

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:33:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508249

Documents (100)

1. [*SPEAK TO THE TAMILS IN TAMIL*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

2. [*Govt. rejects US Congress Report in toto*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

3. [*Tiger nabbed with suicide jacket*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

4. [*Lankan President gives Prabhakaran 24-hours to surrender*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

5. [*Sri Lanka feels mixed emotions over Rajaratnam*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

6. [INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SRI LANKA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

7. [It is time you take a 360deg turn](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

8. [Assassination attempt on Gota thwarted](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

9. [TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

10. [Rajaratnam is hero and villain in Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

11. [Final influx massive](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

12. [AFPTV Advisory for Thursday](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

13. [Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

14. [DOOM & GLOOM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

15. [The truth about Lanka's secret refugee camps revealed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

16. [*Arduous road to realisation of humanity*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

17. [*Civilian death toll soars in Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

18. [*International: Sri Lankan army shot surrendering rebels, rights group says*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

19. [*Sri Lankan military should be acclaimed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

20. [*Scrutiny calls on Tamil 'bloodbath'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

21. [*Top Tiger rebels surrender as Sri Lankan troops advance*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

22. [INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: THE NEW FRONT OF AN OLD WAR](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

23. [Months of August and September 1987](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

24. [Sri Lanka Army writes glorious chapter](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

25. [Govt totally rejects Clinton's statement](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

26. [WOMAN CONVICTED IN RAJIV GANDHI MURDER FASTS TO DEATH](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

27. [SL Army shows its class to the world](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

28. [Law of War](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

29. [13th Tamil immolates self over Lanka issue](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

30. [Lanka begins resettling war displaced](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

31. [Man cleared of helping Tamil Tigers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

32. [Sports now free from terror](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

33. [LTTEs Waterloo](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

34. [Suspension GSP+ will have drastic effect: Italian FM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

35. [Troops foil Tiger's final attempt](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

36. [Terrorism will be defeated soon - FM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

37. [*HRW sees floods as manna from heaven*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

38. [*Migrants not likely to come to P.G.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

39. [*Iniquitous duplicity of western policy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

40. [*Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka -- Tougher screening for Tamils*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

41. [*Sri Lanka rejects Red Cross help Humanitarian crisis in the north where 300,000 Tamils are displaced by battle*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

42. [*Tigers in truce call to UK, France*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

43. [*Tougher screening for Tamils - Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

44. [*Light at the end of the tunnel for Jaffna - Mayoress*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

45. [*News Analysis: Winning the Tamils -- a challenge awaiting Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

46. [*Where will all the young girls go?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

47. [*Building social capital on the foundation of national unity*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

48. [Tamil rebel raised formidable force before demise](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

49. [SECRETARY-GENERAL TO DISPATCH UN RELIEF TEAM TO SRI LANKAN COMBAT ZONE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

50. [Salients of the Media briefing](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

51. [Sri Lanka 'reviewing' UN official expulsion: official](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

52. [Tamils' concerns over Sri Lanka fighting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

53. [Sri Lanka may pardon surrendering rebel fighters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

54. [US 'leading crusade against Pakistan '](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

55. [The IDPs: urgent steps needed for their welfare](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

56. [Comment & Debate: The idealist I once knew became the Tamils' Pol Pot: This paranoid tyrant has led his people to disaster - but once I believed he could shape a future for them within Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

57. [Returning to the broken palmyrah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

58. [Over 100 civilians seek Forces' protection](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

59. [378 killed by Sri Lankan assault on 'safe zone'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

60. [Congress bleeds over Lanka war](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

61. [Tamil hunger strikers agree to sip water as MPs hold out hope of protest to UN](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

62. [US State Dept document tainted](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

63. [More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

64. [Canada at a Glance: AM](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

65. [Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

66. [International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualties](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

67. [Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

68. [*More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

69. [*Another bloody trail in July 1986*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

70. [*Sri Lankan government exterminating Tamils in bombings*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

71. [*Sri Lanka begins resettling war displaced*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

72. [*ROUNDUP: UN calls Sri Lanka fighting "bloodbath" for civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

73. [G2: A long, slow descent into hell: The decades of bitter fighting between the Sri Lankan army and Tamil rebels has left a beautiful country bereft and thousands caught in the crossfire. Novelist Romesh Gunasekera mourns his island's fate](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

74. [A shipment of sanitary items for IDPs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

75. [Rajiv Gandhi assassins continue protest fast](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

76. [Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Gunasekera laments the fate of his homeland](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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77. [Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Gunasekera laments the fate of his homeland](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

78. [*Humanitarian task needs wide support*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

79. [*UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

80. [*Guardian Weekly: Books: Invisible history of the British empire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

81. [*UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

82. [*UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

83. [THE RESURGENCE OF MADHU](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

84. [International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualties](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

85. [Defeated Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

86. [Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

87. [UNP MP hits out at JHU, NFF statements](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newsires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

88. [NEWS DIGEST 0100](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

89. [Sri Lankan civilians flee rebel-held areas for second day =](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

90. [Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

91. [Bloody Sri Lanka Both sides should be threatened with war crimes charges](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

92. [Northern and Uva polls](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

93. [Sri Lanka bringing refugees home](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

94. [DISPLACED SRI LANKANS TRAPPED BETWEEN MILITARY AND IMPENDING MONSOON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

95. [Displaced Sri Lankans Trapped Between the Military and the Impending Monsoon](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

96. [SRI LANKA : DISPLACED NOW TRAPPED BETWEEN MILITARY AND IMPENDING MONSOON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

97. [SRI LANKA Gun wounds spark warning Camps struggle to handle casualties struggle to casualties](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

98. [AFP Asia-Pacific news summary](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

99. [Countering terrorism and healing wounds](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

100. [Search operation in Sri Lanka after rebels kill eight civilians =](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press
Releases; Timeline: Mar 31, 2009 to Nov 30, 2009

SPEAK TO THE TAMILS IN TAMIL

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

April 25, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1315 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 25 -- If a Sri Lankan journalist is given an opportunity now to interview the leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) at a place immune to security forces fire (if any) in the no-fire-zone in now famous Puthumatalan, would he miss it?

The **LTTE** leader even in such an interview might call the present situation a temporary setback and might vow to roll back the military advance that has swept his outfit into a small fishing village. He also might accuse as the **LTTE** peace secretariat head Pulithevan did days ago that the Government troops used civilians as a shield to cut through the no-fire -zone to open civilian floodgates. That is the **LTTE** and Prabhakaran. However, it seems that only a miracle would be able to save now the **LTTE** leadership, given the situation in the war front, and the role being played by the international players in respect of the Sri Lankan crisis. Will the **LTTE** leadership be wiped out from the surface of the earth in this confrontation? Will the rebel leaders surrender as President Mahinda Rajapaksa ordered on Monday and as UN Security Council ruled on Wednesday? Will it be the end of the war? Will the Tamil people be assimilated to the Sri Lankan society for ever? These are the questions currently most of the politically conscious people pose. The situation in the war front is such that the fate of the **LTTE** leadership would have been decided sometimes even by the time this article is published. However, it is difficult to believe that the remaining rebel leaders especially Velupillai Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman would give themselves up to the security forces. Given the manifestations of their character so far, it could be inferred that they might fight to the last in an event they personally confront the troops. Also one could argue that if they had drifted to a level where they find refuge behind **women** and children they even might give themselves up. There is another school of thought that the Tiger leader has already fled the country for good leaving his comrades in the lurch. As a battle hardened fighter if he had followed the theory of attempting to live a little longer to fight another day risking his life, rather than dying foolhardily, he sometimes could have succeeded in sneaking into the Wanni jungles or drifted through the vast Indian Ocean. But he seems to have experimented the theory using the civilians, earning the scorn from the critics that the 'great freedom fighter' is hiding behind **women** and children. And he was condemned by the UN agencies and the human rights organizations worldwide for using the civilians as a human shield. Had he sent the civilians out and confronted the troops with his armed comrades, when it was clear that there is no option but to fight to the last, he would have gone into history of warfare as a legend. It is a pitiful irony that the **LTTE** leadership that claimed for three decades that they were fighting to save the Tamil civilians from the atrocities of the security forces had finally to find refuge behind the same civilians in the face of the security forces' advance. Also it is ironic that the Tamils who willingly as well as under coercive pressure supported the **LTTE** had to flee the grip of the outfit to find refuge with the troops that once they feared or hated. The huge flow of civilians on Monday towards the troops controlled areas in Puthukkudiyiruppu from Puthumatalan 'safe zone' was a reminiscence of the alternate two way human avalanche during the days of the Indo-Pakistan separation across the then vague border between the two countries in 1947. On both occasions people carried their children as well as

SPEAK TO THE TAMILS IN TAMIL

parents along with their movable assets in travelling bags, without showing any concern over the leaving of immovable assets once they had loved and the livestock once they reared. Wannai civilians carried with them dying patients and injured relatives from **LTTE** held Puthumatalan to the Army held Puthukkudiyiruppu as Hindus and Muslims did so across the border between India and the newly created Pakistan. The Government, opposition, Tamil Nadu politicians, NGOs and the UN agencies have been divided on the number of civilians who were entrapped in the fast shrinking Tiger held areas since January. The number varied from Government's 113,000 to 500,000 put forward by Thirumavalavan, the leader of the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Party in TamilNadu. Although the Government's figure has been surpassed by the exact number of civilians already crossed into the troops held areas (now it stands at around 130,000) it seems to be the approximate number to the exact number. Whatever the exact number, each civilian, young or adult, for sure carries a harrowing tale of cruelty by someone, killing, torturing, destruction of property, arson, dying of relatives due to hunger, thirst and lack of medicine before his or her own eyes. If one were to document all these, he might either go insane or kill himself with frustration, before accomplishing the task. Healing wounds in the minds of these people in the North and East would not be an easy task since the cause and nature of the wounds vary. Some might be in anger with the Tigers while others may be in frustration with the Government. We, in the south do not know whose shelling killed whose wife and the children. But the majority of the victims must be aware what happened to them. The people entrapped in the Tiger held area would have hated the outfit at the last stage. However we do not know how comfortable they were with the rebels before they were trapped. At the initial stages the civilians seemed to have willingly gone deep into the rebel held areas for fear of the advancing army, though later Tigers held them hostage. The entrapped people were a small percentage of the entire Tamil population in the country. They may hate the Tigers and their cause now, but the ironic truth is that a sizable section of the vast majority of Tamils around the world seemed to pray that Government troops fail in their effort to get the civilians out of the extremely dangerous entrapped area, since they were always psychologically at odds with the Government This psyche is vividly evident in hundreds of websites run by the Tamils around the world. Most of them seemed unhappy when they saw thousands of Tamils escaping death by flooding into the areas under the troops last Monday. This may not be mainly due to any love left for the Tigers or their cause, but owing to the natural uncomfortable feeling that Tamils in the Tiger movement were being defeated by the Sinhalese in the troops. Government is correct to defeat the **LTTE** given the fact that the rebels have not been genuine in finding a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. The way they scuttled the peace talks with the governments of J.R. Jayawardene, R. Premadasa, Chandrika Kumaratunge, Ranil Wikremesinghe and Mahinda Rajapaksa are points in fact. However, the Government cannot be indifferent to the nature of the present Tamil psyche as well. The authorities cannot justify its fight against terrorism and separatism to the Tamils with the same arguments and the language they apply to the Sinhalese. Especially the younger generation among the Tamils who were born after the commencement of the armed conflict in the North and the East is totally brainwashed with communal hate and separatist dogmas. The activities that are carried out in the newly captured areas might give ammunition to these dogmas and theories. For instance the pictures of the newly opened police station in Thandikulam showed the signboards within the police station all in Sinhala. This gives us some insight as to what we have to begin with. Tamils would understand Tamil more than they understand Sinhala. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 25, 2009

Govt. rejects US Congress Report in toto

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

October 25, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 563 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 25 -- The Government has rejected the recent US Congress report on Sri Lanka, stating that it appears to be unsubstantiated and devoid of corroborative evidence. A communique issued by the Government through the Foreign Ministry, said that the allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka in the document "Report to Congress on Incidents During the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka", appear to be unsubstantiated and devoid of corroborative evidence. It said that there is a track record of "vested interests endeavouring to bring the Government into disrepute, through fabricated allegations and concocted stories". "Thereby these interests hope to fan, once again, the flames of secessionism and to undo the concerted efforts of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, for rehabilitation and national reconciliation. The people of Sri Lanka therefore have every reason to be concerned that this report to the US Congress, may be abused for a similar end," the communique added.

The Government was of the view that the Security Forces were engaged in a humanitarian mission through operations in the North and in the East, to civilians of the Tamil community and the members of other communities living in those areas, from the clutches of LTTE terror.

The United States last week forwarded a document captioned "Report to Congress on Incidents During the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka", which contains a report from the US State Department to the Appropriations Committees of the US Congress.

However, the Government has pointed out that the document relates to a period when the Security Forces of Sri Lanka were engaged in a humanitarian mission through operations in the North and in the East of the island, to free the members of the Tamil community and the members of other communities living in those areas, from the clutches of the terror of the LTTE. The great relief with which the populace in those areas greeted the success of the operations was manifest when, within the space of a few days between the end of April and the start of May this year hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who were being used as human shields by the LTTE, escaped towards the security afforded by the Armed Forces, once the Army breached the LTTE lines.

