

# Inside REPORT

## TAMILEELAM NEWS REVIEW

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# JAFFNA FACES FAMINE AND WAR: GOVT. BLOCKS FOOD AND MEDICINE

With the economic sanctions already in rigid practice, the Government of Kumaratunga and its bureaucracy have been placing impediments in various forms and methods effectively blocking the supply of food, medicine and other essential items to the North thereby causing tremendous hardships and suffering to the Tamil civilian masses. If the situation continues, the present scarcity of food items will aggravate into a dangerous condition of famine. In the meantime, the Government has moved fresh troops and war materials to Palali base in preparation for a major military assault on the Jaffna Peninsula.

An acute shortage of essential items is already prevailing in the North, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula where the Tamil population of nearly one million people are concentrated. With an economic embargo already in force, the Government bureaucrats attached to various departments are deliberately placing obstacles for the private traders to bring food supplies and other essential items to the North. The military, in collaboration with the Colombo bureaucracy are also actively involved in the obstruction of essential supplies to the North. This has caused an acute shortage of essential items and price hikes creating conditions of starvation for the poor. Furthermore, the deliberate delays caused by the Government in formulating an agreement with the ICRC for the protection of food ships is also aggravating the food situation in the North. If the situation is allowed to continue, it is feared, the present conditions of food scarcity will develop into a famine.

In the meantime the Defence Ministry has refused permission to allow medicine for the control of infectious and other deadly diseases to be sent to Jaffna. Particularly affected

by this inexplicably harsh decision by the Government authorities will be thousands and thousands of young children. By refusing to allow triple antigen vaccine for diphtheria, whooping

cough and tetanus and the oral vaccine for polio the Government is deliberately exposing innocent children to the dangers of deadly epidemics.

The conditions of war have resulted in the disruption of many children's immunisation programmes. Those who have started the immunisation for preventative diseases either need to restart the programme or a booster dose to provide the necessary protection against these potentially lethal illnesses. However, with the rainy season only a month or so away and thousands of children either malnourished or accommodated in overcrowded conditions in refugee camps the potential threat to the health and lives of innocent children without proper immunisation protection against these infectious diseases is alarming.

Discontinuing the supply of anti-rabies vaccine to the north will undoubtedly

result in the unnecessary loss of several lives. Without the supply of malothien to control the mosquito population an epidemic of malaria can be expected. Already a common disease causing acute and chronic illness to the affected the absence of malothien will exacerbate the problem and expose countless numbers to the infection.

This is the scenario facing the Jaffna population today. The Government of Kumaratunga has not only subjected the Tamil people to this wretched condition but is also making elaborate plans to launch a massive military offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula. The population of Jaffna is facing the prospect of famine and a bloody war.

## Fear Grips Colombo Based Tamils: Mass Arrests of Youth Continue

Tamils living in Colombo and its suburbs are gripped by fear, anxiety and tension as hundreds of Tamil Youth are being rounded up daily by the Sri Lankan security forces as LTTE suspects. Last week alone more than 500 young Tamils, both men and women, were arrested in the Colombo metropolitan area.

The mass arrest of Tamils in Colombo and other southern districts continues unabatedly for the last few months irrespective of protests from various human rights organisations. The arrested youth are kept incommunicado and subjected to torture. There are several cases of disappearances. The parents seeking the whereabouts of their arrested children are turned away without any information. There have been several gruesome incidents in the outskirts of Colombo where decomposed corpses of young Tamils were found in isolated streets and river banks.

The arrest of Tamil youths has been intensified since last week following the

bomb blast near the Secretariat of the Chief Minister of the Western Provincial

Council in Colombo. A massive round-up and arrest (Continued on Page 2)



The LTTE Leader Mr. V. Prabakaran flanked by his top military commanders inspects a cache of arms captured at Mandaitivu.



# EDITORIAL

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## MISSING THE POINT

Foreign Governments are responding with enthusiasm to President Kumaratunga's programme for a resolution to the national conflict. The American, Australian, British, Canadian and French Governments have already welcomed the President's devolution package and hailed her programme as a 'courageous step' towards restoring peace and finding a permanent solution to this seething national conflict in the island.

Everyone is well aware that uppermost in the thinking of foreign Governments is their genuine concern that the national contradiction that has ravaged the island over the past few decades is resolved; that conditions of permanent peace and political stability prevail, foreign investments are secured and encouraged and making a major contribution to the economic growth and material progress of the people. There are not many people who would dispute with such an ideal political and socio-economic order. Sadly however, such conditions of social existence are not as easily created as many foreign Governments obviously believe nor are they always the top priority of many peoples.

The eagerness of foreign Governments to see that this conflict draws to a conclusion is reflected in the hasty manner they have showered praise on Colombo prior to even hearing the voice of the people in the Northeast. If foreign Governments had patiently waited and studied the responses coming out from the northeast they would have been left in little doubt that there is a fundamental contradiction between their assessment of the President's politico-military formulations and those of the Tamil people. President Kumaratunga's programme for a solution to the Tamil national question includes both a political and military strategy. Foreign Governments, in their response to Colombo, have underplayed the military component, taken up and highlighted the devolution package as central to a resolution of the conflict. However, for the people of the Northeast the devolution package has little meaning to their lives and has not been given even the slightest of serious consideration among the people. The devolution package has been totally overshadowed by the military strategy of the Government.

President Kumaratunga's political programme for the people and military option for the LTTE, everyone in the northeast is well aware, is a ludicrous political position that is not only impractical but has all the hallmarks of an exercise in legitimising war. The military destruction of the LTTE, the people know very well, is not the easy task that the Government thinks nor, may we add, is it the wish of the people. Devolution of power is not an issue for a people facing the real threat of major military aggression and war. For them the central obsession at the moment is survival.

In a very subtle manner the suggestion made by foreign Governments that the LTTE lay down arms and surrender and enter the political mainstream is an articulation of their conception of how they view the solution to the military threat posed by the Sri Lanka state to the people of Jaffna. By trying to shift the responsibility for the impending military operations in the Jaffna Peninsula onto the LTTE, some foreign Governments have chosen to ignore the history of the Tamil people's struggle and underestimated the political judgement of the LTTE. To suggest that the Colombo proposals are substantial and reasonable grounds for the LTTE to lay down arms is a gross oversimplification of the politics of the North, an extra-ordinary underestimation of the LTTE's commitment and political consciousness and a much too flippant reading of the Government's genuineness. Is it fair and reasonable for foreign Governments to expect a liberation movement that has single-handedly fought and struggled for the past twenty years in pursuit of its political objectives to lay down arms and surrender on the basis of a flimsy political package advanced by a Sinhala-Buddhist State that has a notorious history of abrogating pacts and agreements. Further more, the proposals are as yet not finalised but have been put forward for public debate and are available for all forms of changes and modifications. To lay down arms for intangible proposals would not only be political suicide for the LTTE but national suicide for the Tamils also.

