued an ultimatum in March 1991 to the Ministry of Rehabilitation that food aid to displaced persons outside refugee camps must cease. The government stated at the time that there were 230,000 people in refugee camps and another 440,000 displaced lived with friends or relatives.<sup>(137)</sup> According to NGOs government provided false refugee figures - a drop by 300,000 in three months - in order to justify its decision to stop dry rations to refugees living outside the designated camps.

Following protests, the decision was not implemented. However, in September 1992 the government cut dry rations to the refugees in the North-East by

50% (that is, the daily allowance of Rs 9 reduced to Rs 4.50 enough to secure less than 250 gms of rice) in an attempt to drive the refugees out of the camps (138). Significantly, the cut in rations was only in the case of Tamil refugees and not other refugees even in the same district. The rations were restored only in January 1993 after vehement protests by refugee agencies and opposition parties.<sup>(139)</sup>

Despite the dangerous and volatile situation in Sri Lanka and the disappearance of a number of refugees, 29,000 Tamil refugees have been returned to North-East Sri Lanka from Tamil Nadu under a repatriation programme in which international refugee agency UNHCR is involved. The involvement of UNHCR has given legitimacy to involuntary repatriation into a country where Tamils face great danger.

The Indian government began repatriating the refugees in January 1992. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees wrote to the Indian Prime Minister in May 1992 expressing concern over the "unstable security situation in Sri Lanka" and India's refusal to grant access to refugee camps. But within two months UNHCR became involved in the programme, despite the position of the Indian government remaining the same, while the situation had deteriorated, with the Sri Lankan government announcing a military solution and the launching of a number of military operations and intensified aerial bombardment in North-East Sri Lanka.<sup>(140)</sup>

India and UNHCR exchanged letters on 28 July 1992 to set up a token UNHCR presence in Tamil Nadu.<sup>(141)</sup> UNHCR also signed an agreement with the Sri Lankan government on 1 February 1993 to provide emergency relief assistance and assist refugee returnees.<sup>(142)</sup> Most of the refugees returned from Tamil Nadu are still living in camps in Vavuniya and Mannar under difficult conditions and are unable to return to their homes because of the fighting. In some areas houses have been completely destroyed and in other areas soldiers are occupying people's homes.

Around 3,000 Tamil refugees live in the UNHCR-run Pesalai refugee camp on Mannar Island.<sup>(143)</sup> On 10 November 1990 the army entered the camp and arrested 18 Tamils. They were forced to work daily at the Thallady army camp for five months. Currently they are held at the Kalutara prison. Thirteen Tamils were arrested in this camp in March 1992. After interrogation only 12 were released. On 13 April 1992 Gnanaprgasam Joy Anand, a refugee returnee from India, was arrested in the same camp and is currently held in the Colombo Magazine prison. A student named Mary Matilda was shot while having her dinner inside the UNHCR camp at 10pm.<sup>(144)</sup> UNHCR admits that refugee returnees have been arrested but

sings the same song as the army alleging that "those arrested were involved in militant activity after return from India".<sup>(145)</sup>

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## DESTRUCTION

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Enormous destruction has been caused in the North-East by indiscriminate Sri Lankan airforce bombing and military operations. Within a week after fighting broke out between the LTTE and the government armed forces, aerial bombing of the North began. The Jaffna city was shelled from the Jaffna Fort which was then occupied by the army and the Palaly army camp. Civilian areas were targeted with rocket mortars, grenades and shells. The navy shelled the town from sea. The airforce dropped barrels filled with 300kg explosives, nails and metal pieces. After 107 days of bombing, the Jaffna Municipal Commissioner commissioned an assessment of damage to the city of Jaffna.<sup>(146)</sup>

The Vannai Sivan Temple, Veerasingham Hall, the Jaffna Public Library, Central College, Vembadi Girls' College, National Savings Bank, Telecommunication headquarters, the main post office, the market complex, the police station cluster, Jaffna General Hospital, Railway station and many other important buildings were either damaged or destroyed.

The assessment report published in November 1991, estimated the damage caused to the public sector at Rs 1.99 billion (\$49.8 million). The Telecommunication Department suffered the most damage at Rs 1.89 billion (\$47.3 million). Telecommunication transmission equipment and tower and buildings belonging to the Construction Department, Road Development Authority, Electricity Board, Postal Department and Water Supplies and Drainage Board were damaged or destroyed. Twenty kilometres of road and several bridges were damaged.