During the recent security operations, the message given by the President to all ranks of the Armed Forces, was that the military endeavour must at all times be directed against the armed terrorism of the LTTE. Therefore, the Sri Lanka Security Forces were scrupulous in affording protection to the civilians and safeguarding their welfare. Sri Lanka, since gaining independence, has maintained an unbroken commitment to democratic governance, with the rule of law remaining paramount. Hence, the practice of the Government is always to subject to investigation under domestic law and processes those allegations that "prima facie" appear to be credible and well substantiated. Moreover, Sri Lanka's domestic jurisprudence provides all the necessary scope for those perceiving themselves subjected to a violation of their human rights, to obtain redress through judicial directives to the concerned

Govt. rejects US Congress Report in toto

authorities, the communique added. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka). For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 26, 2009

End of Document

Tiger nabbed with suicide jacket

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

September 25, 2009 Friday

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Length: 233 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 25 -- A **female** suicide cadre was arrested along with a mini suicide jacket by the Galle police Intelligence Unit yesterday in Poonthottam, Vavuniya.

Police spokesman Senior DIG Nimal Mediwake said following information from a suicide cadre who was arrested in Vavuniya by the Galle Intelligence Unit, police has nabbed another suicide cadre yesterday in Poonthottam.

"A special team from the Galle Intelligence Unit arrested the **female** suicide cadre on information provided by the **female** suicide cadre who was arrested earlier on Tuesday. Rajaratnam Anusha alias Abirami, 23 was arrested in Poonthottam," he added.

Mediwake noted that a powerful suicide jacket was seized from the **LTTE** suspect's possession. "The mini type suicide jacket is believed to be a deadly suicide kit," he added.

The **LTTE** suspect was living in Manmulai, Mulliyaweli and moved to the Vavuniya area to carry out her mission. A special team from the Galle Intelligence raided a house in Poonthottam, Vavuniya on Tuesday. A **female** suicide cadre was arrested and another committed suicide before the police could arrest her. A stock of explosives was recovered from the **LTTE** suspect. Galle Police Intelligence are continuing further inquiries. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: September 25, 2009

Lankan President gives Prabhakaran 24-hours to surrender

Asian News International (ANI)

April 20, 2009 Monday

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Length: 306 words

Byline: ANI

Body

Colombo, Apr 20 (ANI): Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Monday warned the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) chief Velupillai Prabhakaran to surrender within 24 hours.

Concerned over the insurgency in the island nation, Rajapaksa said that if Prabhakaran fails to do so by Tuesday afternoon, the Lankan troops will go all out for a final military assault.

Rajapaksa told the reporters here that government forces opened up routes for more than 35,000 people to escape from the **LTTE**-held territory.

Earlier, the Srilankan Defence Ministry had informed that Naval boats came to the rescue of the civilians fleeing the war zone today even as a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber who was among thousands escaping into Army-controlled areas set off a blast that killed at least 17 people.

"An **LTTE** suicide bomber has attacked thousands of Tamil civilians who are now trying to seek refuge with the Sri Lankan Army, this morning," the ministry's website said. "Battlefield sources said at least 17 civilians, including **women** and children, have been killed in the cowardly bomb blast."

The website says that over 5,000 people came out rushing today after the soldiers broke a long earthen wall the Tiger rebels had built to halt their advance.

"Troops captured the earth bund and so far 5,000 people have been rescued. It is still going on," military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The military has also claimed that Monday's flight of civilians was the single largest evacuation operation in a day. According to the Telegraph, the fleeing civilians are likely to join the thousands of others who have been kept by the government in cramped, makeshift camps where they face overflowing drains, water shortages and the threat of disease in the sweltering, unsanitary conditions. (ANI)

Lankan President gives Prabhakaran 24-hours to surrender

Load-Date: May 5, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lanka feels mixed emotions over Rajaratnam

Financial Times (London, England)

October 27, 2009 Tuesday

USA Edition 2

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 785 words

Byline: Joe Leahy and James Fontanella-Khan in Colombo

Highlight: News analysis

The billionaire is loathed by some but held in awe by others, write Joe Leahy and James Fontanella-Khan

Body

Behind the tropical beaches of Hikkaduwa, southern Sri Lanka, stands a monument linking the Asian tsunami that devastated this area in 2004 to another kind of tsunami now sweeping the hedge fund industry in New York.

The granite plaque in the village of Monrovia tells how 100 homes here were constructed for tsunami victims by the "Galleon Housing Scheme", a charity funded by Raj Rajaratnam, the manager of US-based hedge fund Galleon Group who is at the centre of one of the US's biggest insider trading cases.

Despite his newfound fame, none of the villagers in Monrovia seems to have heard of Mr Rajaratnam, who this month was charged in the \$20m (EUR13m, £12m) case and has also been accused by the Sri Lankan government of financing the island's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebel group, charges he rejects.

"That's a cricketer, no?" says Upasiri Sumanaratna, standing outside his tsunami relief home.

His response reflects the mixed perceptions of Mr Rajaratnam, one of Sri Lanka's most successful entrepreneurs, on the Indian Ocean island that he left as a child.

While he is loathed by hawkish elements of the government, who accuse him of supporting the Tigers, Mr Rajaratnam is held in awe in Colombo financial circles.

"Sri Lankans are confused about Rajaratnam," says a friend in Colombo who knew him at university. "They don't know whether to stand up for him because he helped the country and he's a dark guy in a white world who's getting hammered on the head, or whether to label him as a Tiger and say: 'This serves you right'."

Mr Rajaratnam, 52, grew up in an elite neighbourhood of Colombo. His father, J.M. Rajaratnam, who was chairman of the local arm of Singer, the sewing machine multinational, moved the family to the US when Mr Rajaratnam was still young.

After he finished school in England, Mr Rajaratnam studied engineering at the University of Sussex, where his fellow alumni in Colombo remarked that he was more into women and sports, particularly tennis and badminton, than markets. "He always had a mischievous streak . . .," the friend recalls.

Sri Lanka feels mixed emotions over Rajaratnam

After he founded Galleon and made his billions, he returned to Sri Lanka in 2002 after the declaration of a ceasefire in the civil war and began investing in the stock market.

A stockbroker friend in Colombo recalls how one of his first investments was in Hayleys, a leading Sri Lankan producer of rubber gloves. When the billionaire accumulated a large stake in the company, newspaper stories appeared claiming that he was funding the ***Tamil Tigers***. The ***LTTE*** fought for 25 years for an independent Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east but was defeated in May this year.

"People . . . couldn't understand how a Sri Lankan could be so successful and he was a Tamil, so they thought he was naturally a Tiger," the stockbroker friend says.

By the time the insider trading case broke, Mr Rajaratnam held \$100m in Sri Lankan stocks, including nearly 10 per cent of the country's biggest listed company, John Keells Holdings. He traded on gut instinct in Sri Lanka, once admonishing his stockbroker friend for being "too rational".

When he made his trips to Sri Lanka, the billionaire loved to eat local food at street restaurants. But his New York brusqueness got him into trouble in a country increasingly polarised between the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist community and the Hindu Tamil minority. This was made worse by the terrorist financing claims.

After the 2004 tsunami, he provided relief funds to projects for each of the island's ethnic groups, Tamils and Muslims as well as Sinhalese.

He also gave millions of dollars to the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, which two years later was proven by the US to be providing funds to the Tigers.

Although the US investigation did not charge him, the Sri Lankan central bank says it is still probing him and a military spokesman has warned he would be arrested if he returned.

He and his father have also been named in a civil lawsuit in the US alleging they supported the Tigers. His lawyer has rejected the allegations and denied his client supports the Tigers.

Regardless of such claims, in Sri Lanka's stock market, Mr Rajaratnam will be missed. When news broke that a big foreign investor was in trouble, pandemonium broke out among traders. "There was real panic in the first hours of trading," Manula Yapa, a Colombo stockbroker, says. "Everybody was asking us to close their positions."

And the insider trading case seems to have increased his popularity among young Sri Lankans, many of whom have only heard of him because of the news. Tariq Hussain, a student attending a financial education seminar in Colombo, said: "I want to be as rich as him . . . but without ending up in jail."

Load-Date: October 26, 2009

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SRI LANKA

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1637 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 7 -- There are several controversial reports on the conditions of the IDPs housed in the camps. In this speech Dr. Noel Nadesan analyses clinically, without political biases, the realistic conditions that prevail in the IDP camps. This is a first-hand report that is a 'must read' to get behind the political spin that has distorted the realities of the conditions faced by the IDPs.

The armed resistance from among the Tamils living in the northern and eastern provinces had spanned a period of thirty years, before being brought to a dramatic end on May 18, 2009.

It is not my intention to discuss the reasons for the armed resistance, herein. However, the armed resistance identified with the Tamil minority within Sri Lanka, evolved over time into a civil war, where the armed forces of Sri Lanka were pitted against the armed forces of the LTTE. The LTTE had established the rudiments of a state within the island and had developed the military structures to be on par or in some instances superior to those of the Sri Lankan state. However, what was deemed impossible was accomplished by the Sri Lankan armed forces on May 18, this year.

The LTTE combined conventional, and Guerilla warfare, with a heavy sprinkling of various acts of terrorism in its operations against the Sri Lankan state and its people, including Tamils. The details of this act of terrorism are too well known.

However, the lasting legacy of the just ended civil war, are the large number of 'Internally Displaced Persons' scattered around the island, with the biggest concentration in Vavuniya.

The IDPs in Sri Lanka can be classified into several categories:

1. The Tamils who have scattered to various parts of the South, of their free-will, to escape the ravages of war, including LTTE and the armed forces.
2. The Tamils who were forced out of their normal habitations during the course of the war and had to be accommodated in camps by the government.
3. The Sinhala villagers who were forced out of the border villages, because of LTTE terrorism.
4. The Muslims who were forcibly driven out of the Northern Province by the LTTE and are living in camps in Puttalam for 20 years.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SRI LANKA

5. The Tamils who moved with the LTTE -as the war progressed towards its culmination starting when the LTTE was driven out of Jaffna. Approximately 300,000 Tamils crossed over to the government side as the war ended. Most of them are presently living in camps set up in the Chettikulam area of the Vanni district.

There are also thousands of Tamils who have fled Sri Lanka to escape the ravages of war and are living in India, either in refugee camps or in freer conditions. There are also hundreds of thousands of Tamils, who migrated both legally and illegally, to escape the conditions prevailing in Sri Lanka, now living in the Western world. These are the 'Externally Displaced Persons', who are also the victims of the tragedy in Sri Lanka.

The concerns being expressed on the plight of the IDPs are largely centred on those in the camps in Vavuniya. The Muslim IDPs in Puttalam and the 25,000 IDPs in the East are rarely mentioned. Further, the 'Internally displaced Sinhalese' are never thought of. The self-displaced Tamils living in the South are of course not considered 'Displaced' at all. Our plans for the future should centre on all these people who were forced out of the places of residence and habitation by forces beyond their control.

Among the IDPs in Vavuniya are also thousands of men, women and children, who were participants in the war on behalf of the LTTE or were sympathetic towards its cause. Thousands have been identified and separated, while many more live amidst the IDP's in the camps. How these people, have to be treated and dealt with should be our concern too. They are also 'Displaced Persons' today and sooner or later have to find a place in society.

The recently displaced persons, who are living in the Vavuniya camps in large numbers and have been cleared of any LTTE involvement, of course should return to normal life, in their original habitations as soon as possible. There can be no dispute about this. However, when this is realistically possible is a subject of much debate, of a rancorous, ill-informed and emotional nature.

The conditions in the Vavuniya camps have been described as akin to those in Nazi-type concentration camps by many who have not seen these camps and interacted with the people there. The presence of LTTE cadres within these camps makes it imperative that the camps be fenced for security reasons by the government. LTTE flags have been hoisted within these camps occasionally! Our team has visited these camps twice and spent long hours there. On the first occasion we visited the Gamini Vidyalaya reception camp and the Kadirgamar IDP camp. On the second visit we visited the Kadirgamar camp and the Zone- 4 camp. We have thus seen the plight of these refugees as they arrived from the war zone and how the conditions in the camps have improved between our first and second visits. We were given the freedom to move around within these camps and interact with the people on both occasions. We also have spoken to the ministers, military officials, the government agent and camp officials, during our visits.

What we saw, heard and learnt are:

1. There are is no major disease out breaks in these camps as alleged.
2. Mortality rates in these camps are comparable to those in any normal society.
3. The malnutrition visible during the first visit had largely abated by the second.
4. The medical facilities within the camps are adequate and the sick have access to specialized care in the Vavuniya and Chettikulam hospitals. The more serious cases are taken to the Anuradhapura and Colombo hospitals.
5. There are skin ailments and cases of chicken pox. The IDPs, when arriving from the war zone already had skin diseases such as scabies.
6. No cases of rape by the armed forces were reported to us by the people we spoke.
7. The people were free to move around within the camps.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SRI LANKA

8. There were facilities for communal and individual cooking. Dry rations meeting international standards of basic nutrition are provided free at these camps.
9. The toilets constructed by the UNHCR and the tents provided by it, were unsuitable for the climate and circumstances. The government-built structures were more climate and people-friendly.
10. There are places allocated for visitors to meet the camp residents.
11. There are co-operative stores, schools, banks, libraries, temples and vocational training centres within these camps.
12. Adequate amounts of water are available in these camps for drinking and bathing. However, people have to take their turn to get their drinking water or to have a bath. There are plenty of tube well outlets and tap outlets. But each has to be shared by many families. This is an inconvenience rather than a problem.
13. The officials - civil, military and Police - were friendly towards the people and this was reciprocated. There was no visible tension between the officials and the people.
14. The camps are of course crowded, but this was not a cause for complaint by the IDPs.
15. People were engaging in small scale trade and had established their back yard gardens.
16. There was a special area for the Brahmin families, because they are vegetarians and have cultural and religious practices that are mandatory.
17. 54 NGO's and INGO's were working in the camps and providing services to the IDPs.
18. During our second visit in July, we observed that systems - trenches and drainage pipes - were being installed to drain water, in anticipation of the rains.
19. Although almost everyone we spoke to wanted to return to their homes and villages as soon as possible, there was no demand that this take place immediately.
20. Mr. Basil Rajapaksa, showed us details of plans to re-build damaged infra-structure in the war torn areas and presented us details of what had been achieved. He also answered our questions without any hesitation and in an open manner.
21. The people in the camps were relieved to have escaped from the horrible conditions in the war zone and were happy to be in a safe place.
22. The **LTTE** supporters, sympathizers and cadres within these camps are of course unhappy at the turn of events and can be suspected to be vocalizing exaggerated stories about the conditions in these camps. We have experienced these ourselves.