At this time when the Tamil people are faced with extreme danger and large scale destruction by the State forces, the good offices of foreign Governments to encourage the Sri Lanka State to desist from prosecuting the military option and urging the parties in conflict to return to the negotiating table is what the people expect from the international community.

## Living in Fear and Uncertainty

President Kumaratunga's often repeated pronouncements that the military operations being conducted in the north are not against the Tamil people have become the subject of ridicule and laughter in Jaffna. The reality of military activity by the State forces tells a different story; a story of death, destruction, the instilling of fear and the stripping of people's dignity by making them dependent and homeless.

For several months now major military offensives by the State forces and the threat of more to come is always an issue to be reckoned with when the people plan their lives. Constant speculation about when and where the army will attempt to launch its next offensive engages many people; people in the villages of West Valigamam wonder how much longer they will be able to remain in their homes before the army blasts the area with artillery and mortar shells or attempts to move in and occupy their village; where to go if the army moves is a major source of concern in an area where independent accommodation is a scarcity. Students sitting for their exams hope and pray that shelling will not distract their study time or disturb their concentration during the examinations. Over and beyond these concerns is the constant knowledge amongst the people of Jaffna that at any time, in any place shells could rain down and kill and maim at will.

The northern part of the Jaffna Peninsula, from the west as far as Ponnalai to the east in Vadamarachchi has become the main arena for the big guns in the deadly arsenal of the Sri Lanka army and navy. The lives of the people in these heavily populated residential areas has become one of fear, fraught with danger from both the Palaly army camp and the navy. Day and night the people live in trepidation not knowing when an artillery shell will rip through the walls of their homes and tear them to shreds.

In the northwest Valigamam area the population has been thrown into constant insecurity and uncertainty. Although the Sri Lanka army has vacated the Operation 'Leap Forward' area of West Valigamam the entire area remains militarily volatile with the army engaging in limited incursions into areas surrounding Palaly and indiscriminate random shelling of the region.

Subsequently, bullock carts laden with household

goods, cycles stacked with food stores, suitcases and cardboard boxes of possessions, tractor trailers overloaded with odds and ends recovered after the initial flight of their owners has become part of the Jaffna road traffic today. This constant stream of people and goods is a sure sign that Valigamam north is not a safe area for normal human activity.

On Friday 4th, the morning after the President's address when it was pointed out that the war was not directed at the people, the army launched a limited offensive from Alavetti to Chunnakam. Just prior to the offensive, in the early hours of the morning the people were awakened by the revving of tank motors creating psychological terror and warning the people that death was on its way. The population fled the path of these mindless vehicles of death. The wanton shelling by tanks destroying any building that stood in the way of the advancing troops and the continuous pounding of artillery shells well beyond the battle zone can hardly be construed as a war confined to the LTTE. Thousands of people from Chunnakam to Manipay fled the area.

Northeastward in the areas of Atchuvely, Thondaimanaru military incursions on search and destroy operations preceded by heavy artillery shelling has uprooted thousands and has become an expectation of the everyday life of the people. Vadamarachchi, an LTTE stronghold, is often singled out for artillery shelling and naval bombardment as acts of revenge and expressions of hatred by the State forces.

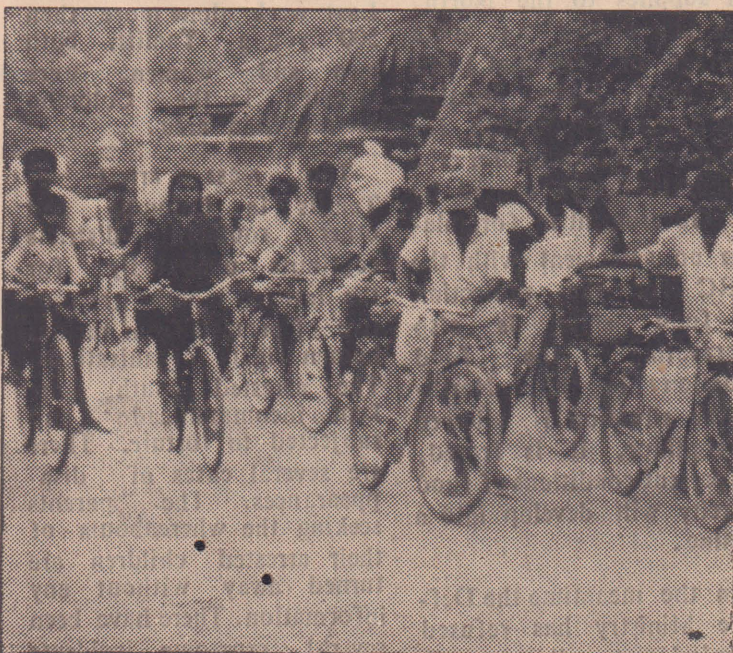
At Velvettiturai a barrage of blind shelling by ships in a navy convoy rocked this coastal village recently. A

large convoy of navy ships carrying troops and supplies moved across the northern waters towards Kankesanthurai several escort vessels took up positions in the seas directly off the shores of Velvettiturai and proceeded to pound the village. The people's experience of these situations prevented panic and chaos and, fortunately, only a few people were injured. But this battle-scarred village once again endured large scale damage.

For vast sections of the population the strain of coming and going and the uncertainty of the future life in their traditional village is too much to bear. Having weighed up the situation the people opt for survival and take up residence in whatever accommodation is available in churches, temples, and schools, some choose to live with relatives. They are homeless, unemployed and quite often in abject poverty. The only solace they have is that they are alive.

## Fear Grips...

(Continuation from Page 1) operation was launched in Colombo and its surrounding areas in which hundreds of innocent Tamils were taken into custody. Most of the arrests took place in the dead of the night at private residences, boarding houses and lodges. The secret police and the security personnel refuse to show their identity, abduct the young people and take them to undisclosed destinations. As the arrests continue, the Tamils resident in Colombo are living in constant fear and anxiety. The Government of Kumaratunga is maintaining a studied silence even though this matter is widely publicised in the media and received international attraction.



Refugees continue to flee from artillery shelling by the Forces from Palaly



# PEACE MASK: WAR FACE

"The Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga, while announcing a set of political proposals for the resolution of the ethnic conflict has also declared an all-out war against the LTTE thereby closing down all avenues for the resumption of a peace process. Therefore, this package of devolution will not lead to peace or a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but rather it will pave the way for a protracted armed conflict".

This was stated by Anton Balasingham, the chief spokesman and theoretician of the LTTE, at a press conference held in Jaffna this week. Characterising the peace effort of the Government as essentially to a war strategy to militarily repress the Tamil national struggle, Mr. Balasingham said that the package of devolution announced by the Government was a deceptive mask to hide the ugly face of war, a peace mask to legitimise and justify the military programme.

