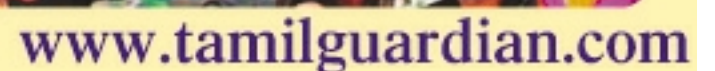
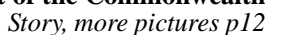


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## NEWS



Sri Lanka's garment manufacturers benefit the most from the EU trade concession

## Sri Lankan rights abuses will not derail EU trade deal

THE European Union has warned Sri Lanka that rights abuses are "deficiencies" in the case for renewing a bilateral trade deal, the island's trade minister said last Thursday - but added export earnings were booming.

Trade minister G.L. Peiris told Reuters in a telephone interview that EU negotiators had expressed concern over human rights but had not suggested the trade deal would be scrapped.

Textiles, tea and tourism have long driven Sri Lanka's economy, with textiles shipped primarily to the United States and European Union, the latter through a deal that Sri Lanka must apply by the end of October to have renewed.

"They have been helping us and advising us on putting our submission (for renewal) together," he said of the EU.

"The European Union has been telling us of the areas we must focus on where there are deficiencies. They have been talking to us about human rights and what they call a culture of impunity."

Textile workers would be hit if the deal lapsed, he said.

The European Commission said this week it had serious concerns about human rights in Sri Lanka and would withhold 70 million euros in aid unless barriers to humanitarian assistance, including visas for international aid staff, were lifted.

"We expressed our serious concerns with the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, as indicated by a range of sources including reports from United Nations rapporteurs," Deputy Director General for External Relations of the European Commission Joao Machado said in a statement.

"We emphasised - there are increasing problems in delivering this aid in Sri Lanka that need to

be resolved," said Machado after meeting with Sri Lankan government officials.

Rights groups accuse Sri Lanka of doing nothing to halt abductions, killings and torture blamed on both government security forces and the Tamil Tigers.

International observers quit the island earlier this year, saying a probe into a string of high-profile killings, including the massacre of 17 local aid staff in 2006, was going nowhere.

Peiris said Sri Lanka rejected some allegations, adding that the military was attempting to improve its rights record. He pointed to the arrest of an air force officer for alleged involvement in abductions.

Income from foreign trade grew by 115 percent last year and rising foreign direct investment, particularly from India and China, meant the Indian Ocean island's economy was performing well despite a return to civil war in 2006, Peiris said.

"We have achieved these very impressive figures despite all the military activity in the country. It does not seem to have had a serious effect."

He said he hoped to reach the same level of growth in 2008, with Sri Lanka benefiting from high prices for commodities from tea to rubber and cinnamon, increasing volumes of which were going to other emerging market countries.

Foreign investment is also growing, he said, citing Indian-backed coal-fired power projects and a Chinese-funded port on the southern tip of the island.

China had also expressed an interest in financing the building of a new road to the capital's international airport, a project that has languished for almost a decade, he said.

Rights groups say that as with Sudan - accused of mass killings in Darfur - the growing power of Asian investors reduces Western clout over rights and other issues.

"It is not a matter of getting rid of old friends but of finding new friends," Peiris said.

### GSP+ the summary

THE GSP+ trade concession by the EU allows Sri Lanka to effectively import over 7000 products into the EU free of duty.

The facility is up for renewal for the period 2009-2011 and every country wanting the facility - including Sri Lanka - must reapply. That is a non-negotiable condition.

Sri Lanka has not yet submitted its application.

Whether or not the country will get the facility, which it has enjoyed from 2005, depends not on the EU but the government based on certain criteria they have to fulfil: namely has Sri Lanka ratified and effectively implemented 27 international conventions on labour rights, environment, good governance and human rights.

To award the GSP+, the EU review exercise looks at ratifications, national implementing legislation, effective implementation on the ground and the scale of violation of rights under the conventions.

"If a country has complied with these conditions, GSP+ will be granted. If not GSP+ will not be granted: simple as that," the Sunday Leader quoted a top EU source as saying.

## Colombo denies Norwegian request to visit LTTE

SRI LANKA has refused requests by Norwegian peace mediators to visit LTTE territory, and said fresh peace talks hinged on Tamil Tiger guarantees to lay down arms and stick to a negotiation timetable.

Nordic ceasefire monitors quit the country this year after the six-year Norway brokered truce disintegrated.

Earlier, Seewaratnam Puleedevan, secretary-general of the LTTE Peace Secretariat, said he wanted to meet directly with peace facilitators.

However, the government said the team headed by Norway's Special Peace Envoy John Hansen Baur, would, for now, not be allowed to visit the Tigers' northern stronghold.

"We don't want Mr. Baur coming up, so that they can take photographs of him and say 'Mr. Baur has come to see the terrible sufferings inflicted on Tamil people of the Tamil Ealam'. It can't be propaganda," Rajiva Wijesinghe, the secretary-general of the Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP), told Reuters late last Wednesday.

"Baur had wanted to go. But we have told him, we want a very clear idea of why you are going. It would mean a commitment of the LTTE and what they want Baur to come and talk about."

The government said it would only consider restarting the dead peace process when the LTTE agreed to a clear road map to ending the 25-year civil war.

The government's stance comes amid intensified fighting between the military and Tigers, after the government formally pulled out of the six-year-old Norwegian brokered ceasefire agreement.

"What the Sri Lankan government wants is - the Norwegians have to give us a clear road map," said Wijesinghe.

"Unless you have a clear road map that leads to a democratic political solution, I don't think you can take any LTTE claim to negotiate a deal."

"Part of that road map would be a ceasefire and commitment ... guaranteeing of laying down of arms. That road map should make very clear to us, there is a very genuine commitment to negotiate to a political solution."

If the Tigers want to pursue peace talks without laying down arms, they should at least guarantee de-commissioning of arms, Wijesinghe added.

The government's response came after the LTTE ruled out the possibility of direct talks without Norway.

Puleedevan said while the LTTE had been in close contact

with key Norwegian figures such as Erik Solheim and the Norwegian Ambassador, it would wait for the facilitators to be granted access to Kilinochchi to further discuss issues relating to future peace talks with the government.

"There are several issues we want to discuss with the Norwegian facilitators before discussing peace with the Sri Lankan government. We want to hold a meeting with the Norwegians. However the facilitators are not being granted access to enter Kilinochchi by the Sri Lankan government," Puleedevan told the Daily Mirror in a telephone interview from Kilinochchi.

Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona had told the media in Singapore that the government was looking for a negotiated end to the conflict but stressed that so far the LTTE had not shown an interest to enter into such constructive dialogue.

"The LTTE is free to come back to the negotiating table but it must do so genuinely with a commitment to negotiating a sustainable peace and for that it must also leave aside its weaponry," he had said.

Kohona said the LTTE had re-armed itself to hit back after the truce began in 2002, and vowed the present government was no longer willing to simply agree to a ceasefire agreement without a commitment on the part of the LTTE to achieve a final solution to this problem.

The LTTE Peace Secretariat Head meanwhile assured the safety of the Norwegians if they were to visit Kilinochchi adding that there were no security constraints in visiting the LTTE controlled areas.

"There are no security constraints in coming to Kilinochchi. We have people from the UN and other international organizations coming into our areas every day. This once again is only a false story just like my arrest," Puleedevan told the Daily Mirror.

Dismissing reports that he had been arrested by the LTTE Intelligence services on the direct orders of LTTE Leader, Velupillai Pirapakaran, Puleedevan said the news items were all false as there was never a move to arrest anyone within the organization.

He also dismissed reports of an internal dispute within the LTTE, insisting that the organization continued to function as usual.

"The LTTE has no problems. Our only intention is to receive the Norwegians in Kilinochchi as they are the official facilitators. Till then we will not discuss anything," he said.

## NEWS

# 'Tamil Eelam, not a hastily concocted concept' - Balakumaran

WHILE support of the international community is necessary for achieving the goal of liberation, the Tamil people should clearly understand that policies of the International community towards different nationalist struggles are often inconsistent and motivated by self-interest, Balakumaran, a senior member of the Liberation Tigers said during an interview with an Australian Tamil radio station.