From what we had seen and heard, we are convinced the IDPs cannot be sent back to their places of residence immediately. The majority in these camps are poor, daily wage earners. They need the infra-structure to provide them employment, healthcare, schooling and welfare support. Farming and trading activities should be possible in these areas, soon after they arrive. There should be facilities to give long-term care for the psychologically and physically traumatized. These areas should be free of landmines and arms. The security of these people should be assured.

The long term interests of these unfortunate people should engage our conscience and financial resources, rather than scoring short-term political or emotional points. It should not be forgotten that although the conditions in these camps can be found fault with, they are much better than what would await these IDPs, if released from these camps immediately. These camps are temporary and the UNHCR demands they be temporary. The TNA

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN SRI LANKA

demanded they be temporary, soon after the war ended. In fact the TNA accused the government of trying to establish new villages in these camps at that time! We cannot have it both ways.

Temporary camps will have their inadequacies and meant to be so. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 7, 2009

End of Document

It is time you take a 360deg turn

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

September 25, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1300 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 25 -- With the exhaustion of the popular pet controversial topics regarding Sri Lanka, now the favourite topic of the international and national community used to flame the anti-Sri Lanka feeling throughout the world is the letters IDP. These three letters have become a gold mine for the said communities as well as for NGOs and their local acolytes. Thus the common and favourite slogan is 'Resettle IDPs soon'.

When the innocent civilians or the so-called IDPs were forcefully herded by Prabhakaran from Mannar to Mulaitivu through a route that is over 150 km, no Human Rights Organizations, Hypocratic Western Democracies or NGOs protested about this action of Prabhakaran for uprooting these people from their original dwellings.

Literally speaking these civilians became the prisoners of Prabhakaran or more precisely they could be called POPs. When Prabhakaran's defence lines were broken and his controls over the civilians were lost, thousands fled towards Sri Lanka Government control area and entrusted their safety and security in the hands of Sri Lankan Defence Forces.

The Government was faced with the task of looking after these helpless civilians and had to provide immediate relief measures to accommodate this exodus of over 280,000 men, women and children. The Armed Forces and the Government Departments worked day and night to erect camps, tents, dormitories to house them.

The pro-LTTE and the anti-Sri Lankan lobby should thank the Sri Lanka Government for providing all basic facilities within a fortnight for over 280,000 people without any help from anybody.

The said lobby expected the Government to fall under the weight of this exodus and expected to cry for help from the outside world. This never happened and the Government bravely faced this situation.

It is a pity that most of these International Organizations, NGOs, Human Rights bodies and pro-LTTE so-called Western Democracies are criticizing the Government's action program of resettling the POPs without studying the real ground situation.

The Sri Lanka Government considers that the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims are its own people and specially the President does not want any person in welfare centres to be resettled without clearing all the mines planted within a land of over 5000 Sq. Km in the North.

Because during the so-called one sided Ceasefire period, LTTE planted hundreds of thousand land mines in their controlled areas.

It is time you take a 360deg turn

Now it is a heavy task and a big responsibility of the Government to uproot these mines before resettling these POPs. One wonders, why these pro-LTTE and anti-SLG lobby are clamouring and pressurizing to resettle these people in a hurry? Surely they waiting hopefully to raise a hue and cry and blame the Government if some person gets injured due to a land mine blast or some other mishap.

Ironically the so-called Super Power pro-LTTE is still struggling to bring back normalcy to the lives of the people who were displaced by floods in that country.

This super power categorized terrorists into two groups calling one group who are sponsored by them as good terrorists and the other as bad terrorists because they attacked that country. It is like cholesterol classified as bad (LDL) and as good (HDL) and for them LTTE is HDL!

There is no question that the Government should quickly resettle these POPs in their original dwellings as early as possible. The Government is spending over rupees 1.4 billion to rupees 1.8 billion per month to feed and maintain these innocent civilians in welfare centres and provides the following facilities such as:

- A) Providing three meals per day for over 180,000 people.
- B) Water for drinking and for ablutions.
- C) Toilet facilities.
- D) Health and hygienic facilities.
- E) Supply of electricity.
- F) Recreation and education for children in welfare centres
- G) Vocational training for elders.
- H) Welfare facilities for all.
- I) Provision of security
- J) Vehicles and fuel to be used for day to day administration and for transport.
- K) Payment of salaries for all the services rendered by all people involved.
- L) Maintenance of welfare centres

For all those facilities the Government has to provide funds without any outside help. The Government is very happy to send back these people to their original places without spending billions of rupees in maintaining these centres. The advocates of quick resettlement want these people to be sent back without a plan so they could fish in trouble waters if the program fails.

Everyone should know that it is the duty of the Government to take proper planned action in resettling these people after clearing all the mines and booby traps without heeding the foolish calls of pro-LTTE and anti-Sri Lanka lobby. The task of resettling is a big responsibility on the shoulders of the Government and have to address the following areas before doing so.

- A) The biggest problem which consumes a lot of time is to clear an area of over 5,000 sq. km. mined by the LTTE specially during the CFA.
- B) The roads which were damaged by the terrorists have to be rebuilt.
- C) Almost all the culverts and bridges that were damaged by the LTTE to prevent the movement of SLG Armed Forces have to be repaired and reconstructed.

It is time you take a 360deg turn

- D) New houses should be built and the damaged houses should be repaired before resettlement.
- E) School buildings are to be repaired and new buildings should be constructed for the children to attend school as soon as they return to their home towns.
- F) Damaged Base, District and Rural Hospitals have to be repaired and provided with medical equipment, beds and medicine etc.
- G) Rebuild the damaged Government administrative buildings and supply with furniture and other electronic items, stationery and equipment to commence civil administration.
- H) Make arrangements to provide basic needs for the families to begin a livelihood.
- I) Repair damaged irrigation work for the farmers to start their agricultural work.
- J) To provide basic requirements such as agricultural equipment, seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and loans/funds for the farmers to begin their agricultural work.
- K) Most of the Northerners are engaged in fishing industry and therefore they must be provided with fishing boats and fishing gear that they have lost during the terrorist war for them to start a new career.
- L) To rebuild and maintain Churches and Hindu temples for these people to worship.

A reasonable thinking man could fathom the amount of money that the Government has to spend in maintaining over 280,000 and former POPs and the amount the Government will have to spend before the resettlement of these people in their home areas.

Some of the International VIPs who come to inspect and observe the conditions of these former POPs have praised the Sri Lanka Government for doing a good job and some of them have criticized the Government program.

The best and the funniest part of all is that no International Government, HR organization or NGO who criticize the work done by the Government and shed crocodile tears for POPs have not parted with a single cent to help the Sri Lanka Government on its program on resettling.

I would like to appeal to the United Nations, the rich countries and NGOs who were sympathizers of the **LTTE** to grant at least over US \$ 02 billion for the resettlement program of the Government, if they are genuinely concerned about the welfare and the well being of these innocent Tamil civilians.

United Nations, USA, England, Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Holland and Scandinavian countries, here is the opportunity for you to help the program of the resettlement of innocent Tamil civilians in their original dwelling places. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: September 25, 2009

Assassination attempt on Gota thwarted

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 25, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 249 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Aug. 25 -- Another major attempt to assassinate the Secretary of Defence Gotabhaya Rajapaksa was averted when State Intelligence Services (SIS) nabbed a senior **LTTE** intelligence cadre and seized a stock of powerful explosives hidden in a house at Modera yesterday.

Police Spokesman Nimal Mediwake told Daily Mirror that a stock of arms and explosives were recovered from Mutwal in Modera as part of a three-month investigation conducted by the SIS following the arrest of an **LTTE** rebel.

With the recovery the SIS unveiled a well-planned attempt to attack the Secretary of Defence's vehicle convoy using an explosive-laden motorcycle driven by an **LTTE** cadre. The terrorists had also designed a back-up plan to attack the ambulance carrying the injured Secretary to the hospital if by any chance Mr. Gotabhaya survived the first attack using a **female** suicide cadre. The recovered items consisted of a suicide kit weighing five kilos, a modern automatic gun, ammunition, five hand grenades, 13 cyanide capsules, five batteries, a remote-control device, two mobile remote-control units, 50-feet of fuse wire and a detonator had been found hidden inside a steel cabinet in the house.

The police intelligence wing officials are now looking for the explosive-laden motorcycle and other suicide cadres who were to launch the attack. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: August 25, 2009

TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 7, 2009 Monday

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Length: 1369 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 7 -- "Terrorism refers to the killing of innocents by people who are after some agenda which usually has political overtones, and barring a few, most terrorist agendas cannot be justified. The most dastardly thing terrorists do is their selection of ordinary people as targets. Their murderous intents are clear when they attack defenceless 'soft targets' - babies, women and old folk. Ordinary people are targeted not because they are threats to terrorists-they are just treated as tools tying them to terrorists' views.

This targeting of civilians is for the terrorists to get their messages across to an audience or to satisfy some radical demand. Their main objectives are those people who matter-important people. But it is easier for terror mongers to order a couple of suicide attacks on a hundred people just to command some attention. But that doesn't mean they are not successful in bumping off people who matter. Terrorists through their attacks remind the powers that be of their agenda and their determination in achieving it. To maximize fear and publicity, terrorists use any type of weaponry they can get hold of. The most popular are bombs. Terrorists don't go hammer and tongs on killing sprees either; they plan their attacks carefully; train their members in terror tactics; and have undercover followers and sleepers who support the cause. Terrorists obtain money to fund their activities locally or internationally while making big money through trade in arms and narcotics. All terrorists fight for something they cannot get through normal means. When I say normal means I refer to achieving goals within the laws and rules of the land."

Terrorism is there to stay

Tommo the pussycat who had been reading an overview of World Terrorism written by an ex- war correspondent in the Sunday Dodger that morning could not get over the reality of human suffering because of the plague of terrorism the world over. He was disturbed to such a degree he couldn't help but get his feelings off his chest to Ooty, his close buddy and working partner at the Wallside Restaurant and Bar. "Terrorist Johnnies are all over the world, Ooty, it has become a way of life for people who are after some dashed thing or another at whatever costs. If you look at the world scenes; the old Khmer Rouge, the Jap Red Army, Basque Al Queda and Osama bin Laden, Abu Sayyat and the hundreds of other terrorist groups including our own striped kind who did all the villainy in their heyday, terrorism is there to stay," Tommo the pussycat stopped his harangue to take a sip of beer and a couple of pulls on his Gold Leaf coffin nail.

"Thuhoot! Hello, hello! Why are you talking about this miserable subject Tommo?"

A second rising?

"Meeooww! It's a miserable subject all right and the bloody game is catching on like flu. Why, there is noise that the Tigers are putting on new undies to have another go at Eelam."

TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA

"Thuhoot! I heard that too."

"Meeoww. The Tigers had an army, navy, an air force of sorts, and some type of administration in areas they called their homeland. They also had a worldwide network supporting their cause. Thank goodness Rajathuma's forces finally stamped out the fellows. But I have a bone to pick with the media."

"Why is that? The media gave a good coverage on the LTTE issue."

Media matters most to terrorism.

"Precisely. You see, Ooty the most important thing terrorists want is publicity. They want the whole world to know who they are, what they want and why. The media is virtually their means of survival. How do you think I got to know about international terrorism? Through the media! If the media did not shout about the LTTE the Tigers would have ended like a gaggle of geese in some farm in Jaffna. But the Tigers made sure that they attracted the attention of the mass media that report things on radio, TV, and in newspapers. The media tend to give publicity to terrorists and terrorism chiefly on hearsay. Even recently the media pumped out a tasty dish of a story of LTTE plans for another try at Eelam as if they knew all about it. Terrorists love publicity. It's their food and drink."

"Toot! I see. If the media does not give them attention, terrorists and terrorism will die of thirst and starvation, right?"

"Meeoowrite! (Right). In fact some governors say that terrorists actually exploit and manipulate the media. What do you know about the dead-Tiger Prabha?"

"Toot! Everything-his birthday, birth place, the school he went to, his age, his heart problems, diabetes, his wife's and children's names, who his parents are how he began his fight for Eelam, the details of his terror activities, the number of governors he had killed-from the year dot up to the time he stared heavenwards with a bloody pottu on his forehead."

"And you got all that info from the media, right?"