At the outset Mr. Balasingham explained that the press briefing was not intended to analyse or criticise the content of the Government's proposals but to apprise the Tamil people of the Government's strategy of prosecuting the war under the guise of a peace package. "The Government has not submitted the programme of devolution either for the LTTE or for Tamils of the Northeast for consideration. In these circumstances, commenting on the merits and demerits of the proposals will not serve any meaningful purpose", he said.

Addressing the press, Mr. Balasingham further explained: "If the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga had a genuine intention of resolving the Tamil national problem through peaceful means, it should have placed a package of proposals during the negotiations with the LTTE having amicably settled the immediate issues of the Tamils. But the Government did not do so. It gave primacy to military concerns and deliberately created conditions for the breakdown of talks. From the very beginning until now, the Government is firmly committed to a military solution. The Chandrika administration entertains a notion that if the LTTE is destroyed militarily, it could impose

an inadequate solution on the Tamil people.

The Government is operating with an absurd and ridiculous scheme that proposes a political solution to the Tamils and a military solution to the Tamil Tigers. This scheme is based on a misconceived fantasy that the LTTE and the Tamil people could be separated by enticing the Tamils with a devolution package. Failing to realise the concrete reality that the Tigers and the people are one and the same phenomenon, the Government falsely assumes that it could alienate the Tigers and win over the people by political deceit. We are surprised that Chandrika regime has not realised that it was precisely the same historical blunder made by the former Government as well as by India. The Indian Government attempted to implement the

serious debate and discussion over the implications of the proposed package of devolution, the people in Tamil Eelam are confronted with a different existential reality. Here, in our homeland, our people are faced with death, destruction and immense suffering brought about by economic sanctions. Instead of a devolution of power, our people are faced with a devolution of state violence and terror.

We have to take into consideration that this proposed package of devolution does not constitute itself into a comprehensive framework, but rather it is offered as a body of proposals, for which different interpretations and elucidations are given daily by some prominent Ministers of the Government. These Ministers have said that the North and East will not be merged but rather demarcated

other nation, impose a political solution against our will. This package of devolution is not submitted for consideration to the Tamil people, nor to the LTTE who are their authentic representatives. Yet the Government wants to impose this set of proposals on the Tamils at the point of a gun through military violence. We will not allow such an aggressive approach.

Without a vision of the future as to what form and structure this package could turn out to be, the Tamil groups in Colombo have welcomed these proposals in haste. Neither we, nor our people are surprised over their action. These groups, having been rejected and alienated by the Tamil people, entered Parliament through fraudulent elections. They have never shown any genuine concern for the interests and aspirations of our people. They are prepared to grasp any bones thrown by anybody simply to cling on to their usurped positions. We are not in the least concerned about their political stand. There are a few senior elderly politicians among them who have now sought refuge under the umbrella of Chandrika Government after having been systematically cheated and lived in political wilderness for more than forty years. Having abandoned the struggle for self-determination, these politicians have at one time welcomed the District Development Councils and the Provincial Councils and are now praising

Chandrika's proposals as radical and revolutionary. They are also preaching political wisdom to the Tamil Tigers. Our people are well aware of the political insight of these politicians. Deluded by the proposed devolution, they are betraying the Tamil cause again. We can forgive them, but the history of the people's struggle will never pardon them.

Even though we are faced with a major war, we have not given up the path of peace nor have we abandoned the process of seeking a political settlement through peaceful means. We are prepared for war and we are prepared for peace. Unlike the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga we have not closed the door to peace. If the Government brings an end to the war, creates the conditions of peace and settles the immediate problems of our people, we are prepared to participate in the peace negotiations. But if the Government escalates the armed conflict and attempts to continue the policy of genocide of the Tamils, we will be left with no alternative other than to close the doors to peace and continue to struggle for the establishment of an independent State. Therefore, it is the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga which has to decide as to whether to pursue the path of peace for a negotiated settlement or to pursue the path of war that will lead ultimately to the division of the country", Mr. Balasingham said.

## Anton Balasingham on Government's Proposals

Provincial Council scheme hoping that it could isolate and crush the LTTE by the force of arms. The present Government seems to adopt a similar approach that the largest army in the world attempted and failed miserably. Having failed to realise the truth that the Tamil people are solidly behind the LTTE, the Government is embarking on a deadly project the disastrous consequences of which have to be borne by the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga.

The Government has decided to implement this set of proposals only after defeating or rather eliminating the LTTE. We learn such an assurance has been given to the leadership of the 'Maha Sangha' by the Government. If this is the true position of the Government we can safely conclude that this package of devolution will never be implemented, because of the very fact that the LTTE will never be defeated or destroyed. Even in the unlikely event of the destruction of the LTTE the Government may not have the compulsion or need to implement the devolution package.

While the people of the south are engaged in a

and redefined with the deletion of territories; that the unitary structure of the state will not be impaired and that the proposals do not confer special status or powers to the Tamils but it would only be an administrative structure for the entire island. They further argue that these proposals would be subjected to amendments and modifications and change at the deliberations of the Parliamentary Select Committee and has to be endorsed by the Sinhala majority Parliament. They say that finally it is the Sinhala majority which has to approve the package. I think there is a lot of truth in what they say. Therefore, it will serve no purpose if we make any comments on the contents of these proposals at this stage.

It is the Tamil people who have to decide on the nature of the solution to the Tamil national question. Self-determination means precisely that. We are not a minority group, but rather we constitute ourselves into a coherent nationality. As a nation of people, we reserve the inalienable right to freely decide our own political destiny. Nobody else can decide our political fate, nor can anybody, be it the

## LTTE Guarantees Security to ICRC Protected Vessels

The LTTE leadership has given an undertaking to the ICRC that it would respect and guarantee the security of the personnel and vessels carrying food supplies to the North.

The International Committee of the Red Cross is seeking guarantees from both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan security forces for the security of the ICRC protected vessels supplying essential items to the Jaffna Peninsula. Following the incident in which an ICRC protected ship 'Sea Dancer' was damaged and sunk at the Kankesanthurai harbour by a seamine, the International Committee of the Red Cross has been trying to

work out an agreement with the parties in conflict to ensure the safety of the vessels and personnel under its protection.

Having given the undertaking to the ICRC, the LTTE has pointed out that guarantees of security to vessels operating inside the harbours and naval bases under the control of the security forces have to be sought from the Government forces.

Though the LTTE has pledged guarantees to ICRC protected vessels in the Northeastern waters and prepared to sign an agreement to the effect, the Government is delaying the procedure thereby causing a food crisis in the North.