Listening to other people's dictates and compromising the ideals only reflect the weakness of a liberation struggle, he added.

He also expressed confidence on the strength and resilience of the Tamil people to confront obstacles in the marathon towards liberation.

*The translation of the Interview with K.V. Balakumaran, aired by Cheyithi Alaikal, an Australian Radio station, broadcast on June 4, 2008, follows:*

**Q:** Recent news stories advance the theme that LTTE should settle for solutions short of Tamil Eelam. What is your comment on this trend?

**Balakumaran:** One has to view this with a deep understanding of the historical background to the conflict. Tamil Eelam is not a hastily concocted concept. Conceptualized before 1948, it developed gradually over time and was strengthened by history in the years since independence. I do not want to repeat history on how the support for Tamil nationhood grew gradually and finally it received mandate in 1977 elections. Colombo has attempted to blur this truth and has been trying to establish that Tamil Eelam was invented by LTTE. The truth is that the responsibility to advance this mandate currently rests with the LTTE.

LTTE was guided by this ideal since its inception. However, the movement has articulated clearly that it is open to examining credible alternate proposals. We regret that this request has not received the attention it deserves.

Everyone knows that the South is not ready to offer any solutions to Tamil grievances; even the solutions proposed by International Community. Recent news stories are intended to break the determination of Tamil people and to create confusion among our people.

One has to question why such messages were not articulated by other powers to national struggles of other peoples, for example why India didn't say this to Bangladesh; US to East Timor, Kosovo, or to the many nations breaking away from the old soviet block?

Our people have to clearly understand the motives behind

such moves by the International community.

**Q:** Is there a need for our people and the LTTE to recognize the political climate of the International Community, and modify their ideals?

**Balakumaran:** Certainly not. We are a nation. We cannot change who we are. Our people have undergone untold suffering in the past three decades. We are in the midst of a war. We should preserve our spiritual power to overcome the odds until we achieve our liberation.

**Q:** A solution to Tamil struggle can be achieved only with the support of the International Community. Do you agree?

**Balakumaran:** This is a universal truth - we accept this. We agree, we have to go along with the International Community. At the same time, our people must have a deeper understanding of this inevitable condition.

We must inquire why is International actors are responding differently to the national liberation struggles of different peoples. The axioms accepted for one struggle is negated for another.

We will realize that countries are motivated by their own self interests in the outcome. A national liberation struggle is cognizant of the welfare of its own people. If the struggle begins to listen to other people's dictates, and compromises its ideals for other people's welfare, than that reflects the weakness of the struggle. Tamil people have a duty to clearly understand this.

**Q:** For a liberation movement to be successful, how important is it necessary to show its strength?

**Balakumaran:** We traditionally equate strength with military might; but, military strength is only one aspect of the liberation struggle. Liberation struggle draws its strength from the determination of its people. Desire for freedom, once felt, never leaves the mind even for a moment.

There is no substitute for freedom. A liberation struggle cannot be quenched except by reaching its goal. It does not mean amassing battlefield successes. This is a marathon; having the strength to confront the obstacles to the finish is how the success of a liberation struggle is assessed. Our people are demonstrating this strength and the accompanying resilience.

**Q:** Can we expect that Sinhala leaders will offer a just solution to the Tamil question?

**Balakumaran:** History proves that this will never happen. Since 1948, our people lived with this illusion - while the first Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake was in



There is no confusion about our goal, which is Eelam, says Balakumaran, a senior LTTE member

power, we believed Kottalawela will be good to us - since then, South has had a array of leaders J.R. Jayewardene, Premadasa, Chandrika, and now Rajapakse. Sinhala people, driven by their perception of history, is in a mindset, which will not allow them to elect leaders who can pursue a fair and just approach to resolve the Tamil issue.

In the current government policy makers include extremists like Champika Ranawaka and JHU. Tamil struggle is aimed at changing this mindset.

Our experience shows this change cannot be created by us. That is why we are now seeking nationhood to preserve our lives and livelihood.

However, we are not pessimists; if a Sinhala leadership offers us a just solution we are willing to consider it.

**Q:** The leaders of the South are elected by Sinhala people. Do Sinhala people then deny existence of Tamil grievance?

**Balakumaran:** Certainly. Over the years, racist ideas were sowed within the Sinhala populace. These ideas have taken a deep root in their collective conscience. Sinhala people have been led to believe all their ills have been caused by the Tamil people.

Our struggle will lift this illusion and show the practical reali-

ties of the difficulties Sinhala people face. Our liberation struggle will also help the Sinhala people to recognize the real path to achieve peace prosperity and happiness. Sinhala army is the guardian of Sinhala racism. To lift this illusion, we must beat back the Sinhala army from our homeland.

**Q:** What political aspirations should the Tamil people have?

**Balakumaran:** We must be clear of our goal. There must no confusion about our goal. The strength of this belief is the propelling force. Currently, LTTE is the only credible vehicle to achieve this goal.

People may find fault with members who spearhead this struggle, may not agree with every activity; but at no time, their belief in the goal should waver. The ideal, the liberation, should transcend the individual. Our people have a clear distinction between the ideal and the shortcomings of some individuals who pursue this ideal. Tamil people have shown this clarity; our message to them is to continue in this path.

**Q:** How can the media help Tamil people?

**Balakumaran:** Media must inform the Tamil people with truthful news.

**Q:** How would you like India to view the Tamil issue?

**Balakumaran:** We observe Tamil Nadu state along with Indian national government. There is a link between us. Our regret is that the India's policy makers are viewing Tamil people's struggle through their lens of their country's political welfare.

Until Indian central government approaches this intellectually and recognize that ours is a struggle for survival by an oppressed people in the land of their birth, India cannot make any healthy, fruitful contribution. India has approached our struggle as an integral part of their national political equation. Like in a political chess game, India has taken positions beneficial to the governments in power. We have said clearly Tamil Eelam is not against India; we will uphold Indian welfare as our own. There was a time, when India looked after our welfare as her own. India will change its current policy towards us one day. We believe firmly, our strong cultural ties to our brothers and sisters in India will help their policy makers to select a just and fair path towards our people. We cannot wait for India's change of mind to continue with our liberation. One fact should be clear, no one should doubt our friendship, and strong ties to India.

## COMMENT



Activists of France-based Action Contra la Faim demonstrated to mark the anniversary of the killing of 17 of their Tamil colleagues in Muttur by the Sri Lankan military

# Is it genocide or politicide? And why does it matter?

The criminalisation of the demand for Tamil Eelam is the enabler for genocide.

**J. T. Janani**  
Tamil Guardian

A STATE may destroy, in whole or in part, a national or ethnic group (genocide). But it may also destroy a group of people who share a political belief (politicide). Sometimes, the two are the same. When the majority of Tamils support a free Tamil Eelam, then politicide is also genocide.

This second article of our three part series explores the evolution of the genocide paradigm in Sri Lanka: from the holocaust to the dark side of democracy and politicide.

Old-school genocide theorists are holocaust-centric. As Barbara Harff puts it, "the Jewish Holocaust... is employed as the yardstick, the ultimate criterion for assessing the scope, methods, targets, and victims of [other] genocides."

The recent political histories of the Jewish and Tamil peoples

have clear parallels: the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany began with racist legislation (the Nuremberg laws), escalated to violence (e.g. Kristallnacht), forced mass emigration and ended in overt genocide (see details of this in the article titled "Insecurity and the lessons of history" marking the 60th anniversary of the formation of Israel in TG373).

Former US Attorney General Bruce Fein has recently noted the similarities between the racist legislation of Sri Lanka and the Nuremberg laws. The intent of both was exclusion of a specific people from society and government, exclusion being a recognised early indicator of future genocide.

Physical violence escalated via a series of anti-Tamil pogroms and led to large scale forced migration. One in four Tamils have been forced to emigrate,

many more are internally displaced in their homeland.