Excessive media attention

"Of course, where else? Our media pals gave full reports on the LTTE, their attacks on the forces, massacres of civilians, their bosses, their dancing partners the Nords and other catchers. They also did features on the mahakotiya, mahaveeran day and pushed the Eelam thing through news views and interviews. And they go to town with pictures of the Eelam flags and Eelam maps wherever possible. Consequently, every governor in the country know the life histories of Prabha, Anton Bala, his kangaroo land wife, Mr Cheese cake, slimy Vikings and all the other guys; fellows who put their beaks into our governors' affairs. There were even full page pictorial essays of these terrorists and their gangs. I tell you it was bloody stupid reporting, our media went to town in publicizing the terrorists as if their lives depended on it. And panditha writers jumped the band wagon to coo about the Tigers, the Tamil diaspora, and foreign finger pokers. The media performed somersaults to land these things in their papers, on TV and radio. Don't ask me why. I can't even guess why the media publicized terroriand terrorism as if they are in cahoots with them. Sometimes I wonder whether some sections of the media take puggas from terrorists to boost their images." Pussy laughed the way pussies do.

"Meeooww! That's exactly what the LTTE terrorists wanted; free publicity and getting all their messages across. Our media fell for it hook line and sinker. True the LTTE advertised worldwide on the internet, but the local media gave them much more prominence. The LTTE made the media here look a bunch of novices."

"Thuhooot. I can't really disagree. The LTTE also managed to get CENEN, BEEBC, Al Kadhira and some other paid and unpaid media types to sponsor them. After the army chopped up Tiger tails a new face emerged-Rasam Papdam-KP, they call the fellow. And Oi! Before we know it, the man's mug shots are in all newspapers with his date and place of birth, height, weight, how many thosais he can wallop at one go, whom he married, a record of his acts of terrorism and arms trade and the number of languages he speaks complete with graphics. In one instance his present designation was stated as "International Spokesman for the LTTE" making a terrorist a diplomat! Someone has been trying to begin a new thing: "terrorist diplomacy." Can you cap that?"

TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA

"I know, I know. My blood boiled when I saw this new terror nut being given front page coverage in a tide of love and compassion."

"When will they ever learn, when will they ever learn?"

"So what is the answer to terrorists' love for the media?"

"The **LTTE** was a terrorist group which killed 70,000 odd people and I feel that the media should have restricted news on them. Better still, excepting government press releases, denied them any news coverage at all. Such considerations would also have been a royal gesture of patriotism on the part of the media."

"It's chapters and volumes too late for that, Tommo. The **LTTE** won the day over the media."

"Meeowwyep!(Yep). I hope that our news boys get wise to the reality that terrorism cannot do without them and not allow a bunch of hoodlums to use the media to pull out kos-ata from granny's hearth." Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: September 7, 2009

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Rajaratnam is hero and villain in Sri Lanka

Financial Times (London, England)

October 27, 2009 Tuesday

London Edition 3

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 822 words

Byline: Joe Leahy and James Fontanella-Khan in Colombo

Highlight: News analysis

The billionaire provokes mixed emotions, write Joe Leahy and James Fontanella-Khan

Body

Behind the tropical beaches of Hikkaduwa, southern Sri Lanka, stands a monument linking the Asian tsunami that devastated this area in 2004 to another kind of tsunami now sweeping the hedge fund industry in New York.

The granite plaque in the village of Monrovia tells how 100 homes here were constructed for tsunami victims by the "Galleon Housing Scheme", a charity funded by Raj Rajaratnam, the manager of US-based hedge fund Galleon Group who is at the centre of one of the US's biggest insider trading cases.

Despite his newfound fame, none of the villagers in Monrovia seems to have heard of Mr Rajaratnam, who this month was charged in the \$20m (EUR13m, £12m) case and has also been accused by the Sri Lankan government of financing the island's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebel group, charges he rejects.

"That's a cricketer, no?" says Upasiri Sumanaratna, standing outside his tsunami relief home.

His response reflects the mixed perceptions of Mr Rajaratnam, one of Sri Lanka's most successful entrepreneurs, on the Indian Ocean island that he left as a child.

While he is loathed by hawkish elements of the government, who accuse him of supporting the Tigers, Mr Rajaratnam is held in awe in Colombo financial circles.

"Sri Lankans are confused about Rajaratnam," says a friend in Colombo who knew him at university. "They don't know whether to stand up for him because he helped the country and he's a dark guy in a white world who's getting hammered on the head, or whether to label him as a Tiger and say: 'This serves you right.'"

Mr Rajaratnam, 52, grew up in an elite neighbourhood of Colombo and attended St Thomas' Preparatory School in the capital's centre, whose playground fronts onto the Indian Ocean.

His father, J.M. Rajaratnam, who was chairman of the local arm of Singer, the sewing machine multinational, moved the family to the US when Mr Rajaratnam was still young.

Rajaratnam is hero and villain in Sri Lanka

After he finished school in England, Mr Rajaratnam studied engineering at the University of Sussex, where his fellow alumni in Colombo remarked that he was more into women and sports, particularly tennis and badminton, than markets. "He always had a mischievous streak . . .," the friend recalls.

After he made his billions, he returned to Sri Lanka in 2002 after the declaration of a ceasefire in the civil war and began investing in the stock market.

A stockbroker friend in Colombo recalls how one of his first investments was in Hayleys, a leading Sri Lankan producer of rubber gloves. When the billionaire accumulated a large stake in the company, newspaper stories appeared claiming that he was funding the Tamil Tigers. The LTTE fought for 25 years for an independent Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east but was defeated in May this year.

"People . . . couldn't understand how a Sri Lankan could be so successful and he was a Tamil, so they thought he was naturally a Tiger," the stockbroker friend says.

By the time the insider trading case broke, Mr Rajaratnam held \$100m in Sri Lankan stocks, including nearly 10 per cent of the country's biggest listed company, John Keells Holdings. He traded on gut instinct in Sri Lanka, once admonishing his stockbroker friend for being "too rational".

When he made his trips to Sri Lanka, the billionaire loved to eat local food at street restaurants. He wore T-shirts and jeans and eschewed air-conditioned limousines for autorickshaws, riding in them to cricket and rugby matches.

But his New York brusqueness got him into trouble in a country increasingly polarised between the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist community and the Hindu Tamil minority. This was made worse by the terrorist financing claims.

After the 2004 tsunami, he provided relief funds to projects for each of the island's ethnic groups, Tamils and Muslims as well as Sinhalese.

He also gave millions of dollars to the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, which two years later was proven by the US to be providing funds to the Tigers.

Although the US investigation did not charge him, the Sri Lankan central bank says it is still probing him and a military spokesman has warned he would be arrested if he returned.

He and his father have also been named in a civil lawsuit in the US alleging they supported the Tigers. His lawyer has rejected the allegations and denied his client supports the Tigers.

Regardless of such claims, in Sri Lanka's stock market Mr Rajaratnam will be missed. When news broke that a big foreign investor was in trouble, pandemonium broke out among traders. "There was real panic in the first hours of trading," Manula Yapa, a Colombo stockbroker, says. "Everybody was asking us to close their positions."

The insider trading case seems to have increased his popularity among young Sri Lankans, many of whom have only heard of him because of the news. Tariq Hussain, a student attending a financial education seminar in Colombo, said: "I want to be as rich as him . . . but without ending up in jail."

Load-Date: October 26, 2009

Final influx massive

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 16, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 462 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 16 -- A huge influx of civilians once again started to flow into the military controlled areas as Security Forces were ready laying siege on the remaining Tiger controlled areas yesterday whilst ground troops uncovered huge stocks of arms and ammunition of the **LTTE** from the areas they captured, military officials told the Daily News yesterday.

As of yesterday evening more than 15,000 civilians have arrived in military controlled areas from Friday morning. More than 10,000 civilians arrived by evening yesterday in the 53 division area after ground troops advanced further southward of the Vellamullivaikkal area whilst more than 1000 civilians arrived in the 59 Division area crossing the Nanthikadal lagoon, military officials added. "Civilians are arriving in thousands into the 53 Division area along the A-35 road and troops temporarily suspended their military operations to facilitate their arrival by yesterday afternoon," a senior military official added. According to sources from the battleground, **LTTE** cadres have been trapped in a tiny area outside south of Vellamullivaikkal and explosions were heard continuously from the area giving strong indications that they were destroying their arms and ammunition to prevent them being captured by the troops. "The Security Forces once again lay siege on the **LTTE** terrain surrounding the remaining Tiger leaders inside as the 58 Division and the 59 Division were poised to marry up in the Mullaitivu sea front by yesterday evening," the official added. During their advance into the Mullaitivu front the 58 Division has recovered the biggest ever arms and ammunition stock they have ever recovered within a 24 hour period, a senior military official added. Seventy two 60 mm mortars, 36 Indian made Rocket Launchers , two anti aircraft pedal guns, one 12.7 mm machine gun, a Marine Radar, 12 suicide boats were among the recoveries. "Thousands of sea mines and huge stocks of arms and ammunitions which were being counted by the troops for hours were recovered on Friday", the official added. Three **female** Sea Tiger cadres were captured whilst recovering 40 Tiger bodies during the operations conducted yesterday. Ground troops launched a massive attack on the **LTTE** cadres who tried to stop the troops' advance into the area inflicting heavy damages to them. According to military officials the next 24 hours will be very crucial as many Tiger leaders have given up hopes of their survival sending their family members along with civilians fleeing towards the military controlled areas. Many of the Maha Veer families and Tiger cadres have also started to abandon Tiger held areas as they have realised that there is no escape for them. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 16, 2009

Final influx massive

End of Document

AFPTV Advisory for Thursday

Agence France Presse -- English

April 30, 2009 Thursday 9:20 AM GMT

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Length: 608 words

Dateline: PARIS, April 30 2009

Body

We will file the following videos:

WHO raises flu alert to five as pandemic 'imminent' - already transmitted

WASHINGTON

The World Health Organisation raises its flu alert to phase five out of six, signalling that a pandemic was "imminent" following the swine flu outbreak.

NEWS

Voiced report

NSV - VID80275

BROADCAST-READY - VID80276

WEB - MMV80277

Top US official: Closing border won't stop flu - already transmitted

SAN DIEGO

US Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano tells lawmakers that closing US borders would be an ineffective and expensive way to try to contain deadly swine flu.

NEWS

Images and soundbites

RAW - VID80263

WEB - MMV80264

EU health ministers discuss tackling swine flu

LUXEMBURG

France will push for a ban on flights to Mexico at a meeting of EU health ministers who will also discuss possible vaccines and antiviral stocks in their bid to prevent swine flu fanning out across Europe.

NEWS

1. Images of arrivals transmitted by 1400 GMT

RAW - VID80300

WEB - MMV80301

2. Images and soundbites of news conference transmitted by 1800 GMT

RAW - VID80310

WEB - MMV80311

Civilians under fire as Sri Lanka rules out ceasefire with **Tamil Tigers**

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's president publicly rules out halting the final military offensive against **Tamil Tigers**, and warns the rebels they only had a "little time left" to surrender. Tens of thousands of civilians are unable to escape the clashes.

NEWS

Images transmitted by 1400 GMT

RAW - VID80308

WEB - MMV80309

Prince Charles given German environmental award

BERLIN

Prince Charles has received the German sustainability award for his contribution to environmental work.

ENVIRONMENT

Images and soundbites transmitted by 1300 GMT

RAW - VID80305

WEB - MMV80306

Congo's male rape victims speak out

KAKU, Democratic Republic of Congo

In Democratic Republic of Congo's troubled and lawless east, sexual violence against **women** is commonplace and often used as a weapon of war. But now, increasingly, male rape victims are coming forward.

SPECIAL REPORT

AFPTV Advisory for Thursday

Voiced report transmitted by 1400 GMT

NSV - VID80285

BROADCAST-READY - VID80286

WEB - MMV80287

A wall around Rio slums?

RIO DE JANEIRO

Authorities in Rio de Janeiro have a new strategy to contain the spread of one of the city's most infamous favelas. They plan to encircle it with an "environmental wall" -- they say to protect the neighbouring rainforest from encroachment.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report transmitted by 2200 GMT

NSV - VID80250

BROADCAST-READY - VID80251

WEB - MMV80252

Language barriers in the Baltics

RIGA

Of the three Baltic states, Latvia has the biggest Russian-speaking population. Moscow argues the minority group faces institutionalised discrimination, including on job applications in which they must submit to Latvian language tests.

SPECIAL REPORT

Voiced report transmitted by 1700 GMT

NSV - VID80290

BROADCAST-READY - VID80291

WEB - MMV80292

Doctor shortage threatens Japan's healthcare

OSAKA, Japan

Japan is the world's second richest country and a leader in global medical technology. But an acute shortage of doctors has led to a crisis in emergency care, sometimes with deadly results.

HEALTH

Voiced report transmitted by 1200 GMT

NSV - VID80302

BROADCAST-READY - VID80303

AFPTV Advisory for Thursday

WEB - MMV80304

Bollywood meets Bronte

LONDON

Bollywood is taking on the mainstream with a musical adaptation of Wuthering Heights. The colour, dance and music of classic Indian cinema comes face to face with Emily Bronte's classic tale of unrequited love on the London stage.

LIFESTYLE

Voiced report transmitted by 1800 GMT

NSV - VID80293

BROADCAST-READY - VID80294

WEB - MMV80295

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Load-Date: May 1, 2009

End of Document

Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

October 25, 2009 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A12; Lorne Gunter

Length: 877 words

Byline: Lorne Gunter, Freelance

Body

It would be easy to say that the 76 Tamils who showed up in a cargo ship off our West Coast last week should be turned around and told to sail at full steam back to wherever they came from. After all, they all arrived either with forged passports or no passports at all.

That's dodgy enough, but given that many Tamils support the murderous ***Tamil Tigers*** separatist group, it is likely some of these would-be refugees are terrorists themselves, perhaps even looking for a safe haven from which to rebuild their shattered organization. Indeed, there is an outstanding Sri Lankan warrant in effect for at least one of the men, Kartheepan Manickavasagar, who is suspected of being a Tiger.