# 'THIS IS A WAR AGAINST CIVILIANS'

The Jaffna Citizens Committee in a letter addressed to President Chandrika Kumaratunga has categorised the current military campaign by the Sri Lanka security forces in the Jaffna Peninsula as a war against the Tamil civilians. Regular mortar and artillery shelling are deliberately directed against the civilian targets causing death and destruction of property. This callous disregard to civilian security violates the universally accepted norms of war. Furthermore, the curtailment of food, medicine and other essential items and the obstacles imposed on communication are deliberate attempts intended to cause misery and hardship to the people. The letter signed by President, Professor K. Kunaratnam, V. C Jaffna University and Mr. R. Mahendran the Secretary, Principal, Kokkuvil Hindu College, calls upon the President to bring an end to military atrocities against civilians and to lift the embargo on essential items.

We publish here below the full text of the letter:

31st July 1995.  
Her Excellency the President,  
Presidential Secretariat,  
Colombo 1.

Your Excellency,

In our two previous letters dated 14th July 1995 and 21st July 1995 we brought to your Excellency's notice the unbearable hardships the people of Jaffna have suffered and the large number of civilian deaths as a result of the recent military operations in the Valigamam area. We appealed to you to order a suspension of all military operations and pursue a path of peace and hoped that you would take action to provide relief and compensation to the people affected by the military operation. To our great dismay, the military operations are still continuing, though without any code name, even after an official announcement to the effect that the Operation 'Leap Forward' has come to an end. Mortar and artillery shells are still being fired daily into civilian areas even when there is no direct confrontation between the army and the LTTE resulting as usual in civilian deaths, injury to civilians and damage to civilian property. We now learn that troops are being massed in the Peninsula and another military operation is being planned even before the civilians have recovered from the physical and mental suffering caused by the earlier operation. We pointed out in our last letter that any such operation will amount to a monumental folly and will wipe out any chance of finding a lasting solution to the ethnic problem besides causing immense suffering to the civilian population.

The Operation 'Leap Forward' and similar operations conducted by the Security Forces in the North and East have all had the hallmarks and dimensions of a war between two nations,

of items to the North. Even after permission is granted what appears to be deliberate and calculated administrative measures are taken to see that the items do not reach the people in time. We learn with great concern that attempts are now being made to interfere with the activities of the ICRC which has been providing humanitarian service to the people here and assisting the officials in transporting food and medical items to the North. Such attempts are callous to say the least, coming at a time when thousands of people have lost their homes, their earning capacity and their livelihood due to the recent and previous military operations and are living as refugees either in camps or with friends and relations. Large tracts of agricultural lands are under army occupation. This together with the fact that the transport of all types of fertilizers to the North has been banned has

a major military operation. Their timely warning went unheard. The number of injured was well over a thousand and many who could have been saved succumbed to their injuries due to the availability of only one qualified Surgeon to care for such a large number of casualties. It is hoped that your Excellency will intervene in this matter and cause the much needed medical supplies, fuel and medical personnel sent to the hospitals in the North soon as requested by the medical authorities here and ensure thereafter a regular supply of fuel and drugs to enable the hospitals to function effectively.

### 3. Obstacles to Communication

Your Excellency is well aware that there are no communication facilities in Jaffna for the civilian population. Jaffna has all the hallmarks of a

without having to go through the military in Palaly for effective discharge of his functions.

### 4. Refusal / delay in granting permission for transport of teaching materials and equipment:

Permission has not been granted for several months now to transport teaching materials and equipment from Colombo to Educational Institutions in the North, particularly to the Jaffna University causing immense hardship to the students. We appeal to your Excellency to direct the authorities concerned to grant the necessary permission and clearance to transport urgently needed teaching materials and equipment.

### 5. Arrest and disappearance of Tamils:

Indiscriminate arrests and disappearances of Tamils particularly youth in Colombo and other areas are causing immense concern to us. It is true that all Tamils were hated and looked upon as potential Tigers and subjected to such inhuman treatment even under the previous regimes. What agitates us today is that it has assumed alarming proportions under your Excellency's administration. The recent chilling news of vital human organs like eyes and kidneys being removed before the bodies of those tortured and killed are thrown into the river makes a gruesome reading in a Buddhist country. What is most painful is that the Government does not appear to have taken any effective action to trace the beastly men and bring them to justice. If steps are not taken to stop these inhuman acts immediately the already strained relations between the two communities will be further exacerbated, preventing a move towards a political settlement of the ethnic problem.

We are dismayed and concerned about the news emanating from Colombo that the Government while proposing to release a political package for the solution of the ethnic problem is at the same time mobilizing the country for a total war purportedly to silence or weaken the Tigers. If past experience is any clue, the Government will in reality be waging a total war against the Tamil people. Death, destruction and

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## Jaffna Citizens Committee Writes to President Kumaratunga

except that even in such wars certain laid down norms are observed to protect the civilians while in the military operations carried out in the North and East no concern has been shown for the security of the civilians. Is it any wonder then that the people in the North and East consider these operations as war waged against the Tamils as a whole and desire a political set up in which they can look after their own affairs including their own security? This desire is further enhanced by other measures taken by the Government and the military authorities which, in the opinion of the people here, are intended to cause as much misery and hardship to them as possible. We enumerate some of these below:

### 1. Curtailment of food supplies to the North:

Transport of food items to the North from Colombo is either curtailed or delayed or stopped at will by the authorities keeping the people here in a state of suspense, worry and semi-starvation. Several bureaucratic hurdles imposed by the authorities in Colombo have to be cleared before permission is granted for the transport

brought food production to a halt. The need of the hour is therefore additional shipment of food to the war-ravaged North rather than a curtailment of its supply. We understand that the food stocks in hand in Jaffna will not last more than a few weeks and if timely action is not taken conditions of famine will soon prevail here. We appeal to your Excellency to ensure adequate and continuous supply of food and other essential items to the people in the North.

### 2. Curtailment of medical supplies to the North:

Even before the recent military operation in the North, stocks of medical items were low in all the hospitals and dispensaries in the North including the General Hospital, Jaffna which is also a teaching hospital and one which caters to the health needs of the entire North. This fact was made known to the authorities well in time by no less an organization than the ICRC. In its report to the Government it also specifically mentioned about the shortage of medical personnel especially Surgeons fearing a large number of civilian casualties with serious injuries in case of

marooned city. The delivery of even the few letters people get from friends and relatives from outside the Northern Province and from foreign countries is deliberately delayed for several months under the pretext of scrutiny by the military authorities contrary to international law and practice. It is now more than three months since the people in the Peninsula received letters by post from Colombo and abroad. By the time the letters reach their destination the contents of the letters had long lost their meaning and purpose. This is clearly an infringement of a fundamental human right. What is more heinous is that the telephone facility given to the Government Agent is often made inoperative or cut under various pretexts. The Government Agent's telephone has not been in operation since the commencement of Operation Leap Forward. This effectively prevents the Government Agent from passing urgent messages to the Government with regard to the actual situation prevailing here. It is our considered opinion that the Government Agent being the top officer of the Government here, should be able to communicate with the relevant authorities direct



# THE STRATEGY OF DIVIDE AND DESTROY

President Kumaratunga, after much political prevarication, has placed her cards on the table and revealed her hand. Her approach to the national conflict in the island is unequivocal. It is, in short, the military option. Her attitude and approach to the LTTE preclude other options.