Damage to public transport sector was estimated at Rs 382.4 million (\$9.6 million). The Northern Region Transport Board, the Railway Department and the Petroleum Corporation have suffered heavy damages. Buildings, furniture and equipment belonging to the Bank of Ceylon, the Hatton National Bank, the Commercial Bank of Ceylon, the National Savings Bank and five branches of the People's Bank in the city were damaged, estimated at Rs 12.9 million (\$322,000).

In the health sector buildings, equipment, furniture and medicine of the Schools Health Officer's office,

Central Dispensary and Maternity Home and the Jaffna General Hospital were damaged or destroyed. The loss was estimated at Rs 17 million (\$425,000).

Fishing boats, fishing gear and ice factories have been destroyed. The loss of income to fishermen's families during the period was Rs 183 million (\$4.6 million) and the total cost of replacing damaged property to the fishing industry was estimated at Rs 399.9 million (\$10 million).

Schools in the Jaffna city and suburbs were often shelled and bombed. Ariyalai Sri Parvathi School, St James School, Navalar School, Koddady Namasivaya School, the Tamil Convent, Vembady Girls High School and Jaffna Central College sustained extensive damages. Twenty five other schools were also damaged. The total damage to schools was estimated at Rs 266.7 million (\$6.7 million).

Seven cooperative sales centres were either damaged or destroyed and the loss to the Jaffna Multipurpose Cooperative Society was estimated at Rs 321 million (\$8 million). Several markets, the power house and sub-station, the Town Hall auditorium, the Rest House, the stadium and three maternity homes were either damaged or destroyed.

In the 107 days covered by the survey report machinery worth Rs 12.9 million (\$322,500) was damaged or destroyed in the Jaffna city. In the two Assistant Government Agent (AGA) Divisions covered by the city, Jaffna and Nallur, 1,628 cows, 2,055 goats and 31,236 chicken were killed. In the Jaffna division 98 fishing boats and 85 fishing nets were damaged or destroyed; thirty seven cars and 179 bicycles were destroyed.

According to the survey report 4,156 movable household items in the Jaffna division were damaged and 1,547 items were destroyed. Damage within the two AGA divisions, excluding buildings was estimated at Rs 46.1 million (\$1.2 million).

In the two AGA divisions 7,832 houses were destroyed or damaged. During the same period 997 shops, 45 places of worship (temples or churches), 53 industrial buildings, 54 government buildings, 37 school buildings and 26 local authority buildings were damaged or destroyed. The total loss as a result of damage to or destruction of buildings in the Jaffna city was estimated at Rs 4.014 billion (\$100.4 million).<sup>(147)</sup>

If destruction to the Jaffna city alone during a period of 107 days was of such huge dimensions, one could imagine the destruction to the entire North-East. Jaffna city constitutes only 47.24 sq.km., that is 0.26% of the entire area of the North-East which is



17,880.60 sq.km. Destruction as a result of military operations, aerial bombardment and shelling from military camps and sea has been widespread and has affected all parts of the North-East. Reports say a large percentage of the 161,338 houses in the Jaffna District have been destroyed by the Sri Lankan security forces.

The Sri Lankan army occupied Alampil in the Mullaitivu District for six months from May 1992.<sup>(148)</sup> When the military withdrew in November 1992, returning Tamil civilians found that all houses, except two used by the army commander, had been destroyed with bombs and bulldozers.<sup>(149)</sup> Whole coconut estates had been flattened with bulldozers in order to have a clear view of the sea to spot LTTE vessels.<sup>(150)</sup>

Similar destruction has taken place in the army-occupied areas in the Jaffna islands, Palaly and Mathagal areas. In Ilavalai many buildings have been razed to the ground. In Mathagal and on the islands, door and window frames of houses have been removed. Cupboards have been converted into huge boxes to transport household items to the south. Coconut, palmyrah and other trees have been cut down to be used for army camps and bunkers.<sup>(151)</sup>

In ten Assistant Government Agent divisions of Batticaloa District in the East, 33,000 houses have been damaged or destroyed. Large number of other buildings have also been destroyed in military operations and airforce bombing.<sup>(152)</sup> Cashew trees on 60 acres of land in Arayampathy and Palaimunai in Batticaloa are being cut down by the army for firewood.<sup>(153)</sup> In the Trincomalee District 80% of the houses in villages have been either damaged or destroyed.<sup>(154)</sup> Participating in the 1993 budget debate in November 1992, Batticaloa MP Joseph Pararajasingham said that over 150,000 houses have been destroyed or damaged in the North-East in the last four years.<sup>(155)</sup>

According to the Sri Lankan Hindu Religious Council (Indu Samaya Peravai) around 700 temples or places of worship have been damaged or destroyed and the icons or holy images removed from 63 temples. Historic Hindu temples such as Thiruketheeswaram in Mannar, Ugantha Murugan temple in Amparai, Murugan temple in Maviddapuram (Jaffna), Naguleswaram temple in Keerimalai (Jaffna) and Fort Fredrick surrounding the Koneswarar temple in Trincomalee are all occupied by the army. These temples have been damaged and desecrated.