But after the pogrom of July 1983, Sri Lanka diverged from the Jewish paradigm as follows: the Jewish people were integrated into their host society; they were not sufficiently organised to offer armed resistance, neither did they have the foundations for statehood.

The state formation process for Israel followed and was outside of the Nazi genocide.

In contrast, the Tamils had a strong case for independence from the outset: they held historic, contiguous territory, had a distinct ethnic identity and a proven record of (pre-colonial) self-governance. The Tamils engaged in armed struggle for secession, as a response to the genocidal pogrom of July 1983, and created a de-facto state of Eelam.

The long-drawn state formation process of the Tamils co-exists with the genocide they confront in Sri Lanka.

Part 1 of this series examined how classical genocidists refused to accept that democracies (compared to totalitarian states) can commit genocide.

But contemporary genocide studies, such as Michael Mann's *The Dark Side of Democracy*

(2005), look at the co-existence in democracies of genocide with an armed conflict and forced emigration.

The *Dark Side of Democracy* considers how nation states negotiate "the problem of national minorities" - ranging from assimilation to extermination. Mann's central thesis is that murderous ethnic cleansing, which in extreme forms can become genocidal, is the "dark side of democracy".

The ideal of rule by the people itself, he argues, tends to convert demos into ethnos, generating organic nationalism and encouraging the cleansing of minorities.

Mann's other theses are:

(2) "The danger zone", from which ethnic conflict may turn murderous, is reached when two rival ethnic movements lay claim to political sovereignty over the same territory; and where both claims appear legitimate and realizable;

(3) "Going over the brink", into actual murderous cleansing, occurs where states are destabilized amid an unstable local geopolitical environment -- out of which crisis "radicals" emerge calling for "tough" treatment of the out-group;

(4) Radicals' plans reflect this instability. Murderous cleansing

is not their initial intent, but typically constitutes a "Plan C", suddenly developed only after Plans A (the carefully considered one) and B (the first adaptation to failure and destabilization) both collapsed.

Sri Lanka fits well the genocide theses of Michael Mann. The Tamils and Sinhala are two rival ethnic groups whose respective nationalism has developed over decades.

There is a difficult, destabilising war for secession and the Tamil claim to territory appears realisable: there exists a de-facto Tamil state of Eelam.

On the other hand, majoritarian radicals such as the extreme militant Buddhist JHU and the Marxist-nationalist JVP have gained power through democratic mechanisms.

In the table on page 18 from Michael Mann, the shaded boxes in the lower right indicates the stage of "murderous ethnic cleansing"

Sri Lanka has already experienced several stages of ethnic cleansing for decades:

- policed partial repression of minority language and culture (from the language act to

*Continued on p18*

## PONGU THAMIL



# Diaspora Tamils rally for Eelam

EELAM Tamils in the Diaspora countries this week began a series of rallies in support of the Tamils' right to Self-Determination.

The rallies, titled 'Pongku Thamil,' (meaning 'Tamil Upsurge'), are intended as Tamil mobilising through cultural programmes. It resumes a major plank of Tamil political activity.

The very first Pongku Thamil was held on January 17, 2001 by university students in defiance of the Sri Lankan military occupying Jaffna and despite the ongoing fighting in the peninsula.

The Pongku Thamil movement was initiated by university students in the Tamil homeland to serve as a demonstration of the motivation and defiant will of the Tamil people for the cause of Tamil Eelam.

After the 2002 Ceasefire began, the rally was repeated not only in Jaffna, but as a series of

events to bring the Tamil people together in a common act of peaceful political agitation in support of the Eelam cause.

In 2003 and again in 2005, Pongku Thamil rallies took place in all the major Tamil population centres in Northeast Sri Lanka and across the Diaspora.

This year's series began with a rally in New Zealand; Tamils gathered at Potters Park in Auckland for two hours on Saturday between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m.

More than 350 Tamils of the 400 Tamil families in Auckland, wearing T-shirts marking the traditional Tamil homeland and carrying the portrait of Velupillai Pirapaharan, the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), called for the recognition of Eelam Tamils Right to Self-determination and marked the upsurge event with cultural pro-

grammes and speeches.

Maire Leadbeater of Indonesia Human Rights Committee, a former East Timor solidarity activist addressed the audience.

Mrs. Narmatha, a former lecturer at the University of Jaffna, who witnessed the emergence of the first Pongku Thamil rally in Jaffna and a representative of Pax Christi International also spoke at the event.

On Saturday Diaspora Tamils in Norway and Denmark also marked Pongku Thamil on Saturday.

In Oslo, around 3,000 Tamils attended a Pongku Thamil event that lasted for more than 4 hours. Trond Jensrud, a ruling Labour Party (AP) politician of the Oslo Municipal Council addressed the event.

Sam Jared, representing an Eritrean organisation in Oslo, in his speech compared the similari-

ties between the cause of the Eritreans and Tamils, and stated that the victory of Tamils is a logical conclusion as their struggle is based on the principle of the right of self-determination.

On Sunday Diaspora Tamils in Northern Italy gathered at Piazza Argentina in Milan, one of the largest cities in Italy for three hours and voiced their support for an independent Eelam.

Burani Vainer, a renown lawyer in Italy for his legal defence of freedom struggles, addressed the audience as a chief guest, on the principles of the right to self determination.

Tamil poet Arivumathi, the other chief guest from Tamil Nadu, India, also addressed the audience.

The organisers of the rally said that although only a few hundreds Tamils reside in metropolitan area of Milan, nearly 500

Tamils gathered in the city where only 30 Tamils families live. Many participants had come from remote areas of Northern Italy to take part.

Meanwhile, around thirty Sinhalese arrived at the site and mobilised a counter-protest. Around 50,000 Sinhalese expatriates live in Northern Italy.

On Wednesday, over eight thousand Tamils gathered in Paris to express their support for Tamil independence. For days before the rally, the streets of the La Chapelle area in Paris, where many Tamils live had been decorated with red and yellow balloons - the Tamil national colours.

Tamils in South Africa, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Australia, Switzerland, UK, France, Sweden, Canada and Malaysia are also expected to hold their own rallies soon.

**Photos p6-8**



PONGU THAMIL





PONGU THAMIL



DENMARK



DENMARK



DENMARK



DENMARK



NEWZEALAND



NEWZEALAND



## PONGU THAMIL



ITALY



ITALY



NEWZEALAND



NEWZEALAND



DENMARK



DENMARK



## COMMENT

# Why Tamils demand independence

## The consequence of sixty years of oppression by the Sinhala state

The Tamil people are struggling for their right to self-rule in an independent state, Tamil Eelam.

Our demand for independence is no mere whim; it has emerged as a direct consequence of a specific, prolonged history of racially-motivated oppression and violence by the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan state.

For over sixty years since the British gave the island independence as a single entity, the Sinhala-dominated state has implemented a series of racist laws, including a constitution (in 1972 and 1975) that places their language and religion as 'first and foremost'.

Our demands for equality have been met by state violence and state-backed mob violence. For three decades, our peaceful demonstrations, civil protests and hungerstrikes were met by police and army violence, racial riots and ever-more discriminatory laws.

It was only after three decades of peaceful agitation, that armed resistance to Sinhala domination began.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka form a nation of people. We are an ethnically distinct population with our own language, culture, traditions and history.

The Sinhalese of Sri Lanka also constitute a nation with their own language, culture, traditions and history, distinct from us. We therefore consider the Tamils and Sinhalese as distinct and equal nations. We do not consider ourselves superior or inferior to the Sinhalese.

The traditional Tamil homeland is in the Northeast of the island of Sri Lanka. The Sinhala homeland is in the south of the island.

Until colonial rulers arrived, there was no single form of united rule over the island. It was only under the British colonial rule that the different parts of the island were turned into a single administration, based in a capital in the south - Colombo.