When it was announced that President Kumaratunga was to address the people of Sri Lanka on the 3rd of July revealing her programme and proposals to resolve the national conflict, the people of the Northeast entertained a hope that she would rise up to the occasion and reveal qualities of statesmanship by announcing radical measures to bring the war to a halt, calling for the resumption of a dialogue with the LTTE and present a comprehensive political framework that demonstrated a genuine attempt to satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamils. But these lingering hopes and expectations were dashed and a sense of disillusionment gripped the Tamils when the President declared her strategy of war against the LTTE under the cover of a set of political proposals, the significance of which lost its meaning by the Government's announcement that it was determined and committed to the continuation of the war. The President's approach to the national conflict has turned out to be a recipe for war and counter-resistance.

The most contentious and surprising issue in the Presidential address is her projection of the Tamil population as a dichotomous people. In her perception the Tamil people constitute a social entity to be approached in one way while the LTTE is to be dealt with differently. Bearing in mind this nebulous political bifurcation amongst the people in the Northeast, the President has deemed it both necessary and feasible to implement a dual approach to the conflict. She has specifically stated that the political programme formulated by her group of advisors was addressed to the Tamil people only. She quite forthrightly and unrepentantly argues that her military forces are determined to prosecute the military option as a solution for the LTTE until such time that they are defeated, weakened or surrender.

It is obvious to astute Sri Lanka watchers that

Mrs. Kumaratunga's well defined dual approach to the national conflict is fundamentally flawed and liable to failure. Her attempt to politically marginalise the LTTE reveals a rather inept reading of recent history, denies the history of the Tamil struggle and indicates an astounding misreading of the socio-political reality in the northeast.

To begin with the dual approach being adopted by the government to the national conflict has been tried and tested and proved to be a catastrophic failure. The Indian intervention of 1987 under the pretext of a peace-keeping exercise, slowly unfolded to reveal the dual approach similar to that of President Kumaratunga's. Based on a distinction between the LTTE and the people, the Indian army waged war and tried to militarily annihilate the LTTE while, on the other hand,

## ADELE ANN

attempting to impose an unpopular political solution on a resistant, hostile population. The outcome is history. The Indians failed miserably to achieve both their objectives and the fourth largest army of the world's biggest democracy was evicted from the island. One of the basic reasons for the failure of the Indian strategy was the conception that the political aspirations of the Tamil population and the LTTE were separable. If Mrs Kumaratunga clings on to this flawed premise she too runs the risk of failure and her attempts to resolve this conflict will end up in the dustbin of history as a prime example of gross miscalculation and political misreading of the relationship between the LTTE and the people.

As the Indians realised and Mrs Kumaratunga will undoubtedly do so with the passage of time, the opinion and political analysis of decadent Tamil groups lounging around in Colombo and the advice of defunct Tamil politicians who have lost their political base will prove to be politically vacuous. Without the support, participation or co-operation of the LTTE in any political dialogue concerning proposals for a resolution to this conflict, programmes and solutions can exist in words only. The people of the Northeast have extended their political, financial and

moral support to the LTTE for two decades and the probability of the people abandoning them now, when 30,000 Sri Lankan troops are poised for military operations in the Jaffna Peninsula, is a fantasy of the alienated intellectuals in the South. The LTTE's armed struggle is not an abstract resistance campaign by a group of socially divorced or frustrated young people, but rather, is inextricably intertwined with the political and socio-economic life of the population. The emergence of armed struggle by the LTTE, two decades ago, is the historical product of national oppression and the failure of non-violent struggles and parliamentary agitation to redress the genuine grievances of the people. The LTTE resistance campaign has been characterised by a history of constant expansion of popular support amongst the Tamil masses emerging today

as a national liberation movement. While the TULF and other Tamil groups abandoned the Tamil people and betrayed the Tamil cause, the LTTE has lived and breathed, faced and fought the phenomenal trials and tribulations entailed in any struggle for freedom. As the struggle deepens and consolidates, a desperate Sri Lanka state draws on all its resources in a frenzied effort to snuff out the flames of freedom. Nevertheless, the LTTE cad-reship has, indisputably, made incredible sacrifices during the prime of their lives, to preserve their homeland, restore the dignity of the nation and to break the bonds of national oppression.

Tamil voices in the south would lead many to believe that the LTTE is an unpopular organisation, tyrannising the people and a military structure divorced from social relationship with the people. But visitors to Jaffna cannot deny the deeply entrenched relationship between the LTTE and the people. All the elements of a State are set in place. The Judiciary system, economic structures, civil administration, immigration department, social welfare organisations, refugee and rehabilitation organisations, women's centres, village development schemes are structures managed by the civil population that reach in one way or other, into

every home in the north in particular. This massive national liberation structure is financially sustained by the people. The national defence fund is a classic example of people's contributions to the LTTE for the purpose of resisting the army and preventing the military occupation of the homeland. Similarly, there is probably not one family who is not, in one way or other, related to an LTTE cadre. In this context the government's attempt to draw a distinction between the LTTE and the people is not only laughable but untenable. Whether the President, her government, Sinhala intellectuals, journalists and the people themselves like it or not the LTTE has earned, emerged and is accepted as the legitimate representative of the Tamil people in the Northeast and without their political participation, any programme put forward by the government of Sri Lanka is doomed to failure. In this context, all military operations by the State forces against the LTTE are tantamount to waging war against the people. Apart from striking at the LTTE fighting force the military operations uproot the people, kill and maim civilians, destroy their property and usurp their land. The military option proposed for the LTTE by the government is inescapably a war against the people also.

The tremendous intellectual and political effort being made by Mrs. Kumaratunga, her government and advisors to deny the LTTE their rightful place as representatives of the Tamil people is a regressive strategy and a major blow to both the Indian and Sri Lankan governments' credibility. The Indian government implicitly recognised the LTTE as the representatives of the people when it offered a temporary administrative structure under the control of the LTTE as part of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. Mr. J. R. Jayawardena's concurrence in such an arrangement is tantamount to recognition of the LTTE. Mr. Premadasa in 1988 unofficially acknowledged the crucial role of the LTTE in any major decision making process when he negotiated with LTTE representatives and worked with them to send the Indian army out of the Island. Mrs Kumaratunga's government's dialogue with the LTTE can be seen in no other way but an acknowledgement

of the centrality of the LTTE. Her setting out of a specific approach to the LTTE, albeit it is a military solution, is a backhanded recognition that the LTTE is the kingpin to the resolution of the national conflict.