Cement, planks and iron rods, which are essential for construction of buildings are banned from transport into the North.<sup>(156)</sup> Consequently new

construction of buildings is not possible in the North and the construction industry has come to a standstill.

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## KILLINGS BY SECURITY FORCES

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Many civilians have been killed in the North-East in Army operations and airforce bombing. Between June 1990 and November 1991, 167 civilians were killed by airforce bombs in the Jaffna city and 205 were injured.<sup>(157)</sup> In June 1992 it was estimated that there were 6,000 widows as a result of civilian deaths in the Jaffna District alone.<sup>(158)</sup> Batticaloa MP Prince Casinader says there are 412 widows in the various refugee camps in the Batticaloa District.<sup>(159)</sup> According to the Child Care Services Department as a result of the war 467,000 children have been orphaned in the North-East.<sup>(160)</sup>

Following the capture of urban centres in the East in June 1990, the army began a terror campaign. People were arrested indiscriminately and killed. In July 1990, over 25 bodies of those arrested were thrown into the streets of Batticaloa. In the same month the army also burned another 27 youths with tyres in the Batticaloa town. In Karaitivu most of the Tamil houses were looted and burned and the bodies of 14 civilians were found in the village.

In Trincomalee in June 1990, the Tamil population was paraded in front of masked informers and over 80 suspects were brutally bludgeoned to death with rifle butts.<sup>(161)</sup> At Selvanayagapuram, China Bay and Thambalakamam 215 Tamil civilians were massacred by the army. In Amparai District 22 Tamil patients were mercilessly shot dead by the army in the Pottuvil hospital in early August.

The Sri Lankan security forces captured the islands west of the Jaffna peninsula on 22 August 1990 killing many civilians. Twenty other civilians were killed on the causeway between Kayts Island and Jaffna when they were used as human shields by the advancing army.<sup>(162)</sup> The airforce heavily bombarded populated areas destroying houses, schools, hospitals and public buildings. Youths in refugee camps were arrested and many of them disappeared. Women were carried away to the army camp and raped. Jaffna government officers found bodies of youths dumped into wells and covered with compost. Between August 1990 and August 1991, on the

islands alone the army slaughtered 365 Tamils and 210 others disappeared. Troops also destroyed 6,025 houses, 33 schools and 37 temples on the islands during this period.<sup>(163)</sup>

On 9 September 1990 an army unit led by Brigadier Karunatileke took 117 Tamils, including women and children, to the Sathurukondan army camp in Batticaloa and shot them dead. Only one person escaped with injuries. In the same month over 50 Tamils were massacred by Home Guards in Puthukudiruppu in the same district.<sup>(164)</sup>

The Special Task Force (STF) shot dead 30 Tamil civilians at Karaitivu in Batticaloa District on 12 October 1990. Later that month 38 headless bodies were found on Akkaraipatru beach in Amparai District.<sup>(165)</sup> Reports also said that in late October thirty men rounded up from villages between Kallady bridge and Kirankulam were tortured and burned alive at the Arayampathy army camp.<sup>(166)</sup>

Following an LTTE ambush on 4 December in Pottuvil the STF massacred 76 Tamils in the same area and on 17 December the security forces killed 17 civilians in Batticaloa and Amparai. Six men fishing in the Batticaloa lagoon were killed by helicopter fire on 20 December.<sup>(167)</sup>

According to Batticaloa MP Joseph Pararajasingham around 200 civilians were killed in army operations in January 1991. During this month international relief workers discovered 44 Tamil youths imprisoned in a pit in the STF camp at Akkaraipatru in Amparai District. Many had been tortured and four were dead. The youths were denied medical treatment and moved to another camp despite protests by NGOs. Sixteen Tamil civilians died by airforce bombs at Puthukudiruppu in the Mullaitivu District.<sup>(168)</sup>

Airforce bombing of the North-East and arrests and killing of Tamil civilians continued throughout 1991 and 1992 and continues to the present day. In April 1991 army death squads began operating in Batticaloa aimed at terrorising the civilian population. Three bodies with severed heads were found at Mandur market in early April. During the same month five more bodies were found at Iruthayapuram and Kalliyankadu. On 30 April 1991 two more headless corpses appeared near the Kallady bridge.<sup>(169)</sup>