The single state of (Ceylon, later renamed) Sri Lanka which was given independence in 1948 is therefore a colonial construction. It is as 'fabricated' as those other countries which received independence from colonialism with ruler-straight borders and artificial governments.

As we are a distinct nation, with our own homeland, we have the right to self-determination under the UN principles established to end colonial rule.

Though as a nation entitled to self-rule, we initially did not seek our independence, but sought accommodation with the Sinhalese in equality and justice.

But within eight years of independence, the Sinhala majority, using the principle of 'one-person, one vote' chose a government that made Sinhala the official language, instead of English. For example, Tamils had to learn Sinhala to get jobs, especially in the state.

Since then, the two largest parties (which are Sinhala-dominated) in the island have competed for votes by promising more and more Sinhala chauvinist policies (so called ethnic 'outbidding').

In the late sixties and seventies, university admission for Tamil youth was sharply reduced, by declaring our districts as 'privileged' and thus requiring



Tamil students to score higher marks for university entrance than students from Sinhala areas.

In 1962, the military began keeping Tamils out, the beginning of an 'ethnically pure' army: Sri Lanka's military is 99% Sinhala. The army's regiments are named after Sinhala kings, which in their mythology, defeated Tamil kings. The military's rituals are Buddhist.

Five times since independence, there have been big state-organized Sinhala mob violence against the Tamil people: 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983. Thousands of people have been massacred, many tortured and raped.

The most extensive was in July 1983, when at least three thousand people died when Tamils in the south were ethnically cleansed and driven to the north.

Since the Tamil armed struggle began in the early eighties, as a form of resistance to racial domination and subjugation, the island has been at war.

The way the Sinhala-dominated state wages its war to destroy the Tamil Tigers shows how it views the Tamils.

Against areas the government does not control, it uses indiscriminate, mass aerial and artillery bombardment, blockade of food and medicine resulting in widespread starvation and suffering.

In areas the government controls, it uses abductions, executions, torture, rape. The targets are Tamil politicians and party workers, journalists, civil society activists, aid workers, etc.

The Tamils have been told by the international community that instead of seeking independence by exercising our right to self-determination, we should seek a solution within Sinhala-dominated Sri Lanka.

But the Tamils have had a long history of being oppressed; sixty painful years. Our efforts to be accommodative, to share power with the Sinhalese have been rejected and we have suffered ever more repression and violence.

The demand for an independent state emerged in 1976 when the Tamil parties united into the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). In 1977, the TULF won all the seats they contested in the Northeast by a landslide, receiving a resounding mandate for an independent state.

We have never abandoned our desire to be independent.

In 2001, the four major Tamil parties (which included the TULF and those militant groups which gave up arms) again united into the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). In 2001 and 2004, the TNA contested elections on a platform supporting Tamil independence and won with landslide again.

Since the mid-nineties, Tamils have sought refuge from the oppression and the brutal war of the Sinhala-dominated state and fled to Europe, Canada and Australia. In all these places, Tamil Diaspora has continued to demand independence.

In short, the demand for independent Tamil Eelam has broad, enduring support.

With every passing decade, despite the ferocious violence and repression unleashed by the Sinhala state with international support, our determination to be free, to rule ourselves as equals with other peoples of the world, has grown stronger.

In the name of equality and justice, we ask for your support.



## EDITORIAL

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WEDNESDAY JUNE 18, 2008 No. 375

## Symptom, not the Problem

## The Tamils are seeking liberation, not just an end to human rights abuses

It has now become widely accepted internationally that human rights abuses by the Sri Lankan security forces and allied paramilitaries are widespread and routine. Sri Lanka has come under intense criticism by international human rights groups as well as some leading Western states. The Tamil Diaspora, which has for the past quarter century been protesting and lobbying international capitals, has understandably gained some comfort from the strongly worded criticism from some host states. However, firstly, this should not be taken as a reduction in support for the Sinhala-dominated state. Secondly, and more importantly, we should not equate ending Colombo's rights abuses with ending Sri Lanka's oppression of the Tamil people. Abuses are only an element of oppression and only a symptom of state racism.

For sixty years, the Sinhala-dominated state has discriminated against and violently repressed the Tamils. In 1972 the Constitution was changed to set up a permanent racial hierarchy that posits the Sinhala-Buddhist majority as having a 'first and foremost' place in the island with the other minorities as subordinate. In short, Sri Lanka is deemed a Sinhala country in which the minorities - Tamils, Upcountry Tamils and Muslims - are allowed to stay, provided they understand their place in this hierarchy.

Since independence from Britain, Tamil protests against the deepening Constitutional and legislative privileging of the Sinhalese have been met with increasingly violent state repression. This led inexorably - from Tamil demands for equal treatment, to demands for federal autonomy - to insistence on outright independence. That was in 1977. It was when state repression intensified thereafter that militancy emerged. It was following the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom - the worst of five or more such mob attacks - that the Tamil armed struggle turned into a fully fledged war of national liberation.

There are several dimensions to state repression of the Tamils. There are the human rights abuses - murder, 'disappearance', torture and rape by the security forces and allied paramilitaries. There is the violent and militarized Sinhala colonization of the Tamils' homeland. For example, whilst the Eastern province had less than 9% Sinhalese in 1948, by 1981 (i.e. before the 1983 pogrom and the mass displacement and killings of Tamils throughout the war) state-backed colonization had ensured Sinhalese comprised 30%. Then there is the way in which the Sinhala military - assisted by the

West-led international community - has waged war: massacres of Tamils, mass displacement of Tamils (often followed by settling of Sinhalese in abandoned lands), indiscriminate bombardments of Tamil population concentrations and embargos on food and medicine. Sinhala racism manifests in almost every state decision. For example, after the tsunami, almost all foreign aid was diverted to the Sinhala south, rather than the Tamil and Muslim dominated Northeast.

None of all this is new to the international community; it has been integral to the Tamil-Sinhala relationship for decades. Quite apart from the incessant lobbying by Tamil expatriates (most of whom arrived in the West as fleeing refugees), the regular reports from Western embassies, research by countless academics, reports from international human rights groups and media reports, have chronicled the Tamils' persecution in detail. Yet, prioritizing its geopolitical and economic interests, the West-led international community has aided and abetted this Sinhala repression - whilst sometimes making much noise about rights abuses (and usually when the Sinhala leaders resist external interests).

There are specific consequences to focusing on human rights as opposed to state oppression. To begin with, reducing the Tamils' suffering to human rights is tantamount to rejecting the Tamils' demand for self-determination; this is because the way to address human rights, in international eyes, is to reform the Sri Lankan state and not 'divide' the country. Secondly, the massive military and economic assistance being extended to the Sri Lankan state is justified under this logic of reform. Supplying further training to the Sri Lankan military means it will be 'more disciplined' and 'less likely to commit abuses', the argument goes. Strengthening the economic base of the Sri Lankan state means 'reducing ethnic tensions'. The state should not be weakened by sanctions, but 'encouraged', by giving it even more aid, to 'improve' its 'governance', its 'accountability' and so on. In short, the logic of 'human rights abuses' thus makes strengthening the Sri Lankan state the solution to Tamils' 'grievances'.

This is why when Tamils protest using the language of 'oppression', racism' and 'genocide', the international community responds in the language of 'stopping human rights abuses'. Which is why the Tamils are told to forget about self-determination or Eelam and to focus on making the state 'more accountable'. This is also why, when we speak of 'state repression', the international community instead blames the 'government' - the prob-

lem, we are told, is the Rajapaksa regime, not the state per se. Thus, it is to justify and facilitate the ongoing international support for the Sri Lankan state that Tamils are being encouraged to agitate in Western capitals - again, provided they use the language of 'human rights', and not that of 'national self-determination'. In short, our role is to plead with the international community to take up our 'grievances' and to become our 'representatives' vis-à-vis the Sri Lankan state.