Under Canadian law it is illegal to belong to the Tigers or any of their fundraising front organizations.

The Tigers--officially the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(***LTTE***)-- were one of the most ruthless militant groups in the world, until, after more than 25 years of civil war, the Sri Lankan army brutally put down their insurrection earlier this year.

The Tigers perfected suicide bombing. They have used it far more times --nearly 500--than any other insurgents in the world, including the main Palestinian terrorist organizations the PLO, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The civil war they conducted against the Sri Lankan government for over a quarter century cost 70,000 lives, many of them innocent civilians on both sides. All of this makes the claimants bobbing in our Pacific waters doubly dodgy.

Still, there is a lot of credence to claims by Tamils that they are mistreated in Sri Lanka, even fearful for their lives. They cannot go back or the Colombo government might arrest and abuse them.

While the Tigers deserve no sympathy or sanctuary, the same is not true of ordinary Tamils.

During British colonial rule, when the island nation was known as Ceylon, Tamils held most of the senior indigenous positions in commerce, the professions and the bureaucracy. This is partly the result of their greater willingness than their Sinhalese countrymen to accept missionary education and British institutions, and partly because of British unwillingness to integrate Buddhists into the upper echelons of society and imperial government.

After independence in 1948, however, Sinhalese majority governments implemented a form of reverse discrimination known as the "policy of standardization." Sinhalese was declared the sole official language.

Be wary of Tamils' terrorist history; But legitimate refugees on ship off West Coast deserve fair treatment

Hundreds of thousands of Tamils were disenfranchised (which made it much easier for the Sinhalese to win overwhelming majorities). Businesses were seized from their private owners--mostly Tamils-- and placed under the control of mostly Sinhalese bureaucrats. Government jobs and contracts, too, were given almost exclusively to those in the ethnic majority.

This culminated in what became known as "Black July" in 1983. After a band of Tigers ambushed a Sri Lankan army convoy, Sinhalese mobs, including hundreds of Buddhist monks, rampaged through the streets of the country's major cities. They went door-to-door looking for Tamils (who are predominately Hindu), dragged them into the street and either bludgeoned them to death with clubs and pipes or placed gasoline-soaked tires around their necks and lit them so the victims would be burned alive.

Most of the victims were civilians, not Tigers. Many women and children were among the dead.

If I were a Tamil, I too would harbour a great deal of resentment against the Sinhalese-dominated central government. Before the Tigers took over the Tamil cause, Tamil legislators proposed many peaceful solutions to the ethnic tension. For instance, they proposed a federal system of government with provinces not unlike our own that controlled provincial affairs. All their ideas were rejected. The Sinhalese reasoned that they needn't compromise because they controlled all the levers of power.

The problem with the Tigers is that far from being mere freedom fighters, they became a criminal organization preying on their own people as often as not. For instance, Tamils in the Diaspora--hundreds of thousands of whom were rightly welcomed to Canada following Black July to shelter them against a repeat of the violence--were threatened with death if they did not make substantial monthly contributions to the Tiger war effort. Tamils here wanting to return home to visit loved ones often found them held captive by the Tigers until substantial ransoms were paid.

Following the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, Tiger soldiers swept through refugee camps and orphanages pressganging hundreds of children to fight the Sri Lankan army and carry out suicide missions against civilian targets.

The Sri Lankan government has been far from angelic, itself, kidnapping, torturing and killing Tamils against whom mere rumours of Tiger sympathy have been made. Last spring's final offensive against the Tigers caught hundreds of innocents in the crosshairs.

The Tamils floating off Vancouver Island cannot be dismissed en masse. Many of them may have legitimate refugee claims. Many may need Canada's protection. Being returned to Sri Lanka might be a death sentence. But Ottawa must be equally certain not to admit any Tigers. We don't need them bringing their violence and corruption to our shores.

lgunter@shaw.ca

Load-Date: October 26, 2009

DOOM & GLOOM

Sydney MX (Australia)

August 7, 2009 Friday

1 - SYD Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 549 words

Body

FEARS FOR 60 ON TONGAN FERRY

More than 60 people are now feared dead after an overnight ferry capsized and sank near the Tongan capital of Nuku'alofa.

A revised manifest increased the number of people on board the Princess Ashika, which sank late on Wednesday night, from 79 to 117, Tonga's police commander Chris Kelly said.

Tonga's Prime Minister Feleti Sevele has asked New Zealand and Australia to send navy divers to help recover bodies, saying there was little chance of finding more survivors.

``It's a very sad day... it's big for a small place. This is a huge disaster, a huge loss. We'll try and cope with it as best we can."

Two bodies have been recovered. Most of the missing are women and children who were sleeping below deck.

US TROOPS DIE IN BOMB BLAST

Five US soldiers were killed when their vehicles struck bombs in western Afghanistan, adding to a soaring foreign military death toll in the fight against the Taliban.

``Four International Security Assistance Force service members died after their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device today," a spokesman said.

Another died when a patrol struck a roadside bomb after troops ``engaged" insurgents who were spotted planting bombs in an operation yesterday.

BLACKWATER BOSS ON MURDER RAPS

The boss of security company Blackwater, which is being investigated for shooting deaths in Iraq, has been accused of a series of crimes including murder and weapons smuggling.

Accusations in sworn affidavits lodged at a Virginia court state founder Erik Prince either murdered or had killed former employees co-operating with federal investigators.

DOOM & GLOOM

The company, which was recently renamed XE, was the most prominent of an army of private security companies employed by the Pentagon and State Department to protect military convoys and guard US diplomats in Iraq.

PAKISTAN ISSUES MUMBAI 13 ALERT

Pakistan has issued a global alert for 13 suspects in connection with November's attacks in the Indian city of Mumbai.

The international police network, Interpol, said that the alert asks member countries for help in locating the fugitives.

It also asks them to report any leads to Pakistan.

India has repeatedly complained that Islamabad has been slow in pursuing those responsible for the attacks, which killed more than 170 people nine of them gunmen.

MOROCCO SEIZES BELGIAN FUGITIVE

One of three prisoners who staged an audacious jailbreak in Belgium in a hijacked helicopter has been arrested in Morocco.

Mohamed Johry was arrested in Berkane, in northeastern Morocco, following an Interpol international arrest warrant.

Johry, Ashraf Sekkaki described as one of Belgium's most dangerous criminals and Abdel Had Kahjary Mulloul flew out of a prison in Bruges on July 23 in a helicopter hijacked by their accomplices.

Sekkaki, 26, has spent the past decade behind bars for his part in a dozen attacks on banks. Some of the offences involved hostages.

Kahjary has been arrested in Belgium, but Sekkaki is still at large.

TAMIL TIGERS CHIEF UNDER ARREST

The new head of the **Tamil Tigers**, the separatist group defeated by the Sri Lankan military after a 25-year war, has been arrested in Thailand.

Selvarajah Pathmanathan was wanted on two Interpol warrants and took the reins of the remnants of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam after their defeat in May.

Load-Date: August 7, 2009

The truth about Lanka's secret refugee camps revealed

Asian News International (ANI)

May 24, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 535 words

Byline: ANI

Body

Colombo, May 24 (ANI): They squat in a circle, grinding their tiny hands nervously into the mud behind the six foot high barbed wire fence that imprisons them. And their little eyes stare wide open in fear at what lies on the other side. This is the Pulmoddai refugee camp in war-torn northern Sri Lanka, where soldiers sit, each one ten yards apart, their AK47 assault rifles trained at the 6,000 terrified refugees huddled inside.

This, according to the News of The World, is the terrifying aftermath of Asia's longest civil war.

Speaking to the tabloid in the belief that their representatives are aid workers, the official in charge of the Pulmoddai compound claimed the Tamil women and children were being "held" for their own safety. We are protecting these people. This is why there are so many soldiers here. There might be Tamil Tigers in there and we cannot just let them come and go. They have water and shelter and they are happy to be free of the war," the official is quoted, as saying. charity worker, however, gives a very different view: "The children, their mothers, their grandmothers, they can't get out. They are trapped behind barbed wire with guns trained on them, innocent children. This is a prison camp, a Nazi-like detention camp that evokes the worst fears of humanity."

And if the children of this bloody war are not being held in camps, they are in a different kind of hell-in orphanages scattered across their war-torn land with no mother or father to comfort them.

To get to the terrifying fallout of the 26-year conflict between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan Government and the Tamil Tigers took a 13-hour, 400-mile drive from the west coast capital Colombo along dangerous roads and through more than a dozen heavily militarised checkpoints and cordons-once having to hide in the back of our minivan.

At every stage of our journey the Sri Lankan military that has effectively created a border cutting off the north of the island from foreigners-brandished their weapons to try to intimidate us and stop us seeing what they don't want you to see.

The truth about Lanka's secret refugee camps revealed

For here, in the north-east of the South Asian island, is a scene light years away from the pristine tea plantations and golden sandy beaches in the south and west of the island that attract more than 100,000 British tourists a year.

To British honeymooners, Sri Lanka is a tropical paradise; to British businessmen it is source of clothing for high street stores like M and S, Next and Gap. But for the past three decades the former British colony has been gripped by a deadly war that has bitterly split the South Asian nation in two and killed 100,000 people.

It erupted in 1983 after the demands of the minority Tamils for a homeland of their own separate from the Sinhalese were refused. Last week it finally came to a violent and bloody end in the north of the country. And since January, an estimated 7,000 civilians, many of them children, have died in the crossfire at the hands of both sides.

But now the end of the conflict has brought new and terrible suffering for the Tamil people left behind. (ANI)

Load-Date: May 24, 2009

End of Document

Arduous road to realisation of humanity

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

November 8, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1142 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 8 -- After ten years of silence, veteran film producer and Director has re-emerged with his latest movie Alimankada (Road From Elephant Pass) depicting a saga of the thirty year war. This film now shown at Regal cinema portrays a story of the nation breathing fresh air after the ending of a bloody war that ravaged the country. It is timely that Rutnam comes out with a refreshing cinematic view of the human relationships coloured by ethnicity and biases. 'Alimankada' was the only official entry to the academy awards

Based on the award winning novel by Nihal de Silva, script writer and the director has meticulously crafted a script which is true to the sentiments articulated by the novelist with grotesque descriptions of the vegetation, flora and fauna and exotic landscapes of the wild in the Wilpattu sanctuary.

Breathtakingly beautiful with rare scenes from abounding natural beauty of Sri Lanka, the film meanders through a path leading to the realisation of human bondage, love, sorrow and unity in adversity that make the very anatomy of any civilized society.

The civil war was at its peak, by the time Nihal de Silva penned the novel that provides a rather fertile background to discuss the inconvenient issues that draw apart two communities who lived in harmony through generations and covers ethnic complexities that indirectly fuelled the ideology of hate and terrorism. One of the important facets of the film is that it is neither a carbon copy of the lengthy novel nor is an eulogy of parties to the conflict. The film is a meaningful narrative of human bondage which cuts across cultural, linguistic and ethnic boundaries that coloured biases over the decades. In the conventional sense, 'Alimankada' is not a war film but it is a brilliant post war film which does amazingly contribute to the much-needed healing process. More over it presents a postmortem on the ideology of the conflict through intricately knitted scenes and meticulously crafted dialogues which are rare amongst Sinhala cinema.

Although the narrative is interspersed with bizarre scenes, which provide spice to the story, the crust of the narrative is to infuse humanity into a war weary nation and to provide a refreshing post war vision for a healing nation. At the hand of the script writer and director, the war which has become a symbol of misery and blight of contention over the years, has been inversed into a metaphor which strangely unites two strange bedfellows, Sri Lankan Army officer (Ashan Dias) and a **female** informant of the **LTTE** (Suranga Ranawaka). One of the potent and lethal weapons that the **LTTE** possessed was its ideology of separation which demonized the Sinhalese as a community against Tamils.

In the course of the journey from Elephant Pass to Colombo, some of the contentious issues of the conflict have been discussed. Suranga Ranawaka, who brilliantly portrayed the role of a **LTTE** informant, dominated the movie although the lead role of a captain was equally played by Shan Dias. The film 'Alimankada' is marked for its

Arduous road to realisation of humanity

brehtaking cinematography which captured the intrinsic natural beauty of Sri Lankan forest reserves and the use of natural sets which synchronizes well with the very tempo of the story. This is a signature feature of a master filmmaker and director. One of the important factors of the film is its time of release.

At the time Nihal de Silva penned the novel, LTTE's activities were at its zenith. The terrorist outfit was, more or less, controlling the North and East of the Country and purportedly preparing for a final battle for a separate homeland. By the time the LTTE had overrun major military camps such as Elephant Pass and built up the myth as an invincible force. It was against this backdrop the novel 'Road from Elephant Pass' was written.

The novel among other things has captured the ferocious nature of the semi-desert landscape ravaged by war. Since the LTTE infiltrated into forest reserves such as Wilpattu, the journey from Elephant Pass through the wildlife sanctuary to Colombo was one fraught with danger. Besides the guerillas, the forest reserve was infected with hunters. It was a highly militarised landscape where each and everyone was looked at with suspicion. Earlier films such as Vimukthi Jayasundara's 'Sulanga Enu Pinisa' (The Forsekan Land) and Prassana Vithanage's 'Pura Handa Kaluwara' were not allowed to be shown.

However, time has changed. Sri Lankan forces annihilated the LTTE which was deemed as an invincible military outfit and described by western media as the most dangerous terrorist outfit. Following the victory euphoria swept the country and the militarization of collective psyche is pervasive and manifested in much-eulogised military exhibitions and society is grouped into two; patriots and traitors. Now, the pervasive militarization in terms of military exhibitions contributes not to 'triumphalism' as envisaged but to creation of a social landscape with eerie military presence.