In May 1991, over 3,000 people were rounded up by the security forces from villages in Kalmunai and Thirukovil in Amparai District. They were held for over a week at the Kanchikudichcharu army camp and screened before masked informers. On 1 May 1991 a major military operation was launched in

Vavuniya and Mullaitivu. The army caused extensive damage between Thandikulam and Omanthai in Vavuniya District. Food lorries were burned and over 1,000 bicycles wrecked. Over 1,000 bags of rice were burned at Omanthai Cooperative stores and another 25,000 bags in the surrounding villages. All houses and public buildings were burned or damaged.<sup>(170)</sup>

The army ran amok, after two soldiers died in a LTTE landmine attack on 12 June 1991 in Kokkaddicholai in Batticaloa District, killing 180 civilians, many of them women and children.<sup>(171)</sup> The government appointed a Commission to inquire into the massacre, following world-wide condemnation. The army killed the Mahiladitivu village Headman (Grama Sevaka) in mid November to prevent him giving evidence before the Commission.<sup>(172)</sup> Despite these pressures the Commission concluded civilians had been deliberately massacred. In March 1993 Captain Kudaligama who was responsible for the massacre was found guilty by a military court only of failure to control his subordinates and the disposal of dead bodies and was dismissed from service. The seventeen soldiers implicated in the killings, whom he failed to control were acquitted.<sup>(173)</sup>

Nineteen Tamil farmers were abducted by the army from Savalakadai in Amparai District on 14 August 1991 and hacked to death in front of the Hindu Pillayar temple in the Central Camp area.<sup>(174)</sup> In early October 1991 following a LTTE attack in the same area, Sri Lankan soldiers killed 13 Tamils. A 30 year-old woman S Ariyamalar had been raped and hacked to death.<sup>(175)</sup>

Nine Tamils disappeared after an army night raid on the Clappenberg refugee camp in Trincomalee on 14 January 1992.<sup>(176)</sup> The Trincomalee Plantain Point military headquarters is used as a place for torture and killings by the army. In July 1992 six Tamils were shot dead by the army in Uppukulam and their houses were burned.<sup>(177)</sup> Following the death of senior military officers in a landmine attack in the North, soldiers hacked to death 35 Tamil civilians on 9 August 1992 in Mahilanthanai village in the East. Shelling and bombing during *Operation Earthquake* killed ten civilians and injured 50 others in the Jaffna peninsula on 20 August.<sup>(178)</sup> Ten Tamils were arrested by the army on 10 October and their dismembered bodies were found in a quarry near Vellaveli in Batticaloa District. On 18 October airforce planes attacked Kokkuvil in Jaffna District killing six civilians and destroying many houses.<sup>(179)</sup>

In Batticaloa town three bodies burned beyond recognition, the hallmark of army death squads, were found on 25 November 1992. In the same month the STF arrested 825 Tamils in the Amparai District, but

only 772 persons were released later. In the North planes continued bombing the Jaffna peninsula, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts. In Paranthan six civilians were killed by bombs.<sup>(180)</sup> The airforce also killed a woman and injured 12 other civilians in Ariyalai in Jaffna District on Christmas day.<sup>(181)</sup> On 6 January 1993 the Sri Lankan airforce attacked Sithankerni in the Jaffna peninsula killing nine civilians and injuring 16 others and damaging 25 houses. In late January 1993 army shells damaged Kathiripai Hindu temple and the Kattaimeni church in the peninsula. In the same month 20 Tamils arrested in Mandur in Batticaloa District disappeared.<sup>(182)</sup> In late February 1993 airforce planes bombed Iluppaikadavai in Mannar killing three civilians and injuring 11 others.<sup>(183)</sup>

Only some of the killings by the security forces are included in this report. In an appeal to Western and Asian foreign missions in Colombo in August 1992, the Jaffna Citizens Committee said over 30,000 civilians had been killed in the North-East and 10,000 had disappeared since the June 1990 war began.<sup>(184)</sup> An Amnesty International team which visited Batticaloa in October 1992 received documents confirming 4,189 disappearances since June 1990 in the district.<sup>(185)</sup> Over 1,500 Tamils are currently held in the Colombo Magazine and Kalutara prisons, many of them for over three years without access to courts, and an unspecified number in army camps and police stations.<sup>(186)</sup>

## GENEVA CONVENTIONS

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Article 3 common to the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol II of 1977 are international instruments applicable to situations of non-international armed conflicts.<sup>(187)</sup>

In the case of an armed conflict not of an international character, Article 3 (1) common to the four Conventions states as follows:-

*" (1) Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction based on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria.*

*To this end the following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above-mentioned persons:-*

*(a) violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture;*

*(b) taking of hostages;*

*(c) outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliation and degrading treatment;*