Which leads to the question of Tamils' support for the Liberation Tigers. When the crisis in Sri Lanka is reduced to 'human rights abuses' and the solution is deemed to 'strengthening and reforming the state', there is no room for armed struggle against the state (i.e. 'terrorism') irrespective of the form of the oppression. Which is why the European Union, when banning the LTTE in 2006, insisted the move 'was against the LTTE and not the Tamil people.' This is why the 'War on Terror' and 'a solution acceptable to all Sri Lankans' are deemed to be one and the same.

'Human rights abuses' therefore have starkly different meanings for the Tamils and the international community. For the Tamils, the atrocities inflicted on them by the Sri Lankan security forces are a symptom, an indicator of the racist logic of the Sinhala-dominated state; for the international community, they are the problem itself i.e. end the abuses and thus solve the crisis.

The demand for Tamil Eelam emerged out of the impossibility of reforming the Sri Lankan state; i.e. the failure over decades of Tamil efforts to bring about change within a united state dominated by a numerical ethnic majority. The Tamil armed struggle emerged out of the violent, militarized repression of this Tamil demand. In the 21st century, the Tamils have been promised international action - most recently under the logic of 'responsibility to protect' - to ensure the Sri Lankan state ends its oppression. But nothing like this has happened. Instead, the Sri Lankan state continues to receive increasing international assistance - military, financial and political.

The point here, as we have stated before, is not that human rights are not of value - as a community that has suffered abuses for decades, few appreciate these more. Rather, it is to say human rights cannot be separated from the central political issue - in our case self-determination and liberation from state oppression. To do so is to obscure and - given the dynamics of international action in Sri Lanka - in fact to propagate Sri Lanka's oppression.



## NEWS

# India, China compete in Sri Lanka

**Gavin Rabinowitz**  
The Associated Press

THE battered harbour town of Hambantota, on Sri Lanka's southern tip with its scrawny men selling even scrawnier fish, seems an unlikely focus for an emerging international competition over energy supply routes that fuel much of the global economy.

An impoverished place still recovering from the devastation of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, Hambantota has a desolate air, a sense of nowhere, punctuated by the realization that looking south over the expanse of ocean, the next landfall is Antarctica.

But just over the horizon runs one of the world's great trade arteries, the shipping lanes where thousands of vessels carry oil from the Middle East and raw materials to Asia, returning with television sets, toys and sneakers for European consumers.

These tankers provide 80 per cent of China's oil and 65 per cent of India's - fuel desperately needed for the two countries' rapidly growing economies. Japan, too, is almost totally dependent on energy supplies shipped through the Indian Ocean.

Any disruption - from terrorism, piracy, natural disaster or war - could have devastating effects on these countries and, in an increasingly interdependent world, send ripples across the globe. When an unidentified ship attacked a Japanese oil tanker travelling through the Indian Ocean from South Korea to Saudi Arabia in April, the news sent oil prices to record highs.

For decades the world relied on the powerful U.S. Navy to protect this vital sea lane. But as India and China gain economic heft, they are moving to expand their control of the waterway, sparking a new - and potentially dangerous - rivalry between Asia's emerging giants.

China has given massive aid to Indian Ocean nations, signing friendship pacts, building ports in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as Sri Lanka, and reportedly setting up a listening post on one of Myanmar's islands near the strategic Strait of Malacca.

Now, India is trying to parry China's moves. It beat out China for a port project in Myanmar. And, flush with cash from its expanding economy, India is beefing up its military, with the expansion seemingly aimed at China. Washington and, to a lesser extent, Tokyo are encouraging India's role as a counterweight to growing Chinese power.

Among China's latest moves is the billion-dollar port its engineers are building in Sri Lanka, an island country just off India's southern coast.



The Chinese insist the Hambantota port is a purely commercial move, and by all appearances it is. But some in India see ominous designs behind the project, while others in countries surrounding India like the idea. A 2004 Pentagon report called Beijing's effort to expand its presence in the region China's "string of pearls."

No one wants war, and relations between the two nations are now at their closest since a brief 1962 border war in which China quickly routed Indian forces. Last year, trade between India and China grew to \$37 billion and their two armies conducted their first-ever joint military exercise.

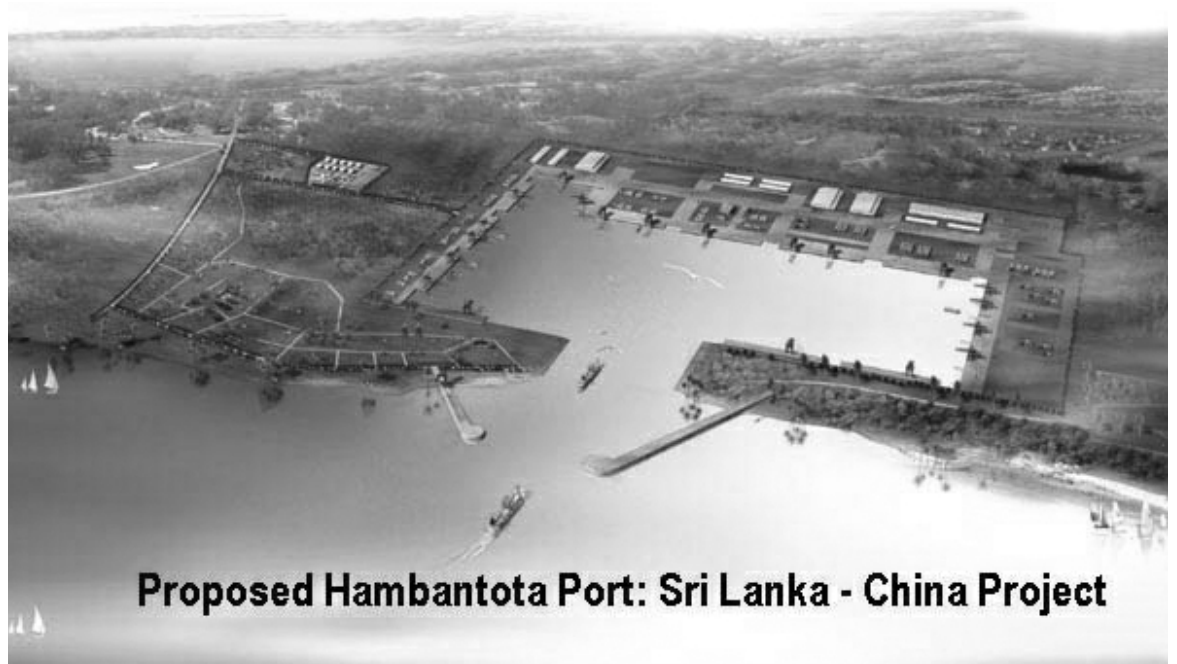
Still, the Indians worry about China's growing influence.

"Each pearl in the string is a link in a chain of the Chinese maritime presence," India's navy chief, Admiral Sureesh Mehta, said in a speech in January, expressing concern that naval forces operating out of ports established by the Chinese could "take control over the world energy jugular."

"It is a pincer movement," said Rahul Bedi, a South Asia analyst with London-based Jane's Defense Weekly. "That, together with the slap India got in 1962, keeps them awake at night."

B. Raman, a hawkish, retired Indian intelligence official, expressed the fears of some Indians over the Chinese-built ports, saying he believes they'll be used as naval bases to control the area.

"We cannot take them at face value. We cannot assume their intentions are benign," said



**Hambantota beach was destroyed by the tsunami, but China plans to rebuild to the schematic above**

Raman.

But Zhao Gancheng, a South Asia expert at the Chinese government-backed Shanghai Institute for International Studies, says ports like Hambantota are strictly commercial ventures. And Sri Lanka says the new port will be a windfall for its impoverished southern region.

With Sri Lanka's proximity to the shipping lane already making it a hub for transshipping containers between Europe and Asia, the new port will boost the country's annual cargo handling capacity from six million containers to some 23 million, said Priyath Wickrama, deputy director of the Sri Lankan Ports Authority.