Though the narrative may not be applicable against this backdrop, what is important here is that the people have to move on, out of the war and into a landscape which is capable of healing the wounds and to forge ahead in search of a collective identity and destiny. People could no longer rest on laurels or overarching 'triumphalism' but to face the hard facts of life.

Rutnam's movie 'Alimankada' is important in this respect. What is important at this juncture is not to have reconciliation between ethnicities, nationalities and 'reclaim' the forgotten cultural landscape with resonant multiculturalism.

Apart from its visual excellence and masterly cinematic diction, 'Alimankada', ends with a note of hope. One of the fundamental differences the film from other so-called war films is that the crust of the film is a celebration of life with love, sorrow and agony in separation against the backdrop of a ferocious civil war. Captain falls in love with a female LTTE informant during the course of the journey from Elephant Pass to Colombo through the wildlife sanctuary is not a mere love affair but an inevitable culmination of a process of reconciliation and triumph of humanity over war.

Although the author Nihal de Silva is no more, he would, certainly, be happy of the film based on his novel. "Road from Elephant Pass" is one of the best fictions that came out of Sri Lankan writings in English. Although it is a herculean task to turn such a work into cinema, has done justice to the novel converting it to a cannon defining film in Sri Lankan cinema. The film has clearly established the fact that Rutnam as a master of filmmaker and equally gifted script writer. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka). For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Civilian death toll soars in Sri Lanka

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

April 25, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 11

Length: 524 words

Byline: Matt Wade Herald Correspondent in Colombo

Body

THE United Nations has lifted its civilian death toll estimate in recent fighting in Sri Lanka by more than 30 per cent, to 6432, as the country's refugee crisis spills over to its giant neighbour, India.

Some Tamil civilians fleeing fighting between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels have risked travelling by boat to India to avoid being sent to Government-run camps. As the army closes in on the rebels a growing number of refugees are making the treacherous journey across the Palk Strait that separates the island nation from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Indian officials have reported several groups of refugees crowded onto small boats arriving at villages on the Tamil Nadu coast. In one case, 19 refugees, including eight women and two children, reached the town of Arcoturai after sailing for nearly 24 hours in a small fishing boat, The Indian Express reported. Refugees arriving in India say more boats are on the way.

The assessment of a dramatic increase in civilian deaths is contained in a UN document circulated among diplomatic missions in Sri Lanka in recent days and obtained by the Associated Press. The UN has declined to publicly release its casualty figure estimates.

The document says 6432 civilians have died in the fighting since January 20 and a further 13,946 have been wounded.

The new refugee arrivals in Tamil Nadu join about 73,000 Sri Lankan Tamils already living in refugee camps in south India.

In a sign of how much the Sri Lankan conflict is reverberating inside India, New Delhi has demanded an "immediate cessation of all hostilities" in Sri Lanka and sent two of its top officials to Colombo. India's National Security Adviser, M. K. Narayanan, and Foreign Secretary, Shivshankar Menon, are expected to meet the Sri Lankan leadership and directly convey India's demand for a ceasefire.

In his third formal statement on the Sri Lankan crisis in a week, the Indian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Pranab Mukherjee, said that thousands of innocent civilians remain threatened.

"We are very unhappy at the continued killing in Sri Lanka. All killing must stop," he said.

Civilian death toll soars in Sri Lanka

The conflict is having a political impact in India, which is home to 60 million Tamils sympathetic to the plight of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

This week more than 100,000 refugees fled the small area held by the **Tamil Tigers**. Most are being processed by the military and will be accommodated in special camps near Vuvaniya in northern Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan Government has appealed for international aid to help cope with the surge of refugees and aid agencies are worried the camps will be overcrowded and poorly supplied.

The UN says another 50,000 civilians are still trapped in the crossfire in the area controlled by the rebels. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, announced the immediate dispatch of a humanitarian team to the affected zone. "So many lives have been sacrificed. There is no time to lose," he said.

The Tigers have fought since the early 1980s for an independent Tamil homeland but most analysts believe the army will soon overrun the rebels. The UN Security Council has called on the Tigers to surrender.

Graphic

PHOTO: Human cost . . . people take shelter in a northern village after fleeing an area still controlled by the **Tamil Tigers**. Photo: Reuters

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

International: Sri Lankan army shot surrendering rebels, rights group says

The Guardian - Final Edition

June 12, 2009 Friday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 18

Length: 426 words

Byline: Gethin Chamberlain

Body

A devastating report into the final months of Sri Lanka's brutal civil war claims government forces carried out a politically motivated massacre of surrendering Tamil Tiger fighters.

The inquiry by a leading Sri Lankan human rights group accuses elements of the Sri Lankan army of touching "the most depraved depths of humanity". But it also accuses the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) of torture, murder, and the forced conscription of children, and says the rebel group was probably responsible for most of the thousands of civilian casualties in the final days of the war.

The report was issued on Wednesday night by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) group, which has spent 21 years exposing abuses by both sides in the civil war.

Its investigators uncovered evidence that **LTTE** fighters shot civilians who they believed were trying to escape, and that government troops threw grenades into bunkers where they knew civilians were sheltering and used a vehicle to run over injured civilians. There are also allegations that wounded civilians may have been bulldozed into mass graves, along with the dead.

The most controversial claim, however, is that the government authorised a massacre of **LTTE** cadres after persuading them to surrender.

Citing sources within the Sri Lankan armed forces, the report points to a "polit ically ordered massacre of people who wanted to surrender or surrendered".

It adds: "The army had for the most part conducted itself in a disciplined manner in trying to protect civilians. But once the command gives a signal for barbarity to be let loose, the men touch the most depraved depths of humanity."

The report came as Amnesty International called on the Sri Lankan government to overhaul its justice system if it was to secure lasting peace. "If communities that have been torn apart by decades of violence and impunity are to be reconciled, the Sri Lankan government should initiate internal reforms and seek inter national assistance to

International: Sri Lankan army shot surrendering rebels, rights group says

prevent ongoing violations and ensure real accountability for past abuses," said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific director.

In a separate report released yesterday, Amnesty called for an international commission to investigate allegations of abuse and torture, saying that past government inquiries had had no impact.

Amnesty's findings were given extra weight by the Jaffna report, which said "claims of a massacre emanating from the security forces all said the same thing: all LTTE members who were left there were massacred, including women and children".

Load-Date: June 15, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan military should be acclaimed

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

June 12, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1216 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 12 -- Throughout history, during times of war, soldiers have been known to do horrible things. Committing atrocities because of fear, stress, confusion or unbalanced mental states is not an uncommon occurrence; animalistic behaviour has not been unknown. Acts of inhumanity to man are never acceptable under any circumstances, but they are generally viewed by historians as an unfortunate condition, or bi-product if you will, of all military conflicts.

Sri Lankan soldiers fought to protect the sovereignty of our country, and they did their job well. During the entire course of the long LTTE conflict I was always impressed by one characteristic that consistently stood out in regards to the way the war was being managed: the compassion and restraint showed by the Sri Lankan military towards the IDPs and the civilian victims of the war. Let me cite a few examples: Velupillai Prabhakaran I will never forget the images I saw of Sri Lankan soldiers respectfully carrying the body of slain terrorist leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, on a stretcher. One soldier even stood next to the body and waved flies away from its lifeless face. There was no mistreatment of the remains of the man responsible for nearly 100,000 deaths, including 24,000 soldiers; there was no cheering or 'triumphalism' as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon commented the other day. There was only the same basic human decency and respect that the Sri Lankan soldiers would have shown to one of their own fallen comrades. Prabhakaran was a human being, after all. The LTTE had an arsenal of sophisticated state-of-the-art weaponry, which had been purchased with money donated by the world-wide Tamil 'Diaspora'. They used their technological advantage against the army at every opportunity ? even during the final days of the war. The Army, however, only had simple, out-of-date equipment with which to do battle; and in the last days they restrained themselves even in the use of that - often resorting to hand-to-hand combat in order to insure the lives of the trapped human shields. Claims by the Western Powers that the Army was using heavy artillery on the incarcerated civilians is nothing more than propaganda generated by those that shared Prabhakaran's dream. For some, that dream is unfortunately still alive. Before its defeat the LTTE killed children, pregnant women, monks, priests, and their own Tamil leaders - not to mention political leaders of both Sri Lanka and India. They used suicide bombers to destroy the lives of innocent people on buses, trains, public roads and buildings. They even shot their own people in the back when they tried to escape their last prison called the 'No Fire Zone.' Instead of indiscriminately wiping out the remaining cadres in the final days, the soldiers used the utmost care to rescue the unfortunate human shields as quickly as possible. This restraint cost the Army the lives of several thousand soldiers, but they prevented the loss of tens of thousands of Tamils. Many of the IDP's required emergency medical treatment, and the Army made sure they got it speedily so their lives could be saved. Western Powers When nearly 100,000 people escaped on that first amazing day of rescue, the Army was caught by surprise; it was unprepared for the deluge of humanity they saw coming toward them, and for whom they were charged with providing care. Many of the soldiers did without their own food and water that day, and gave their portions to the starving masses as they reached safety. Please remind the Western Powers of this selfless act of charity and

Sri Lankan military should be acclaimed

compassion when they preach about human rights. Why don't we see these stories reported in the Western media? Speaking of food and water, let's not forget the fact that the Government of Sri Lanka actually fed the LTTE cadres during the final phase of Eelam IV, giving them energy to fight us another day. They wanted to make sure the human shields had food, so they fed the enemy at the same time. We later learned, of course, that the LTTE kept most of the humanitarian supplies for itself ? including food, water, and medicine. The President knew this, but insisted that the human shields were all Sri Lankans, and they needed to be cared for as he would care for his own children. When the Americans and their allies invaded Iraq they toppled, smashed, and destroyed statues of Saddam, and the many monuments he had built to celebrate his own perceived greatness. The Sri Lankan military, however, showed respect for the monuments the LTTE had erected in Kilinochchi and elsewhere, and they remain in tact to this day. Even the monuments honoring the leader of the Sea Tiger's son, and others, were left standing by the liberating soldiers. Thousands of children, most of whom had never attended school, were among the human shields rescued by the soldiers. Within a matter of days the Government already had them attending classes for the first time. Universal education is a law of the land in Sri Lanka, and the President wanted to make sure these children were deprived of this right no longer. Prabhakaran used to murder the families of his enemies, and those of people who refused to give money to his cause or follow his rule. Prabhakaran's parents as well as the families of other LTTE leaders? some slain, and some still alive are in the Government's custody, and are being cared for well. After all, they are Sri Lankans too. IDP camps We have just learned that there are approximately 3,000 pregnant women and girls in the IDP camps. They got themselves pregnant in order to avoid being conscripted as soldiers by the LTTE. During the last days of the rescue, some pregnant human shields gave birth in ships, and their babies were brought into the world by female soldiers with hearts of gold. These new mothers are now being given proper medical treatment, and the children they bore will be raised as fully-enfranchised Sri Lankan citizens - not as minorities. The Government of Sri Lanka has a big job on its hands caring for 300,000 Sri Lankans who up until now had no future. The soldiers who rescued them demonstrated compassion, patience, restraint and goodwill. The US and British Armed Forces, as well as others, have demonstrated far less in their callous, degrading and inhumane treatment of prisoners in Iraq and elsewhere, and they seemed to care very little for the thousands of lives they destroyed during their bombings of Iraq, Afghanistan and lately, Pakistan. Human rights I suggest that the Western Powers re-evaluate their assessment of the Sri Lankan Government and its Armed Forces, and instead of condemning it for fabricated human rights offenses, and trying to align the United Nations against it, it should give it accolades for its humanitarian actions and compassionate motivations. It should use the Sri Lankan Army as an example for its own militaries, and teach their soldiers how to behave with benevolence during wartime. During the entire LTTE conflict we witnessed no atrocities or unspeakable acts of inhumanity against the enemy; it is perhaps one of the only wars in history where this never happened. May all our war heroes and their families have the Blessings of the Triple Gem. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: June 12, 2009

Scrutiny calls on Tamil 'bloodbath'

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

May 21, 2009 Thursday

Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 516 words

Byline: MATT WADE, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT, COLOMBO

Body

SRI Lanka is under mounting pressure over alleged war crimes committed by its military forces during the bloody closing stages of the war with Tamil Tiger rebels.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, who will visit Sri Lanka tomorrow, said any serious allegations of war crimes should be properly investigated.

The UN estimates at least 6500 Tamil civilians died between mid-January and early May, describing the closing phase of the conflict as a "bloodbath".

The British Government also wants a probe into what it calls the "truly shocking and appalling" numbers of civilian dead. Amnesty International said "the mounting evidence of serious violations of international law" must be investigated.

Both sides in the conflict repeatedly accused each other of rights violations. The Sri Lankan Government says the **Tamil Tigers** used civilians as human shields and that the military did everything it could to avoid harming non-combatants.

On Tuesday, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who staged a 26-year armed struggle for a separate homeland for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Mr Ban said he was relieved by the end of the military operation but troubled by the loss of so many civilian lives. "It is most important that every effort be undertaken to begin a process of healing and national reconciliation."

He said the legitimate aspirations of Sri Lankan Tamils and other minorities needed to be fully addressed and he called for a "credible" devolution of power in Sri Lanka.

This echoed a demand made by India earlier this week that Sri Lanka take steps towards "the effective devolution of power" so that Tamils can "feel at home and lead lives of dignity of their own free will".