Undoubtedly, the President has two central intentions in her mind by advancing her dual approach to this thorny conflict. At the local level, the President, by proposing a political programme to the Tamil people, aims at creating a schism between the LTTE and their political base. In the highly unlikely event of such a happening the LTTE would be politically marginalised as non-representative of the aspirations of the Tamil people. In such a hypothetical situation, any action, particularly military action could easily be justified by the President and her government as necessary steps in the process of restoring peace. Inextricably linked to the above thinking is the second concern uppermost in the mind of the President. By presenting a devolution package to the people the President aims to present herself to the world as a leader genuinely interested in peace and prepared to offer controversial concessions to the aggrieved Tamils in an effort to settle this national conflict, while she in fact is able to carry on her intended objective of winning the war and militarily bringing the northeast under the control of the state. That the President is attempting to legitimise the military option is evident by her total rejection and exclusion of the LTTE from any future political dialogue.

There seems little doubt that the Tamil political groups in Colombo will extend their support to the Government regarding the proposed programme for solving this major national issue. Having abandoned long ago, their initial political objective of fighting for a separate state for the Tamil people, collaborating with the government has become their main road to power. They too were not only consulted but have been active participants in helping the President shape and decide on the dual approach to the problem. The guarantee of military victory by the state forces and the prospect of power in the Northeast is a mouth-watering temptation to

(Continued on Page 7)



# ON THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TAMILS

After a long history of Tamil attempts, marked by suffering and deaths at the hands of Sinhala thugs and soldiers, and after so many agreements and pacts were unilaterally torn by the Sinhala Governments, after a series of deceptions and broken promises, the Tamils have at last helped emerge a form of leadership that the Sinhala Majority and its Government are finding difficult to deal with, if not buy / win over. Until recently the Sinhala Governments either bought over the Tamil leadership with some ministerial privileges, broken pacts and unfulfilled promises or kept them watering in their mouth and clinging to their feet with a promise of sharing power in the future. But the present LTTE leadership, besides being an invincible military threat to the Sri Lankan Army, has proved by its consistency of demands, its commitment to the Tamil cause and its determination to heroic self-sacrifices that they are the true protectors and leaders of the Tamil people living in the North and East.

This misunderstanding or non-understanding of the Tamil problem and the non-acceptance of the LTTE leadership have led the very Chandrika who came to power with the promise of a peaceful solution to the Tamil problem to declare a full-scale war under the guise of a mysterious formula "War for Peace". And this "Peacethrough war" has proved to be squarely a plan to take over the Jaffna Peninsula and the LTTE leadership with all the death and destruction it entails.

The Government is bending backwards not only to justify this war against the Tamils in order to quench their thirst for a war-victory. Slogans like "Let's have a war as a way to Peace", "Let's liberate the Tamils of Jaffna from the terrorist activities of the LTTE", "We wanted Peace, but the LTTE asked for war", "War against the LTTE and not against the Tamils" - cannot hide for long the true genocidal massacre that is unleashed by the Army in the North nor the shameful defeats they suffered from the Tigers.

An almost adamant and prolonged refusal on the part of the Sinhala majority and its successive Governments to accept the true

situation about the Tamils in the North and East and its contemptuous disregard for the LTTE leadership of the Tamils, have resulted in its desperate option for this massive war and a shameful defeat already in its initial phase by the LTTE's "Leap of the Tiger" operation.

After having ignored the voice of the Tamils for almost forty years, now the majority are so excited, angered and affected by certain setbacks in their war, that they only think of first winning the war at all costs. They have been told repeatedly by their leaders like President Premadasa that there is no victor in this war. Yet they do not care or count the loss of life and property to the thousands who are going to be victims in the war. They only want a war-victory to quench their thirst for power.

Largely influenced by the Tamils and Tamil groups in Colombo, the government still thinks and goes ahead with the idea that a meaningful negotiation could be held with the Tamils by side-tracking or even exterminating the LTTE. Many of the Tamils and the Tamil groups living in the South or those who have settled in other countries may have their own grievances against the LTTE or may support the LTTE. They are free to make a choice about the future. But they cannot decide for the Tamils still surviving in the North and East. It is only those who have chosen to live in the North and East who have the right to decide about the future of their homeland.

The non-acceptance of the leadership of the LTTE is bound up with a number of other misconceptions and miscalculations of the Tamil situation. We could briefly articulate a few basic ones.

Very often the Government talks of negotiations only from a position of strength. At other times it speaks as if they were the only legitimate leaders and others are all invalid and immoral people. With such attitudes of self-righteousness, no genuine peace negotiations could be held. At least during the negotiations a certain equality of partners to the talks must be maintained. Assertions of superiority, self-righteous-

ness against the other will not help.

Again from time to time, even at this late stage of the Tamil struggle, doubts and questions are being raised from various people in the South about the leadership of the Tamils in the North and East. These questions come mainly from two quarters. There are people enslaved in their own pro-western and colonial ways of thinking about democracy and its leadership and have no considerations for the historical developments in recent decades in our own context. They gauge everything through their set categories of thought and pass judgements from their homeground about events and realities which they have not experienced. They have contact neither with the death and destruction that have ravaged the North and East nor with the recent historical development in the form of government and leadership that has emerged in the North and East.

Besides, the brand of democracy and the democratic elections held in recent years are best known to the Tamils. The so-called democratically elected Tamil leaders based in Colombo came through the backdoor of democracy. With only a handful of citizens living still in the

uncomfortable war-zones of the Tamils into safer and more comfortable residences and became supportive of the Government, even to the extent of betraying the struggle. They still claim to be leaders of the Tamils of North and East and question the leadership of Mr. Prabakaran. They have managed to enter the Parliament through the backdoor gaining only a handful of votes from the army occupied territories and now claim to speak for the Tamils!

It is true that the LTTE was born as a consequence of and counter to prolonged



state-terrorism of the fifties and sixties. Any sensible visitor to the North and East will readily agree that it has grown to be a full-fledged liberation movement with its own wings for military and civil administration.

These denials and claims about the actual leadership of the Tamils at this stage are only attempts made by

**S. RATNARAJA**

army-occupied areas, these so-called leaders procured by the backdoor thousands of police-votes which brought them to power!

The Tamil population which has witnessed the elections held by the IPKF as well as that held by the Sri Lankan Army knows too well what brand of democracy brought these political mercenaries or coolies to power.

There are also self-seeking Tamils living in the south with no contact with the North and East for the last few decades and who want to discredit any successful leadership other than their own subservient leadership vis a vis the Government. They are made to feel leaders by the Government and for the Government.