*(d) the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples."*

Article 14 of the Additional Protocol II of 1977 says:

*" Starvation as a method of combat is prohibited. It is therefore prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless, for that purpose objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works. "*

Article 16 of the Protocol states:

*" ... it is prohibited to commit any acts of hostility directed against historic monuments, works of art or places of worship which constitute the cultural or spiritual heritage of peoples, and to use them in support of the military effort."*

Article 17 of the Protocol states:

*" The displacement of the civilian population shall not be ordered for reasons related to the conflict unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand. Should such displacements have to be carried out, all possible measures shall be taken in order that the civilian population may be received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition."*

Article 4(3)(a) of the Protocol stipulates:

*" Children shall be provided the care and aid they require in particular they shall receive an education .... "*

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## CONCLUSION

A non-international armed conflict refers to "any situation where dissident forces are organised under the leadership of a responsible command and exercise such control over a part of the territory as to enable them to conduct sustained and concerted military operations".<sup>(188)</sup> In the current armed conflict situation in Sri Lanka the government is obliged to observe the Geneva Conventions. The mere fact of the legality of a government involved in an armed conflict suffices to bind that government as a contracting party to the Convention.<sup>(189)</sup>

The Sri Lankan government is clearly in breach of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions, particularly by destroying or rendering useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population. In addition to the economic blockade the Sri Lankan government has sought to drive the Tamils from their homes by intensified Sinhalese colonisation of Tamil areas, particularly in the East, by the involvement of the entire state machinery and the armed forces. Houses and lands belonging to Tamils have been occupied and Hindu temple lands taken over for colonisation.

Money circulation in the North has been impeded in the North by the destruction of financial institutions. All other economic bases have been either destroyed or made effectively redundant to ensure that the North is a cypher in relation to contribution to the national economy in the long-term. The total destruction of the North would not then have any adverse effect in the South. Starving the people and depriving them of basic needs for life is also a military and political strategy aimed at turning the people against the LTTE.

In the Tamil areas houses, shops and other buildings

necessary for the community have been destroyed. The population is deprived of such basic needs as food, shelter and fuel. Communication facilities and transport services have been destroyed and the right of movement greatly restricted. A large number of landmines in the North-East further restrict the movement of the people. Letters are being opened by armed forces and the information obtained is used for persecution. A major section of the Tamil population has lost employment and facilities for agriculture, industries and fishing have also been destroyed. Educational institutions cannot function and educational needs have been denied.

Human rights are recognised to promote the development of the individual to enable effective contribution to the society. The Tamils of Sri Lanka have been denied all that is necessary for the development of the individual and human rights have become a dead letter.

Western missions in Colombo have been claiming in recent months that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka has improved. To make such a claim while thousands of Tamil civilians, including children, are dying without food and medicine and in atrocities of the armed forces, is irresponsible, and exposes underlying political motives. These claims contrary to the truth are made, while Sri Lankan human rights NGOs say the situation has in fact deteriorated further, to make it possible for the Western governments to return Tamil asylum seekers to Sri Lanka.

The international community has the responsibility to ensure that Tamil asylum seekers are not returned to starvation, torture and death. In this direction the international community should become involved more vigorously towards peace in Sri Lanka. As a first step the Sri Lankan government must be urged to end the economic blockade of the North immediately and observe the rules of the Geneva Conventions. If foreign governments continue to aid Sri Lanka while starvation is used as a method of combat and citizens of the island are killed wilfully in military operations and aerial bombardment, it would mean genocide of Tamils has their sanction.





## APPENDIX (1)

The following items are currently banned to the North:

- 1) Batteries
- 2) Surgical instruments
- 3) Medicines, cotton wool and bandages
- 4) Fertilizers containing nitrogen and urea
- 5) Modern electrical equipment
- 6) Chemicals
- 7) Camphor and other inflammable material
- 8) Petrol and diesel
- 9) Polythene and packing material
- 10) Plastic containers
- 11) Gold excluding private jewellery
- 12) Electronic toys
- 13) Remote control devices
- 14) Electric wire
- 15) Guns, ammunition and explosives
- 16) Toy guns
- 17) Uniforms similar to army uniforms
- 18) Binoculars, compasses, town maps and other war accessories
- 19) Road maps, pictures, shoes, black shirts and trousers,  
    canvass shoes, small and large bags
- 20) Printing machines and other equipment used in printing
- 21) Roneo copier and photocopier
- 22) Barbed wire and nails
- 23) Candles
- 24) Iron and iron bars
- 25) wooden planks
- 26) Flannel sacs
- 27) Tools for repairing Roneo copiers
- 28) Wire cutting equipment
- 29) Aluminium
- 30) New motor cycles
- 31) Electric cookers
- 32) School bags
- 33) Cement
- 34) Printing paper
- 35) Typing sheets and other white sheets
- 36) Cycles
- 37) Tyres, spare parts for motor vehicles
- 38) Sanitary towels
- 39) Camphor liquid, brass polish, shoe polish
- 40) Soap
- 41) Umbrellas
- 42) Box of Matches.