Wickrama said a new facility

was needed since the main port in the capital Colombo has no room to expand and Trincomalee port in the Northeast is caught in the middle of Sri Lanka's civil war. Hambantota also will have factories on site producing cement and fertilizer for export, he said.

Meanwhile, India is clearly gearing its military expansion toward China rather than its long-time foe, and India has set up listening stations in Mozambique and Madagascar, in part to monitor Chinese movements, Bedi noted. It also has an air base in Kazakhstan and a space monitoring post in Mongolia - both China's neighbours.

India has announced plans to have a fleet of aircraft carriers and

nuclear submarines at sea in the next decade and recently tested nuclear-capable missiles that put China's major cities well in range. It is also reopening air force bases near the Chinese border.

Encouraging India's role as a counter to China, the U.S. has stepped up exercises with the Indian navy and last year sold it an American warship for the first time, the 17,000-tonne amphibious transport dock USS Trenton. American defence contractors - shut out from the lucrative Indian market during the long Cold War - have been offering India's military everything from advanced fighter jets to anti-ship missiles.

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DIASPORA

# Rival London demonstrations as Rajapaksa meets Commonwealth heads

TamilNet

OVER thousand expatriate Tamils demonstrated on June 10 outside the Commonwealth Secretariat where Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa was attending a conference of Commonwealth leaders.

Meanwhile several hundred other Tamils who arrived at the demonstration in Pall Mall were turned away by Police, citing space restrictions, to another space in Trafalgar Square. A thousand Tamil expatriates attended the demonstration from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Next to the Tamil demonstration, fifty Sinhalese staged a protest in support of the Sri Lankan President. Carrying several Lion flags, they demonstrated next to the Tamils.

With an official restriction on the number of people permitted to gather, police extended the designated space, but as protestors continued to arrive, directed them to another gathering point in Trafalgar Square.

Police separated the two groups with barriers and metal sheets.

The Sinhala protestors denounced the British Tamil Forum, which had coordinated the organizing of the Tamil demonstration as a Tamil Tiger front.

On June 9, Amnesty International organized another demonstration against the Sri Lankan president outside the Commonwealth Secretariat protesting repression of media in Sri Lanka.

South Asia director of the Amnesty International, Sam Zarifi, told the BBC the government should understand that Sri Lanka is 'not forgotten' by the international community.

"Certainly the situation in Sri Lanka has been the source of the increasing concern around the world because the deterioration has been rapid," Sam Zarifi told BBC Sandeshiya.

The government is not seen to be willing, he said, to respond to the concerns by human rights watchdogs and the international community.



The Northeast London branch of the TYO held a competition titled 'Eelakkathirkal 2008' on June 7 at the London Selva Vinayakar temple to mark Tamil Eelam students day. Mrs Selvarajah, the wife of the temple Secretary, lit the common flame. The events on the agenda included a dance in praise of Kalaivani by the students of Mrs. Kausika Sukumar and a poem in praise of the competitors. UK parliamentarians Lee Scott and Mike Gapes were chief guests at the event.



The Norwegian Tamil Youth Organisation commemorated the 34th death anniversary of Sivakumar on 7 June in Oslo, Norway. The event began with a moment of silent respect, before Mr. Puhalethi, an artist, lit the flame of sacrifice. Mr. Puhalethi also delivered the Sivakumar memorial speech. A number of dramas by the Tamil youth greatly engaged the audience, while there were also dance items to entertain. The event also saw the launch of a short film titled 'Vidiyal', by Tamil artist Mr Prasanna. The programme ended with patriotic songs by the Malathi Music Group.



Over 500 people gathered at a hall in Osterberg, Netherlands, on 7 June 2008 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Thiruvalluvar Tamil Schools. Beginning with the raising of the national flag and common flame of sacrifice, the event also included a moment of silent respect, cultural programmes by the students, including dramas, dances, speeches and poetry. All the teachers of the Thiruvalluvar Tamil Schools were honoured for their service with plaques presented by the Chief Guest, Mrs Naguleswary Ariyanayagam, Secretary of the Tamil Eelam Education Board. A book titled "The lessons of History" was also released. A publication of the Tamil Eelam Education Board, the book tells the recent political history of the Eelam Tamils.



## NEWS

# Don't visit Colombo, Ganesan warns NorthEast Tamils

TamilNet

ACCUSING both the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of acting irrationally, Mano Ganesan, told Tamils from the NorthEast to stay away from Colombo.

"[N]either the government nor the LTTE have any control over blasts going on in the respective territories under their own control," the leader of Western People's Front (WPF) and the Convener of the Civil Monitoring Commission (CMC) said in a media release June 7.

He appealed to the Tamil civilians travelling from North-East to stay away from Colombo and the South as both areas are "unsafe and insecure for Tamil civilians."

"Capital Colombo and south in general are unsafe and insecure for Tamil civilians travelling from north and eastern provinces.

"The recent bomb blasts have triggered hate and doubts on all those Tamils coming to Colombo from northeast.

"The state media is orchestrating this hate campaign on an hourly basis. Rational behaviour cannot be assured within the security establishment authorized to maintain law and order.

"We are not in a position to assure safety to Tamils coming to Colombo from north and east. Therefore I call upon the Tamils to refrain from coming to Colombo until further notice."

"Nobody other than me, the Colombo district's elected Tamil parliamentarian, has more legitimacy to make this announcement," said the statement.

"Numbers of persons have been reported arrested and gone missing immediately after the bomb blasts. We have come to a situation where it is difficult to differentiate between the acts of Abductions and Arrests. The family members of the victims are pleading for relief at our offices and crowding at police stations. The plights of the elderly parents are awful," the statement said.

"On the other hand the expres-

sions of grief of the family members of the bus bomb victims in Moratuwa and Kandy are heart breaking.

"The cries of the civilians are haunting me. All these people are suffering due to the sins of power hungry politicians of both sides.

"These are chain actions to the bombings in Colombo and in Wanni. We have absolutely no controls over these activities," he said.

"Neither the government nor the LTTE have any control over blasts going on in the respective territories under their own control. So is the inactive parliamentary opposition. All civil society voices have drawn in the war drum beats. There are only empty rhetoric statements but the sufferings of the people are ascending from bad to worse.

"Both the government and the LTTE are at war. The illogic and irrational pundits in the government and LTTE have stopped listening to the international community.

"We go to their assistance when people are in trouble. We make noises and take up the issue when civilians go missing due to extra judicial activities of the state. We are running campaigns on sharing political power as solutions for the national question. We are doing this in the name of peace in this country. We are committed to the just cause.

"We are risking our own personal lives yet we do not want to go down in the history as cowards. We are not running with the hares and hunting with the hounds. We face the pressure and the burden hence we have to inform the reality. Our limits have extended to the limits now. We are unable to cope up with the situation.

"I therefore call upon the Tamil people of the north and east to refrain from coming to Colombo until further notice. This is the only way available for me to support the maintenance of some order in Colombo."



Toursits continue to flock to Sri Lanka's attractions despite travel warnings and the ongoing civil war

## Tourist arrivals up ...

THE number of tourists arriving in Sri Lanka in May rose 18.4 percent from a year earlier, despite security concerns stemming from the country's civil war, officials said on June 11.

Arrivals rose to 31,140 from 26,307 a year before, the island's state tourist authority said. Arrivals in the January-May period rose 1.2 percent to 196,403 from 193,981 a year earlier, reported Reuters.

"May was a low month, when we had night curfews in the airport," a top official at Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority told Reuters asking not to be named

Tourist arrivals fell 40 percent in May 2007 due to the night closure of Sri Lanka's only international airport after Tamil Tiger air raids on fuel installations and the air force base adjacent to the airport.

The tourism industry expects arrivals in future to drop because of an upsurge in violence this year from the 25-year civil war between the state and separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

Renton de Alwis, chairman of the Sri Lankan Tourism Development Authority Sri Lanka, said: "I don't think these (bombings) would deter people from visiting Sri Lanka. No tourists have been inv-

olved in any of these incidences."