Last night two of India's most senior officials, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and National Security Adviser M.K.Narayanan arrived in Colombo for talks with Mr Rajapaksa.

Scrutiny calls on Tamil 'bloodbath'

It is believed they will personally convey India's concerns on the plight of Sri Lanka's Tamils and press India's demand for political reform. However, in a televised address on Tuesday, Mr Rajapaksa sent a clear message that he would not allow the international community to dictate terms to Colombo.

Sri Lanka expected co-operation in the process of rebuilding the war-ravaged north of the country and not obstruction, he said.

Meanwhile the UN's child welfare agency, UNICEF, called for full access to camps housing displaced Tamils.

"It is reported that access to some camps for internally displaced persons within Sri Lanka has become restricted," UNICEF executive director Ann Veneman said in a statement.

"Full and unimpeded humanitarian access must be ensured so that children and women can receive the assistance they so desperately need."

James Elder, the spokesman for UNICEF in Sri Lanka, said many refugees had recently arrived at camps sick and malnourished.

"The number of people in camps will almost quadruple from 65,000 a few weeks ago, to more than a quarter of a million", he said.

Mr Ban plans to visit refugee camps in the north of the country this week.

Graphic

PHOTO: The body of Tamil Tigers leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is carried past Sri Lankan soldiers near Mullaittivu this week. PICTURE: REUTERS

Load-Date: May 20, 2009

Top Tiger rebels surrender as Sri Lankan troops advance

Agence France Presse -- English

April 22, 2009 Wednesday 12:12 PM GMT

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Length: 643 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, April 22 2009

Body

Two key Tamil Tiger officials surrendered Wednesday as Sri Lankan troops pressed a final offensive against the rebels despite a global outcry over the fate of civilians trapped in the war zone.

Among the senior rebels who turned themselves in was the Tigers' main mouthpiece to the outside world, chief spokesman Velayudam Dayanidi, who is better known as Daya Master.

Another official, who once served as an aide to the late head of the Tigers' political wing, S.P. Thamilselvan, also surrendered.

The defence ministry spokesman said more than 100,000 people had fled the shrinking patch of territory still controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), adding troops were "rescuing" civilians caught up in the war.

"Our operations to rescue civilians are continuing," Keheliya Rambukwella told reporters, describing the Tigers as a spent force with just 12 square kilometres (five square miles) of land left.

"The LTTE has lost all its military capabilities. They are fighting a losing battle," he said, adding the government also "strongly believes" that Tamil Tiger leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran, 54, was still in the area.

The Tigers, who have been fighting for an independent Tamil homeland since 1972, have acknowledged losing ground, and have accused the government of killing 1,000 civilians in recent days.

The military insists it has aided the escape of tens of thousands of men, women and children this week -- and has found 3,000 suspected LTTE members among the refugees.

It says some fleeing non-combatants were fired on by the rebels, who are alleged to have kept villagers as human shields.

The rival claims are hard to verify as independent reporters are not allowed near the conflict zone, but aid agencies have painted a grim picture.

Top Tiger rebels surrender as Sri Lankan troops advance

"The situation is nothing short of catastrophic," said Pierre Kraehenbuehl, operations director for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"What we are seeing is intense fighting in a very small area overcrowded with civilians who have fled there."

He estimated there could be thousands more people still inside rebel-held territory, while facilities for those who had reached relative safety were overstretched.

The United States and other nations have urged both Sri Lankan troops and Tiger rebels not to fire indiscriminately, and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has asked that UN staff be allowed to enter the area for relief operations.

"The casualties are certainly in the thousands and have been fairly consistently high running throughout the last couple of months, as the patch of (LTTE) territory has narrowed," said Gordon Weiss, the UN spokesman in Colombo.

An aid worker from Doctors without Borders (MSF) reported that a hospital in the government-controlled area had received more than 400 new patients in the past two days, many with shrapnel and landmine injuries.

"The buses are still coming and they're actually unloading dead bodies at times as some wounded people died on the way," said Karen Stewart, a medical officer working in Vavuniya.

"It's chaotic," she said. "We have people under every bed, so that's double capacity. You also have a lot of people who are outside in the walkways lying on mats."

The apparent endgame in Sri Lanka has triggered protests around the world, with up to 30,000 Tamil demonstrators clogging the Canadian capital Ottawa to demand a ceasefire.

Similar rallies have been held in London and Paris.

The LTTE were once considered one of the world's most efficient guerrilla outfits, lording over a third of Sri Lanka's territory and running a de facto mini-state.

A Norwegian-brokered truce between the government and the rebels began falling apart in December 2005, and fighting since then has seen the progressive collapse of the rebel army.

Last month the UN's human rights chief said both sides in the conflict may be guilty of war crimes.

aj-mg/bgs/sst

Load-Date: April 23, 2009

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: THE NEW FRONT OF AN OLD WAR

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 8, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 678 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 8 -- Since the defeat of the LTTE on 18th May'2009 at Nandikadal, the issue of the 300,000 ' Internally Displaced persons (IDPs)' has become the new front to fight an old war. People who have not been to the IDP camps in Chettikulam have been very vociferous in condemning the conditions and the very existence of these camps. Objective reports based on contextual realities by those who have visited these camps and talked to a cross section of the IDPs are dismissed as propaganda on behalf of the government. Other reports of those who visited these camps, but have highlighted problems that fit in with the agenda of those fighting in the new front are gobbled up with glee. The reports of those who have not visited these camps and are relying on second hand information and photographs, are accepted as the gospel truth. The desire to condemn and use the situation as an opportunity to continue the old Eelam agenda under a new guise is overwhelmingly obvious.

These camps are temporary and the UN demands that they be temporary. Tamils also want these camps to be temporary. The government has declared they would be temporary. However, the fact that a sincere and concerted effort is being made to remedy problems and improve conditions cannot be denied. It will be travesty of truth to deny these facts. The conditions in zone-4 camp - reported to be the worst- are considerably better than in most Colombo slums!

The circumstances under which these IDPs arrived in Vavuniya - the trauma they had experienced during a brutal war (between the LTTE and its sworn enemy, the Government of Sri Lanka) and the cruelty they were subjected to by the LTTE (The self proclaimed sole representatives and liberators of the Tamils)- are being very conveniently ignored.

The IDPs arrived in Vavuniya in a state no human should ever be. I have seen them as they arrived at one transit camp in Vavuniya. They were able to smile even under extremely desperate circumstances, because they were relieved to be alive! Grand mothers were destined to look after their orphaned grandchildren. Aunts and uncles had to take responsibility for their orphaned nephews and nieces. They had no time to mourn their dead. They had to care for the injured and permanently maimed, while they themselves needed help. They had no hope for the morrow. They were destitute and benumbed.

They were haggard, malnourished and weak. Women were giving birth soon after their arrival in the transit camp. Mothers had no milk in their breast to suckle new born infants. Many did not know where their children and other relatives were. Many had seen their children, partners, parents, relatives and fellow humans drown, succumb to their injuries or fall dead, while escaping. The misery I witnessed and heard cannot be easily described, and have to be seen and heard to be appreciated.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS: THE NEW FRONT OF AN OLD WAR

They had to abandon their homes or see their homes destroyed. They had to abandon their villages, towns and occupations and move as the war front shifted, to be finally trapped at Nandikadal. They had to hide in bunkers to save themselves from the bullets and shells flying over them and falling among them. The bullets and shells were being fired by both the Sri Lankan armed forces and the LTTE. They had to live under flimsy plastic tents or under trees and fend for themselves.

They witnessed their kith and kin being killed and blown up. They saw dead and putrefying bodies around them. They saw fellow Tamils being killed by LTTE cadres. They had to hide their eleven and twelve year olds in camouflaged holes, to save them being conscripted by the LTTE. They had to keep their children for as long as two months in such holes and feed them there. They had to provide for their sanitary and toilet needs in these holes. Some saw their precious children die in these holes, succumbing to the prolonged confinement.

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Load-Date: September 8, 2009

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Months of August and September 1987

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

July 6, 2009 Monday

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Length: 577 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 6 -- The months of August and September 1987 were to become historic in more than one sense both for the people of Sri Lanka as well as for the separatist terrorist groups. During this month New Delhi ushered in the Indo-Sri Lanka accord that was thrust on President J.R.Jayewardene with a 'solution' brokered by the South Lobby foreign office of India ably supported by the Indian High Commissioner in Colombo J.N.Dixit who was called Vice Roy of India in Colombo by Anura Bandaranaike.

The Indian brokered peace plan was for the terrorist groups to hand over their weapons to the Indian peace keeping force who by the beginning of August had numbered 3000 The day the arms were handed over to the IPKF there was jubilation in Jaffna and the people cheered the PLOTE, EPRLF or **LTTE** handing over some weapons. The jubilation was short lived as the terrorist groups did not hand over all their weapons but it was told that they handed over most of the old weapons that were no longer serviceable. The commander of the IPKF Lt.Gen Harkirat Singh was quoted saying that the terrorist groups India and some Sri Lankan people called militants should hand over their arms by August 7. It was of course wishful thinking and also case of poetic justice as it was India that had trained, armed, fed and nurtured the terrorists who were to become intoxicated with the power of arms they possessed. When the Indian brokered solution of an interim administration for the North and East merged as one province by the naive Jayewardene at India's behest as the "Northeastern Province" terrorists became even more jaunty and soon it was proved they would even kill the rival groups of terrorists to assume sole power in this merged region. On September 13 an orgy of killings in Batticaloa and Kalmunai areas shook the very foundation of civilization in that locality. The **LTTE** that still possessed a large stock of firearms and ammunition went on rampage against the rival groups EPRLF and PLOTE. At the very first instance people waking up in the morning in those localities were to witness 40 bullet riddled corpses including two area leaders of the EPRLF who were unarmed at the time. They were taken completely by surprise and by the time the attack on the two rival groups was over the death toll had risen to anything between 72 and 100 and dozens were injured. Thousands of **women** and children took to the streets to protest in both towns but the **LTTE** as usual had disappeared after gunning down their rivals. At this time after the so-called surrender of arms and introducing the Indian brokered peace there was anything but peace especially in the east. Meanwhile the South Indian politicians were urging the terrorists to fall in line with the interim civil administration of the northeast but as the days and weeks went by it became clear that the terrorist outfits especially the **LTTE** was not prepared to make peace but war, It was gradually becoming clear that the IPKF instead of doing peace keeping would have to go on the offensive as the the terrorists brazenly rejected the advice of their former patron India and were going to fight in our with the IPKF. Gradually **LTTE** would wipe out the other terrorist outfits and assume the role of sole representative of ruthless terrorism. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Months of August and September 1987

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Load-Date: July 6, 2009

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Sri Lanka Army writes glorious chapter

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

April 24, 2009 Friday

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Length: 2193 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 24 -- If there was any fateful day in the Sri Lankan military history that would decide the destiny of the Sri Lankan nation, the Sri Lanka Security Forces and all the citizen of this country especially those of the Tamil community, it dawned last Sunday with Sri Lanka Army taking a crucial, important and most challenging decision they ever had taken in its history.

Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka, who steered the Sri Lanka Army to achieve one of the outstanding victories against the most ruthless terror outfit in the world amidst a most challenging scenario many Armies in the world would have feared to face, was quite confident of his decision and was awaiting the ground troops carrying out the biggest hostage rescue mission in the world. International community On the one hand President Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Commander in Chief and Head of State had entrusted the Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka with this task quite confidently at a time the entire international community was keeping an eye on the Sri Lankan situation and exerting huge pressure to stop military operations fearing a blood bath inside the No Fire Zone where more than 120,000 people were taken hostage by the LTTE. So he had taken this challenging task quite confidently as he was aware that his troops are quite capable of achieving this gigantic task as the entire nation was awaiting to see a peaceful end. On his visit to the Security Forces Headquarters in Vanni on April 18, Lt. General Fonseka made final touches to the plan for the biggest hostage rescue operation and briefed the field commander engaged in the last lap of the Vanni liberation operation, about this most sensitive operation. Finally the 58 Division which made its victorious march along the Western coast having commenced operation from Mannar to reach the Eastern coast after passing many victorious milestones under the leadership of Brigadier Shavendra Silva was entrusted with this most decisive task, by the Army Commander. Decisive operation The Commando Brigade under the command of Colonel Ralph Nugera and Special Forces Brigade under the command of Colonel Athula Kodippili were also given the task of deploying enough Commando and Special Forces troops for this most sensitive and decisive operation. By last Sunday, the 58 Division which had completed the mission of reaching the outskirts of the No Fire Zone were ready with their ground work for this decisive operation. The 58 Division troops were operating just 300 meters away from the No Fire Zone and were closely observing what was happening inside the Zone with the information provided by the ground troops and also through the visuals of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle of the Sri Lanka Air Force. Operation plan Brigadier Shavendra Silva after numerous conferences with his battalion Commanders and officers have prepared the ground suitable for this decisive operation and selected 9 Gemunu Watch battalion under the Command Lt. Colonel Lal Chandrasiri, 8 Gajaba Regiment under the command of Lt. Colonel Chandana Wickremasinghe and 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Kithsiri Ekanayaka, for the operation. The Commando Brigade Commander Colonel Ralph Nugera entrusted the task to the 2 Commando Regiment under the Command of Major Shamal Silva whilst Special Forces Brigade Commander Athula Kodippili decided to deploy 1 SF troops for the mission. They all discussed the operations plan together and were prepared to accomplish their decisive mission on Sunday night. The task ahead of them was big.