APPENDIX (2A)

Displaced People In the North-East as at 31 March 1993

District	No. of Welfare Centres	No. of families in Welfare Centres	No. of families outside Welfare Centres	Total No. of families displaced
Jaffna	233	30,105	52,326	82,431
Mannar	7	8,764	5,080	13,844
Kilinochchi	10	7,659	3,045	10,704
Vavuniya	8	874	1,886	2,760
Mullaitivu	25	5,089	2,437	7,526
Trincomalee	26	4,730	3,421	8,151
Batticaloa	25	2,633	15,861	18,494
Amparai	22	4,158	1,999	6,157
	356	64,012	86,055	150,067

Source: Ministry of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Sri Lanka



APPENDIX (2B)

**Displaced People in the North-East as at 31 March 1993**

District	No. of persons in Welfare Centres	No. of persons outside Welfare Centres	Total number of persons Displaced
Jaffna	67,649	175,771	243,420
Mannar	34,694	20,056	54,750
Kilinochchi	28,564	12,325	40,889
Vavuniya	3,271	8,136	11,407
Mullaitivu	19,966	10,173	30,139
Trincomalee	18,520	15,207	33,727
Batticaloa	10,509	66,021	76,530
Amparai	15,603	7,583	23,186
	198,776	315,272	514,048

Source: Ministry of Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Sri Lanka