At least 32 people have been killed and over 100 wounded in a series of bomb blasts targeting civilians in two commuter buses and two trains in capital Colombo and central Sri Lanka during rush hours since May 26.

The Tourism Development Authority said arrivals from the Middle East rose 78.1 percent in the January to May period compared with a year earlier.

Tourist arrivals from north Canada, United States, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, and Australia have dropped during the first five

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## ... but Colombo not safe

IN AN international survey released June 9, Colombo was cited as one amongst the less appealing cities in which to live, reported the Daily Mirror newspaper.

According to the Quality of Living Global City Rankings 2008 covering some 215 cities, Auckland was named as the city with the best quality of living in the Asia Pacific region while Dhaka is the city with the region's worst quality of living.

European cities dominate the worldwide rankings having the best quality of living locations with Zurich retaining its 2007 title as the highest ranked city, followed jointly by Vienna (2), Geneva (2), then Vancouver (4) and Auckland (5).

The survey is conducted to help governments and major companies place employees on international assignments.

The survey also identifies those cities with the highest personal safety ranking based on internal stability, crime, effectiveness of law enforcement and relationships with other countries.

For personal safety, Pakistan is one of the lowest-scoring destinations followed by Colombo, Dhaka, Jakarta and Manila. Singapore is the region's best location for personal safety, scoring 120.2 compared to Karachi's 25.3.

"Border conflicts and internal issues, combined with high levels of crime, make many other countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Indonesia less appealing reloca-

tion destinations," senior researcher, Slagin Parakatil said.

"Personal and family safety is of paramount importance when employees consider opportunities overseas. Cities that are, or are perceived as, unsafe may experience difficulties in attracting the best people and skills," he said.

Data was largely collected between September and November 2007 and is regularly updated to take account of changing circumstances.

In particular, the assessments will be revised in the case of any new developments.

The database contains more than 350 cities, but only 215 cities have been considered for the

*Continued on p22*



## NEWS

# Canada's WTM denies funding terrorism

## Government says blacklisting for Tamils' benefit.

A Toronto-based Tamil non-profit group was added to Canada's list of outlawed terrorist organizations on Monday, on the basis it was raising money to arm Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas.

The decision to designate the World Tamil Movement (WTM) as a terrorist "entity" marks the first time the Conservative Cabinet has used its Anti-Terrorism Act powers against a registered Canadian community group.

The WTM denies the accusation.

"This is something we've done with care and caution," Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day was quoted by the Canwest News Service as saying.

It is now illegal to knowingly participate in, contribute to, or facilitate the activities of the WTM.

Day acknowledged the decision could affect some legitimate community services provided by the WTM.

He accused the WTM of using threats and intimidation to raise money for the Tamil Tigers.

"When we think of the fact that innocent civilians in other countries have been killed by terrorist activity, and that those terrorist activities, in part, are funded by dollars that have come from Canada, we want to put a stop to that," Day said.

WTM President Sitta Sittampalam said he was consulting with his lawyers and was considering an appeal of the decision. The WTM has always denied funding the Tamil Tigers.

Although the government said it had taken the step to "support" the Tamil community in Canada, the Canadian Tamil Congress, which is not affiliated with WTM, denounced the move.

Many Canadian Tamils are sympathetic to the Tigers, considering them freedom fighters, Canwest News Service said. Canada outlawed the Tamil Tigers under the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2006.

CTC spokesman David Poopalapillai said Ottawa should be

pressuring the Sri Lankan government to curb its human rights abuses and military campaign rather than singling out the Tamil Tigers. "This is not the way to promote peace in Sri Lanka," he said.

Poopalapillai says the government is punishing an entire organization instead of a few individuals. He says if someone in the WTM broke the law they should be punished, but not the entire organization.

The WTM has been a registered Ontario non-profit society since 1986. Its incorporation papers list its mandate as serving ethnic Tamils, lobbying governments and raising money "for charitable organizations serving the Sri Lankan Tamils, particularly destitute refugees."

Allegations it secretly acts as a financial front for Tamil terrorists date back to 1995, when the group's co-ordinator was arrested in Toronto for allegedly raising money for the Tigers and purchasing equipment with military uses.

In 2003, the RCMP launched a criminal investigation into the WTM called Project Osaluki. Police raided the WTM offices in Toronto and Montreal in 2006, seizing thousands of documents.

In April, the RCMP seized dozens of bank accounts linked to the WTM and closed its Montreal branch.

The WTM's financial assets were frozen on Monday.

Prof. Wesley Wark said the listing could drive Tamil Tigers fundraising underground where it would be more difficult to monitor, but he says he believes the government had made the right decision.

"It makes it very difficult for the WTM to function and it sends a message to the Tamil community in Canada that financial support for a terrorist group will not be condoned," said the University of Toronto intelligence expert.



Tens of thousands of Tamils, like these people in 2004, rallied in support of the LTTE before Canada outlawed such expressions of support

## Remember Quebec? The Tamils are no different

### One Tamil responds to the Canadian government's terrorism ban on the WTM.

#### Vel Velauthapillai

DEAR Hon. Stockwell Day:

I read your latest announcement about "Terrorism" and the ban on the World Tamil Movement, a 20 years old cultural organization on Monday.

I am surprised to see that the Tories are bringing Canada to what feels like dictatorship. While US Democratic candidates Mr. Obama and Ms. Clinton are showing maturity and expressing a willingness to reconsider their "list of terrorists", you are encouraging state terrorism and rewarding human right violations.

After the Tories banned the LTTE in 2006, Sri Lankan government waged war against Tamils and killed more than 5000 Eelam Tamils. Now, the Sri Lankan government may plan to execute more massacres with newly pledged financial support from Iran.

In Sri Lanka, the problem is state terrorism and the Sri Lankan government is killings Tamils in much larger numbers than the civilians you mention in your public statements. Please ask the UN or ask HRW for reports.

Please remember you used the same HRW reports to support your decision to ban the LTTE in 2006. Why don't you use their recent reports to ban the Sri Lankan government and close their terror funding embassy in

Ottawa?

In fact, in the reverse, several Canadian UN officials, notably UNHCHR Louise Arbour, have been branded as 'terrorists' by the Sri Lankan government.

Tamils democratically decided to free themselves from Sri Lanka in 1977, long before the LTTE came into the picture. The problem is similar to Kosovo, Tibet, or Bangladesh where a separation is needed to solve the problem.

Tamils were waited for help from International community more than 30 years until 1977, then they decided to go separate and started to fight against Sri Lankan state terrorism.

In Canada, Tamils are a successful hardworking community with many thousands of doctors, professors, engineers, business leaders and other skilled professionals. It is true that many Tamils came to Canada as refugees, but they immediately started to contribute to the Canadian economy and very quickly joined with the Canadian mainstream, including in politics.

It is very hard to believe such a educated community could be threatened by the LTTE for money. Even if that is the case, I believe the Canadian police and the RCMP are capable of handling the situation with available laws.

In fact, there are many Tamils

who have worked for the police, army, and the RCMP as well. Please recruit more Tamils to the police if you want to know more about what is happening in the community.

Branding Tamil organizations as terrorists, shutting down public voices or threatening the Tamil community will not help in any way. In fact, it will be counter productive.

On the other side, those who really want to help Tamils back on the island, will do so underground. Is this what the Tories want to achieve?

In the 1980s, Canada faced the similar scenario as what is happening in Sri Lanka in Quebec, but a civilized and mature Canadian leadership very peacefully resolved the issues and provided adequate powers to Quebec. If Canada had banned the Bloc Quebec, the situation may be similar to Sri Lanka. It is always better to learn from history.

Tamils know how the Sri Lankan government has denied their rights using anti-terror laws. It was the US who armed the Taliban, and it was the US who armed Iraq. Now, it is the US and Canada who help Sri Lankan state terrorists. Dictatorship or governance using fear will cause more problems. Please don't play political games at the expense of a young fast-growing, productive, law-abiding community.