There are also some groups who initially were part of the struggle, but in recent years moved out of the

self-seeking politicians who do not want to accept the reality of the Tamil situation. They continue to project their own picture and go on with their wishful thinking but never close to the reality.

The art of governing has not been a privilege of the university dons. In fact such men have made blunders in history. In our own history and in the long experience of their struggle, the Tamils have learnt that many qualified elitists have also betrayed the Tamil cause for their personal politics and career.

Hence the present generation of Tamil youth have taken up the leadership and they are promising. Let no judgement be made as to their ability and competence at governance. We welcome the so-called educated armchair critics of the south, to lower their newspapers

and look into the present governance of the North and East. The infrastructure for a separate state has been laid.

The Tamil leadership went through various forms in its long struggle for freedom. The post-colonial leadership fostered by the British period of education and parliamentary system consisted of highly qualified and internationally recognized university dons mostly based in Colombo and representing the Tamils of North and East. The least qualified of those could only be a lawyer. By their eloquence they expressed and argued for the rights of the Tamils, but they were either heckled down to their seats or were bought over to the government side by offering some ministerial posts.

Very often in our human relationships, we unconsciously want the other to be a replica of ourselves, our views our attitudes etc. We are reluctant to accept the other in his or her "otherness". We try to change the other to be like us or we fight against the other, and failing in that even attempt to destroy the other. The Sinhala majority of this country have tried to buy over the Tamils and their leaders. They have tried to assimilate them or subordinate them to the one Sinhala Nation. And failing this, as a last resort as evident to most of us living in the North and East in recent times, they are trying to destroy the Tamils of the North and East and their leaders.

Thus there is a fundamental problem for the Sinhala majority of accepting the Tamils and their leaders as they are. They want to think of themselves as the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka and the Tamils as the "later invaders or settlers" and "one ethnic group among the many minorities" of the land. Hence they speak of tolerance of the minorities and the minorities living on this land by concessions and favours of the majority. Such a dream and language have been promoted by self-seeking politicians and narrow-minded Buddhist clergy.

The larger question is not how to liberate the Tamils from the LTTE but how to liberate the majority Sinhalese from the dream world of the politician and the Buddhist monk.



# Controversy Over Church Massacre: Government's Credibility at Stake

Although a month has lapsed since the massacre of 120 Tamil civilians took place in the precincts of St. Peter's Church, Navaly, controversy continues to plague the incident. Despite indisputable evidence provided by hundreds of eye witnesses and survivors of the carnage confirming the aerial attack and authentic reports submitted by eminent persons like the Bishop of Jaffna, the Government Agent and the ICRC delegate, the Government of Chandrika Kumaratunga persists in its



efforts to cover-up the incident. What has shocked the Tamil people is that the President herself has taken up the crusade to deny the heinous massacre to protect Sri Lanka's image and to justify her position that the war is not against the Tamil civilians.

At a recent press conference in Colombo, President Kumaratunga, when questioned on the events surrounding the massacre, made every effort to cover-up the incident. Ignoring the killings and maimings of the civilians, the President attempted to shift the main focus of the story on to the issue of whether or not the Church structure has been damaged. Implicitly denying that the Bishop of Jaffna had informed her of the scale of the tragedy as early as the 10th July, the President commented that she was waiting for confirmation of the events from him before she made any further comments to the public. However, that the President had been fully informed that civilians had been the victims of aerial bombardment is evident in the Bishop's letter to the President on 10th July. We publish below the Bishop's letter to the President.

"Your Excellency,

Please allow me to bring the following sad incident

to your kind attention. I very much regret to report to you the tragic killings of innocent civilian refugees who had gathered at the above Church on the instruction of your Defence Ministry. A 'Pukkara' Air Craft had dropped a cluster of many bombs on this crowd of refugees who had taken shelter in the church resulting in the death of over 65 civilians including women and children and over 150 were seriously injured sustaining the loss of limbs. Besides many were rendered homeless as many houses were razed to the ground and others heavily damaged, including our church and priest's house. All the people in this village have fled to safer areas as refugees.

Therefore we very earnestly appeal to Your Excellency to kindly instruct your forces to desist from bombing, strafing, artillery rocket attacks on civilian targets like Kovils, Churches, Schools and Hospitals."

Copies of this letter were sent to H. E. Most Rev, Oswaldo Padila, Apostolic Pro Nuncio in Colombo, His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando, President Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation, Colombo.

In the meantime, on July 11th 1995, ICRC headquarters in Geneva issued a statement confirming the massacre. The statement said that the Sri Lankan armed forces launched a large scale military offensive involving intensive artillery shelling and airstrikes which forced tens of thousands of civilians to leave the area. Confirming the airstrike at Navaly Church premises, the ICRC statement said that 65 civilians were killed on the spot and 150 wounded including women and children. "That evening and into the night Sri Lanka Red Cross staff evacuated most of the wounded by ambulance to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) present the next morning at the scene of the attack noted the widespread damage and measured the extent of the tragedy. Many of the bodies had not yet been removed from the rubble", the ICRC

statement said. The ICRC expressed its deep concern over the massacre and called upon the parties involved to 'respect civilian lives, property and places of refuge'.

It is well known how the Kumaratunga Government responded to the ICRC's statement. The Foreign Minister Mr. Kadirgamar went to the extent of calling the chief ICRC delegate in Colombo to reprimand him for bringing the incident to light without consulting and confirming the incident from Government sources.

For the past month the President's response to questions concerning this massacre have been evasive and full of duplicity. Her immediate response to the Catholic Church's notification of the killings, was to order an inquiry. However, realising the implications the massacre would have on her international image as a peace-maker waging war against the LTTE and not the Tamil people, she has quickly changed her strategy from one of denial of the incident, to underplaying the importance of the tragedy to an effort to shift the blame to the LTTE. The President and her Ministers made confusing statements. One State Minister had claimed that it was the LTTE aircraft that bombed the Tamil civilians. Some others have argued that artillery fire was responsible for the deaths. On other occasions the President and her Ministers questioned the reliability and integrity of sources reporting the incident. Lately the emphasis has been on the damage to the structure of the Church. On the 4th August, the President, addressing a press conference, said that the Navaly church was intact and she was awaiting a message from the Bishop of Jaffna. Surprised by the President's statement, the Bishop of Jaffna Rt. Rev. Thomas Soundranayagam responded with the following letter on the 7th August 1995.