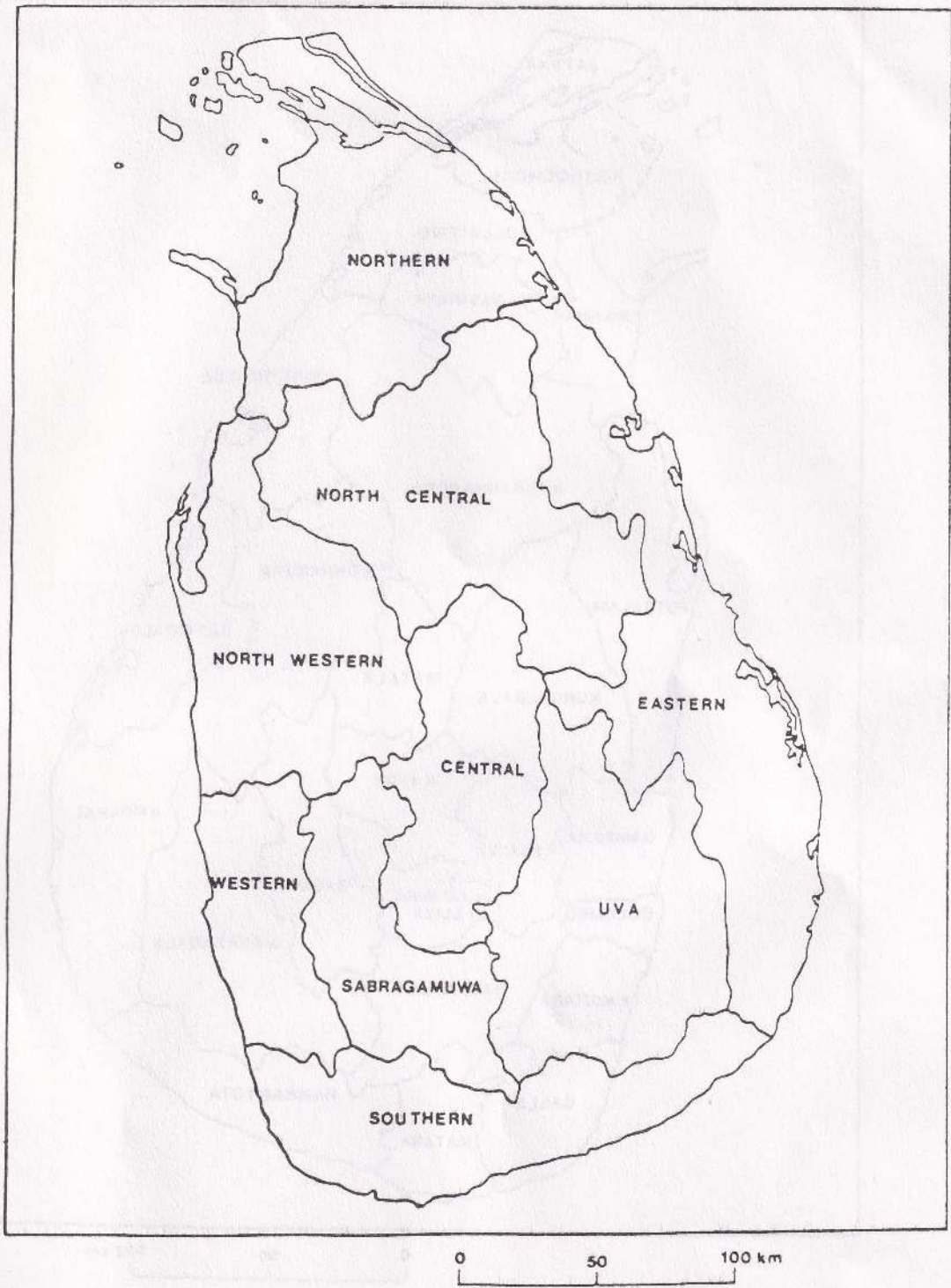
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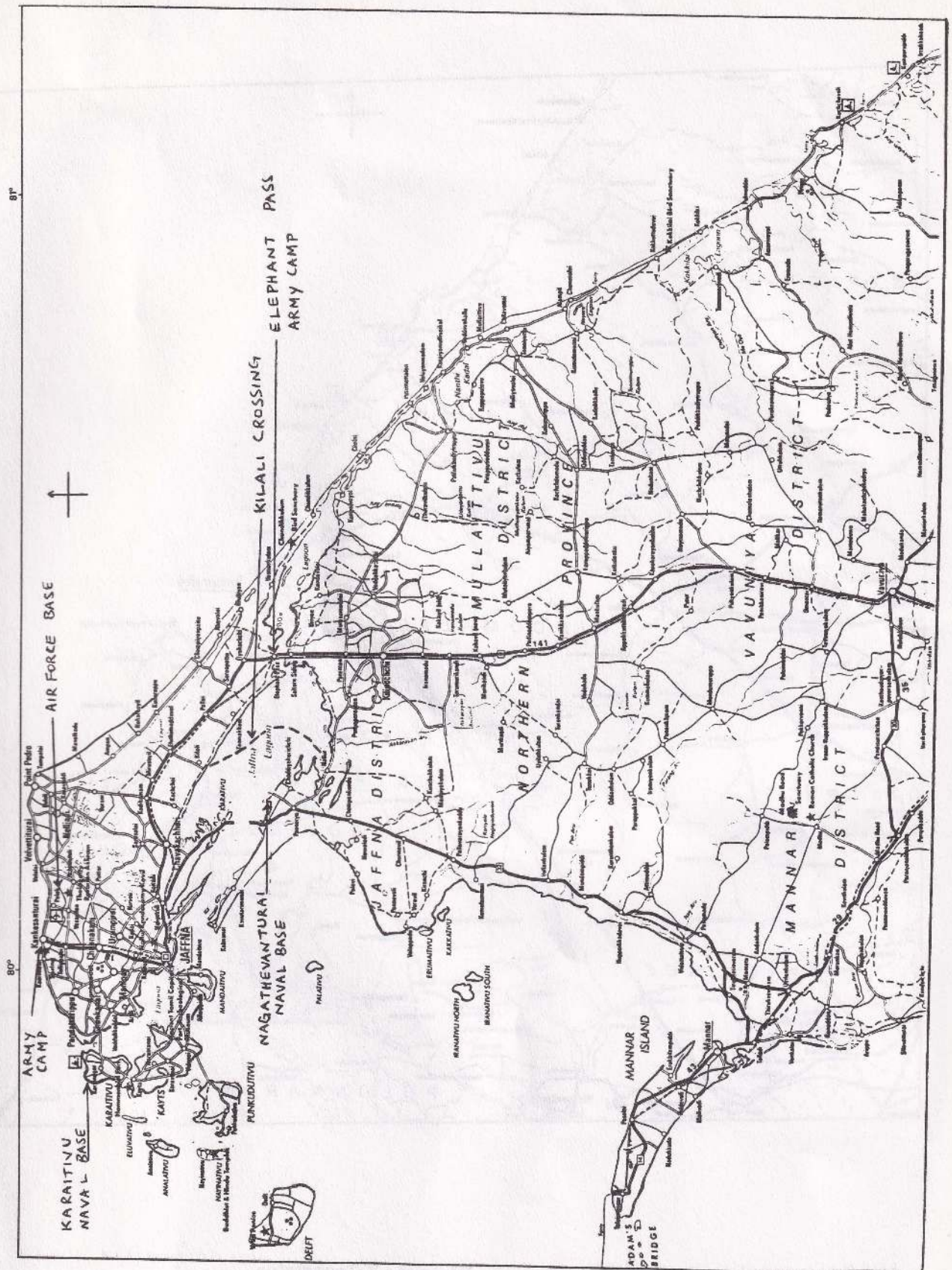
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**MAP 1 - Sri Lanka : Provinces**