I believe Canada still honors freedom of speech. Please don't apply any criminal charges to me for directly writing to you.

(Edited)

## Italy arrests Tamils, says LTTE links

ITALIAN police Wednesday arrested 33 Sri Lankan Tamils charged with belonging to the Tamil Tigers, an official said.

Twenty-eight people were arrested in a series of raids on the mainland, suspected of membership and of providing funding for the LTTE, an official with the police counter-terrorism cell in Naples who coordinated the raids, told AFP.

They were detained in nine Italian cities including the south-

ern cities of Naples and Rome as well as Milan and Genoa, in the north of the country.

Five other Tamils were detained by authorities in Palermo, Sicily, also on suspicion of belonging to LTTE, in a separate police operation, the official, Antonio Sbordone, said.

Some 200 police were involved in the operation which saw raids across the country from Naples in the south to Bologna in the north, and also on Sicily.



## NEWS

# Sea Tigers raid key navy camp in Mannaar

TamilNet

THE Sea Tigers, the naval wing of the LTTE, launched a surprise attack on a Sri Lanka Navy camp at Erukkalampiddi in Mannaar in the early hours of June 11, temporarily ceasing control of the camp for about 2 hours before withdrawing.

The Sea Tigers seized arms and military equipments, including a radar, from the camp, LTTE officials in Vanni told TamilNet.

The operation was carried out by Marine Commandos, a special forces unit of the Sea Tigers.

The Tigers seized a 50-caliber machine gun, 81 mm mortars, light machine guns, rocket launchers and several other pieces of military hardware from the camp, the Tigers said.

The Sea Tiger Marines of Lt. Col. Cheran unit launched the seaborne lightning strike at 2:08 a.m. Wednesday and brought the entire installation under their full control within 10 minutes, according to the LTTE officials.

Commander Viduthalai led the Commandos while Commander Ilanko led the sea mission, including counter-attacks on Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) vessels dispatched from Thalaimannaar Sri Lanka Naval Command.

One 50 caliber machine gun, one 50 caliber barrel, two 81 mm mortars, one PK-LMG, one rocket propelled grenade launchers, one light anti-tank weapon, one 60 mm mortar, one AK-LMG and one T-56 assault rifle were seized.

Radar equipment, two hundred and-three 81 mm shells, sixty five 60 mm mortar shells, four RPG propellers, 6 RPG shells, three kit-bags, 1,195 50 caliber rounds, 5,870 T-56 rounds and several other ammunitions and military accessories were also seized by the Sea Tigers.

The Tiger commandos were in full control of the SLN installation for almost two hours and destroyed the camp at 3:45 a.m., before leaving Mannaar island at 3:50 a.m., the Tigers said.

Five Tiger commandos were killed in action.

Sea Tiger commandos had verified that 9 Sri Lankan troopers were killed in action.

One of the Sri Lankan troopers, seriously wounded, succumbed to his injuries later, according to the Tigers.

The Sri Lankan military refused to comment on the LTTE claims. Many of the soldiers stationed at the camp belonged to the Gajaba Regiment.

Just before they left, the Sea Tiger commandos destroyed a power generator that was supplying electricity to the camp.

The Sea Tigers attributed the mission to the memory of Lt. Col. Kadaafi, a commander of the Sea Tigers Special Engineering Division, who was killed two months ago.

LTTE officials supplied photos taken during their mission to reporters who went to cover the display of the arms and ammunition that were seized during their mission.

Erukkalampiddi is 7km north-west of Mannaar city and 8km southeast of Peasaalai.



Some of the weaponry captured by the Sea Tiger cadres at the camp

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Foreigners accounts

Foreigners are to be allowed to deposit money with Sri Lankan banks in a move to promote investment in an economy which is short of domestic savings. The central bank said Sri Lankan citizens living abroad, corporate bodies incorporated outside Sri Lanka and foreign institutional investors will be allowed to invest in savings and time deposits in designated foreign currencies or in rupees with commercial banks. A deposit account will have to maintain a minimum balance of at least \$10,000 or its equivalent and total foreign deposits. Previously foreigners could only invest in the treasury bond and treasury bill markets. Analysts said the move was to raise more money after the central bank had failed to assure dollar inflows in its previous attempts at liberalising capital markets. "This is a desperate move to raise more dollars in the economy," an analyst, who asked not to be named told Reuters. (Reuters)

### Christians abducted

Christians in northwestern Sri Lanka have been subjected to an outbreak of abductions in recent days. Pastor Kandiah Sivakumaran and his assistant Mariyappan Yuvaneswaran were abducted in Tabbowa, in the Puttalam District of Sri Lanka on May 31 and released the following Monday. The pastor was active in Christian

ministry. The unidentified abductors arrived at the scene in a white van. Restrictions on Sri Lankan Christians have been increasing. A new curfew law requires individuals to report where they are going and what they are doing, and another law attacks late night prayer meetings, Gospel for Asia reports. Gospel For Asia's Bible college and its students have also been attacked and harassed. (Mission Network News)

### PhD thesis in Tamil

For the first time, candidates will be able to submit their PhD thesis in Tamil, after Bharathiar University (BU) in Coimbatore decided to allow the submission of thesis, except for those on English literature, in Tamil. The decision facilitates candidates 'to express' their ideas more effectively and encourages more students to pursue research. "When Germans, Chinese and Japanese can do research in their respective mother tongue, why not a Tamilian in Tamil in this state," asked the Vice Chancellor of BU Professor G Thiruvassagam. "Language should not be a barrier for those who want to pursue research," he said. The Vice Chancellor claimed "no university in India allows a candidate to submit the thesis in his or her own mother tongue." However, there is no compulsion the thesis should be in classical Tamil. Notably, the BU is now preparing

the list of examiners abroad who know Tamil to examine thesis copies for award of the doctoral degree or M.Phil. The varsity has instituted an award - Dr. Kalaingar Ariviyal Virudhu (Dr Kalaingar Science Award) - for the best thesis submitted in Tamil. (newindpress.com)

### Mother detained

A Tamil mother suspected of stabbing two of her children to death and critically wounding her baby girl was lonely and depressed by her life in Britain, her relatives said. Police detained Sasikala Navaneethan, 35, under the Mental Health Act over the deaths of her son, 5, and his sister, 4. Their six-month-old sister remains in a critical condition after all three children were stabbed at their home in Carshalton, South London, late on May 30. Police refused to give details of the incident but press reports suggested that the throats of the older children had been cut. Neighbours described seeing a "tiny bundle" being carried out of the house. "It was obviously a child," one said. The children's father, Navarajah Navaneethan 39, was initially questioned but later released by the police. Speaking through an intermediary, a relative of Mrs Navaneethan said she had become depressed after her brother and his wife moved out of the house. (The Times)

## 15,000 SLA deserters

### Daily Mirror

THE Sri Lankan Army has a problem with desertion.

Currently there are about 15,000 army deserters at large. But late last year, it was worse, with about 20,000 deserters on the books. In the past, the army has managed to get deserters to return by offering an amnesty.

The most recent one, that was available the first two weeks of May, was extended another two weeks because the initial response was so great.

The army expects to get about a third of its wayward soldiers back.

The main cause of the desertion is the 25 years of fighting with the Liberation Tigers, which has killed over 70,000 people.

About a third are Tamils (18 percent of the population), while most of the rest are soldiers.

Since the army is only about 150,000 strong, and the heaviest fighting has taken place in the last decade, it's no wonder so many recruits changed their minds.

The Sri Lankan army has always been an all-volunteer force.

But once you are in, you are obliged to stay in as long as your contract specifies. If you want to leave before that time is up, you are classified as a deserter.

The army does not make a big effort to hunt down deserters and bring them back. That would cause civil unrest.

A better solution has been victory in combat. And that's what the army has been doing for the past year.

Nothing succeeds like success.

The generals have been keeping army casualties down, while taking down lots of the enemy. So a record number of deserters are returning.