"Your Excellency,

I am writing to Your Excellency regarding a news item which appeared in Daily News of 05.08.95 about the aerial bombing incident on the 9th of July

1995 in the Church premises at Navaly. Your Excellency had said that you were awaiting a fax message from me on the above incident. On the 10th of July itself I wrote a letter and on the 11th I had requested the UNHCR office to transmit it to you. I am surprised that it had not reached your office up to now. In the meantime I had sent also a copy of it to the Papal Representative in Sri Lanka and to the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka. This letter also was released in the Colombo Press. I had written this letter after ascertaining the facts from the Parish Priest. Our immediate concern was the killing of the people who had taken refuge in the Church and its premises. I had mentioned that the Church and Priest's House were also damaged owing to the blast of the cluster of bombs released from the Pukkara air craft on the 9th of July at about 4.45 p.m. Subsequently I myself visited the site of the incident and I found the roof of the church damaged, all the doors and windows wrenched from the frames and strewn about, and the floor was littered with broken glass pieces. I also found blood stains on the floor and blood stained clothes still lying about. By this time the death count had risen to 117 and so also the number of injured persons. I am enclosing a copy of the original letter addressed to you on the 10th of July, just after the incident.

The war in the peninsula is still continuing and the innocent civilians are living in fear because of the aerial

## The Strategy of...

(Continuation from Page 5) these groups. But the people of the Northeast are far too experienced with the double talk of Sinhala politicians and the Tamil groups to be captivated by the President's address. The articulation of a political programme while prosecuting a war, the exclusion from political discourse of the only organisation in the Northeast struggling for the survival of the Tamil people as a nation, the popular masses are well aware, cannot be construed, by any stretch of the imagination as a genuine effort to solve this national conflict or to usher peace. On the

bombings and artillery shelling. This is a futile battle and it will only increase the death of innocent civilians and help to alienate the people from the government. Hence I am appealing to you not to have resort to military solution and to resume the peace-negotiation once again. While appreciating your efforts at solving the Ethnic problem, we appeal to you to stop the war which could give us the opportunity to reflect and discuss your peace proposal. We assure you of our co-



operation in your efforts to find a lasting solution to our problem. May God bless you."

The Bishop's letter is a statement of truth which illustrates the reality of the incident. Furthermore, the Government Agent of Jaffna, the Jaffna Citizens Committee, the Jaffna University Teacher's Association and several organisations have written to the President confirming the massacre of innocent civilians at Navaly. If the President is not convinced by this mass of corroborative evidence and continues to deny the incident and refuses to accept the truth, then her personal integrity as well as her commitment to ethnic peace become questionable.

contrary, the President's confident articulation of her plans appears more as an attempt to rationalise and legitimise an all-out military effort to wipe out, once and for all, the national liberation struggle of the Tamil people. Should such an eventuality arise, it is well known, there would be no further compulsions on the part of any Sri Lankan government to offer any political proposals at all. The island would remain a unitary Sinhala Buddhist country and the President's strategy would then satisfy the Sinhala south completely. The Tamil people are fully aware of this dangerous prospect. That is why they are solidly behind the LTTE.



# Mass Anti-Govt: Demo in Jaffna: Protest Against War and Embargo

Thousands of people staged a mass demonstration in Jaffna on the 9th August protesting against the continuing military atrocities by the State's forces and tightening up of the economic embargo in the North. The mass rally was organised by the Confederation of People's Organisation of the Jaffna District in which members of the Government and non-Government organisations, co-ope-

ratives, corporations, trade unions, voluntary social services organisations, farmer's associations, teaching associations and several other organisations participated. Raising slogans against the policies of the government, the demonstrators marched through the main streets and finally reached the Government's Secretariat, where a memorandum was submitted to the Additional Government

Agent, Mrs Thilaganayagam Paul to be sent to the President.

The memorandum entitled 'Travails of the People of Jaffna' states that the prolonged war has brought untold misery, suffering and frustration to the people and calls upon the Government to put an end to the genocidal war.

The imposition of the economic embargo on

19.4.1995 was an act of grave injustice to the people, the memo said. "Your Government's decision to ban the supply of all inorganic fertilizers to the Jaffna Peninsula will virtually halt all agricultural production thereby depriving the people of much needed food supplies adding to the trials and tribulations of those who are already beset by war", it further stated.

The memorandum calls upon the Government to:

1. Stop forthwith all military operations which are designed to decimate the Tamils through genocide.

2. Lift forthwith the ban on agricultural inputs which are needed to make a people self-sufficient in food.

3. Lift forthwith the economic embargo, and take constructive measures immediately to send essential food items to the Jaffna District by ship and by land.



A section of demonstrators protesting against the military atrocities and the Government imposed economic embargo

## "Tigers are not Aliens from Another World but are Children of the Tamil People" — Fr. Emmanuel

"The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are not aliens arrived from a different planet. They are the children of the Tamil people, the sons and daughters of the Tamil soil. They cannot be isolated and separated from the Tamil masses", said Rev. Fr S J. Emmanuel, Vicar General of Jaffna Diocese in an interview to the BBC last week.

Answering a question on the proposed package of devolution Fr. Emmanuel said that these proposals are being discussed and consulted with those who are living outside the Northeast. "If those proposals for devolution are addressed to the Northeast region, then the people of the Northeast have to be consulted", he said.

"So far the proposals announced by the Government of Kumaratunga are not submitted for the consi-

deration of the people of the Northeast. They are being discussed and debated outside the Northeast. This makes one wonder whether these proposals are worked out for the resolution of the Tamil problem. If this package of devolution is intended to settle the Tamil question, then it has to be submitted to the LTTE", Fr. Emmanuel pointed out.

"It is those who are not aware of the intimate relations between the LTTE and the Tamil people who claim that the Tigers and the

people are separate. The Tigers are not aliens arrived from a different planet. They are the children of the Tamil people, the sons and daughters of the Tamil

soil. They are fighting for the rights of their people. Their struggle is not to deprive the rights of any other community", Fr. Emmanuel explained. Fr. Em-

manuel further said that peace and normalcy will be restored once the armed forces withdraw from the Northeast.

### This is a War...

(Continuation from Page 4)  
suffering will be immense and unbearable. Such action will only help to harden the feelings of the people and destroy the atmosphere for any peaceful settlement of the ethnic problem.

We therefore appeal to your Excellency to carry the people towards peace avoiding further spilling of blood by hundreds of thousands of innocent people. We request you in particular to -

i. order a stoppage of all aerial bombing and

mortar and artillery shelling of civilian areas;

ii. lift the embargo on the transport of all non-military items to the North and allow a regular supply of food, medical and educational items and fuel and fertilizer to the North unhindered by the dictates of military and civilian officials in Colombo and at check points at Vavuniya;

iii. provide adequate compensation to the families whose members lost their life, limbs or property during the

recent military operation;

iv. stop further militarization of the ethnic conflict and create an atmosphere of peace;

v. restore communication to the North and allow unhindered and regular delivery of mails;

vi. take action to stop indiscriminate arrests of Tamils in the South and set up a Committee of Inquiry into the disappearance of young Tamils in the South with a view to bringing the culprits to book and stopping further disappearances.