**MAP 2 - Sri Lanka : Districts**

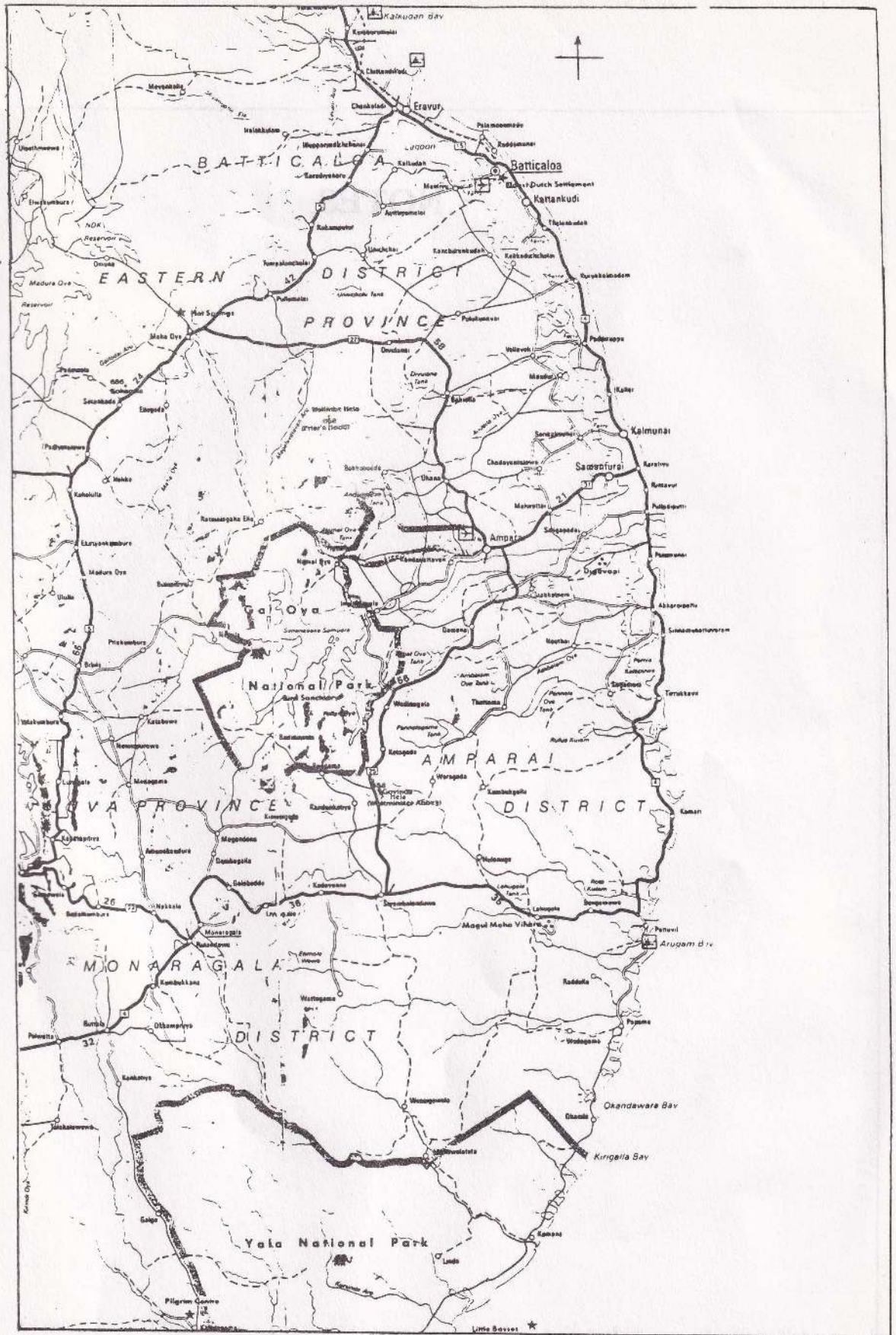


MAP 3 - Northern Districts : Jaffna ; Kilinochchi ; Mullaitivu ; Vavuniya ; Mannar



MAP 4 - Eastern District : Trincomalee





**MAP 5 - Eastern Districts : Batticaloa ; Amparai**

## NOTES

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