Sri Lanka Army writes glorious chapter

They had to capture the last LTTE defence line bordering the No Fire Zone after crossing the lagoon that separates the 58 Division defences and the No Fire Zone. The most challenging situation was that they have to achieve the goal without causing a single civilian death when they capture last LTTE defence to get the civilians free, but were not aware what would be the reaction of the civilians once they reach the Tiger earth bund. Challenge Heavy weapon use was strictly prohibited and each and every soldier was aware of the responsibility of achieving this task without shedding blood of the civilians. By Sunday night the operations room of the 58 Division was ready for this task and the entire defence hierarchy was having a sleepless night to observe the result of this mission. It was at 11.30 p.m. all Infantry battalions, Commando and Special Forces battalions were to start the operations. Under the cover of thick darkness they had to reach the Tiger earth bund which was stretching in a 3 km stretch from Putumattalan to Ampalavanpokkanai where tens of thousands of civilians were trapped by the LTTE. Three Groups from the 2 Commando Regiment were given the task to reach the Northern most edge of the earth bund along with the 8 Gajaba Regiment. The Alpha Group under the command of Captain Navaratne, Bravo Group under the command of Major Ratnayake and Delta Group under the command of Captain Samarasinghe from the 2 Commando Regiment were asked to deploy their teams for this task. The 8 Gajaba Regiment Commanding Officer Lt. Colonel Chandana Wickremesinghe tasked his Alpha Company under the command of Captain Susantha Rajapaksa, Bravo Company under the command of Second Lt. Ruwan Kumara who was the acting OC, Charlie Company under the command of Captain Ajith Hettiarachchi and Delta Company under the command of Captain Pubudu Rajanayaka for this mission. Battalion troops One SF troops were tasked to take 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry battalion troops from the Southern part of the earth bund in Ampalavanpokkanai. Lt. Colonel Kithsiri Ekanayake deployed his Companies, Alpha Company under the command of Captain Chinthana, Bravo Company under the command of Captain Lt. Lalantha Kollurage, Charlie Company under the command of Captain Kasun Ranchagoda and Delta Company under the Command of Lt. Harshana Jinasoma for this task. The troops of the 9 Gemunu Watch under the command of Lt. Colonel Lal Chandrasiri was given the task of advancing towards the earth bund from the middle independently. Infantry battalions were commanded by 581 Brigade Commander Lt. Colonel Deshapriya Gunawardena and 582 Brigade Commander Colonel Sanjay Wanigasinghe whilst all the other Infantry battalions attached to the 58 Division were extending their support for the mission by various means. They all were on alert to face any eventuality during this mission. Each battalion opted to cross the lagoon, depending on the water level of the lagoon they have to cross. By 11.30 p.m. they started their advance into the earth bund. They have been given 2 am as the H hour to reach the earth bund. Stiff resistance Once troops were reaching the Tiger earth bund, the LTTE started to fire at the troops from all their guard points located on the earth bund and there were stiff resistance from two guard points. But troops managed to overcome the resistance. The biggest resistance came from the Pedal Gun of the LTTE which directed the fire towards advancing troops from the beach front. Whilst troops were advancing towards the earth bund the operations room of the 58 Division was closely monitoring the situation inside the No Fire Zone through the UAV visuals and observed that the panic stricken civilians were reaching towards the earth bund. The civilians trapped inside the No Fire Zone had got the message that the earth bund has been captured by the troops. Safe zone Civilians were living just 300 meters away from the earth bund and once they got the message they started to flee towards the Security Forces controlled areas leaving all their belongings there in the Safe zone. The operation plan was changed as the troops observed the huge influx of civilians towards the military controlled areas. They started to flood into military controlled areas amidst desperate attempts by the LTTE cadres to prevent civilians from fleeing the area. It was a difficult to figure out the number of civilians arriving towards the military controlled area as they were crossing the lagoon in thousands. The 58 Division hurriedly made arrangements to check each and every civilian arriving towards the military controlled areas. As the LTTE failed to prevent the civilians fleeing the Safe Zone, Pottu Amman who was commanding the Tiger cadres himself deployed suicide cadres to prevent the civilians. That was the first occasion the LTTE used their human bombs against the same Tamil community who were there with the LTTE for three decades as a shadow. There were three suicide blasts around 8 am on Monday morning which killed 17 civilians including children and women. Civilians Tiger cadres also directed artillery fire towards the fleeing civilians killing dozens of civilians, but could not close the flood gates through the captured earth bund. The 7 Sri Lanka Light Infantry Battalion, 6 Gemunu Watch , 10, 14,12 and 20 Gajaba Regiments were deployed to the task of the handling the huge influx of civilians. The true sense of a humanitarian operation was evident as soldiers engaged in this operation came out with their hearts to assist the civilians fleeing from the Safe Zone. As these civilians had to wait hours at the long queue to get clearance soldiers gave their meals to them as they could not hide their emotions once they saw thousands of children who were crying in search of food and water. The injured civilians were immediately evacuated to hospitals

Sri Lanka Army writes glorious chapter

whilst transporting thousands of civilians in buses to Omanthai and Vavuniya. The flow of civilians was quite unexpected and the message was passed to President about the exodus of civilians. That prompted the President to visit the Operations Room of the Air Force Headquarters to watch the huge influx of civilians through the UAV visuals. That must be the happiest moment for the President as the scene relieved a big burden on him as Security Forces were able to achieve this task with a thumping success. Air Force Commander Air Marshal Roshan Gunatilleke explained to the President the situation at the operations room of the Air Force headquarters. Even foreign journalists based in Colombo were invited to observe the UAV visuals as the entire world had to be enlightened about the real situation within the No Fire Zone. The panic stricken civilians opted to flee from the No Fire Zone even by sea and also towards the 55 Division area in the North of Puthumattalan. On the first day over 35,000 civilians were checked and taken into Security Forces controlled areas. The 58 Division waited till Monday night to launch the second phase of the operation and deployed the troops to reach the eastern beach front of the No Fire Zone as the **LTTE** continued to use the beach front for their movements inside the No Fire Zone. Once troops reached the beach front of the No Fire Zone it was divided into two and a section of Tiger cadres were trapped in the Northern part. The 7 Sinha Regiment troops were ordered to move in the northern direction immediately. Whilst 7 SR troops were moving towards the Northern part of the No Fire Zone troops were able to destroy number of Tiger vehicles moving on the beach front and during such attacks **LTTE** Batticaloa leader Ramanan got killed along with his two bodyguards. No Fire Zone However there were many Tiger movements in the Northern part of the No Fire Zone whilst 7 SR troops were advancing towards the North. The 7 Sinha Regiment troops advanced some three kilometres towards the North and linked up with the 55 Division which was operating in the North of Putumattalan. As the 58 Division troops captured the entire Northern part of the No Fire Zone in Puthumattalan the Tiger leaders pushed the remaining civilians to Valaimadam and Vellamullivaikkal. On Wednesday morning the 58 Division deployed the 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry battalion to advance further southwards to rescue the remaining civilians trapped inside the No Fire Zone. By Wednesday evening once again it was decided to deploy Special Forces and Commando troops along with the 11 SLLI and 10 SLLI troops to advance towards the South as **LTTE** had trapped and mines in the southern part of the Safe Zone. With the troops advancing towards the South civilians were directed towards the 53 Division to facilitate the military advance operation. As of Wednesday evening 101,000 civilians had arrived in the Government controlled area since Monday early morning and another 10,000 to 20,000 were yet to be liberated by the troops. Hundreds of Tiger cadres also arrived the Security Forces controlled areas mingling with the civilians and hundreds of **LTTE** identity cards strewn in the No Fire Zone before they arrived in the Government controlled areas. **LTTE** media coordinator Daya Master and interpreter George master were nabbed by the troops as they arrived in Vavuniya mingling with the civilians. Intelligence reports indicate that Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran still hiding inside the southern part of the No Fire Zone waiting until the last moment to flee from the country. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Govt totally rejects Clinton's statement

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 277 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 3 -- Government Defence Affairs Spokesman and Minister Keheliya Rambukwella yesterday vehemently opposed and totally rejected the statement made by US State Secretary Hilary Clinton to the UN Security Council that rape had been used as a tool of the liberation war in Sri Lanka.

US State Secretary Hilary Clinton in a statement made to the Security Council has included Sri Lanka among the other countries which had used rape as a weapon in their liberation wars.

"We vehemently reject and condemn the irresponsible statement made by US State Secretary Hilary Clinton", the Minister said.

Minister Rambukwella stated that it was a totally fabricated story which had no background whatsoever.

He said that it was for the first time an allegation of this nature was leveled against the Sri Lanka and Security Forces in the aftermath of the liberation operation.

For the past three and half years there had been no complaint that the Sri Lankan Security Forces had raped any woman or **LTTE female** cadres.

"Even the countries that opposed Sri Lanka in its fight against the **LTTE** has not made such an allegation against the Sri Lankan Security Forces", the Minister pointed out.

"This is an attempt to tarnish the image of a sovereign nation", the Minister added

The Minister also pointed out that US President Barack Obama has made a completely different story regarding **LTTE** terrorism saying that under no circumstances is the US ready to give legal cover to any terrorist organization. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 3, 2009

WOMAN CONVICTED IN RAJIV GANDHI MURDER FASTS TO DEATH

Malaysia General News

September 21, 2009 Monday

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Length: 312 words

Dateline: CHENNAI Sept 21

Body

Former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) suicide bomb squad member Nalini Murugan, convicted for her involvement in the high-profile assassination of then-prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, began her fast to death at the Vellore Central Prison this morning.

Then a young and pregnant Nalini, a member of the now-defunct **LTTE women's** wing, was sentenced to death in 1991, when she was found guilty of being part of the suicide bomber squad which blew up Gandhi in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu.

Her death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment, and for the last 18 years, she has been languishing in the high-security jail in the **women's** cell.

The 43-year-old's husband is also in the same prison.

"She has begun to fast since this morning, demanding premature release from prison," prison superintendent Jaya Barathi told Bernama today.

In a letter dated Sept 20 addressed to her jailers, Nalini pleaded that 19 of her co-accused in Gandhi's murder were released from prison but she was still behind bars.

"Of the 26 accused, 19 were acquitted but there was no place in the law for my release...how to justify that?"

"I will fast to death as there is no other way for me under this circumstances," she said in the letter that was written in Tamil.

LTTE suicide bomber Thenmozhi Rajaratnam assassinated Gandhi, on May 21, 1991, while he was about to attend a pre-election rally in Sriperumbudur in the southern state.

At least, 20 people were killed in the blast.

Last week, Nalini moved another petition at the Madras High Court for her release.

Under the Indian Criminal Procedure Code, a convict imprisoned for life could seek premature release on the grounds of good conduct, after serving at least 14 years in jail.

Early this month, Nalini managed to obtain her Master's Degree in Computer Application from the Indira Gandhi National Open University, studying from her cell.

WOMAN CONVICTED IN RAJIV GANDHI MURDER FASTS TO DEATH

Load-Date: September 22, 2009

End of Document

SL Army shows its class to the world

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

April 26, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 2350 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 26 -- The Sri Lankan Army has in no uncertain terms proved its capability of crushing the most ruthless terror outfit in the world under any challenging circumstances having rescued most probably the largest number of civilian hostages by a terror outfit in the world, since its most sensitive operation in its history, at the dawn of April 20, 2009.

The valiant troops of the Sri Lanka Army took up that challenge at a time the entire international community was ringing alarm bells fearing a blood bath or humanitarian catastrophe if Sri Lanka tried to rescue the civilians by nearly 150,000 civilians held hostage by the LTTE. Those who cautioned the Sri Lankan Government about a possible blood bath in the No Fire Zone and exerted pressure to extend the humanitarian pause offered for the civilians to flee, could not provide any alternative solution to end this problem by peaceful means. Many suggestions by those international players to end this issue were appalling as they wanted a safe passage for Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and his subordinates to flee from the country at the last moment with the LTTE is facing its final defeat. Did not give in The Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, however, did not succumb to any of the pressures of the international community to go for a Ceasefire as the Security Forces were in their final phase of its humanitarian act to free the last batch of civilians from the LTTE and to push the Tiger leader to final defeat. It was the key factor behind the success story of defeating the world's most ruthless terror outfit by military means as there were many opportunities for the Sri Lankan Security Forces to eliminate LTTE terrorism at the initial stages of the conflict. President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa were open in their arguments with the international community as they managed to expose the true nature of the LTTE in each and every forum they represented Sri Lanka and justify their action to crush the LTTE. Stormy waters It was a sailing in stormy waters as all other governments which had dealt with the North-East issue, had feared to expose ground realities. May be that they had no genuine interest to understand the ground realities themselves and salvage the country out of this messy situation or they lacked courage to argue with the international community who tried to exert pressure on the government based on the facts and figures provided by the media, NGOs and INGOs with vested interests. Not only was the Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa genuinely committed to see an end to this problem, but also had the courage and will power to face any challenging scenarios when dealing with the North East problem. He also understood the capabilities of the Sri Lankan Security Forces to end this problem through military means. That was why Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka got the full blessings of President Rajapaksa and Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa to go ahead with this biggest humanitarian operation to rescue more than 120,000 civilians trapped inside the No Fire Zone. It was after President Mahinda Rajapaksa saw for himself the ground realities in the No Fire Zone during his visit to Kilinochchi along with Service Commanders and the Police Chief that instructions were given to rescue the civilians as soon as possible. By the time President Rajapaksa visited Kilinochchi the 58 Division, under the command of Brigadier Shavendra Silva, had completed their task of capturing the areas outside the No Fire Zone and were operating

SL Army shows its class to the world

some 100 to 200 meters distance from the borders of the No Fire Zone. So, Army Commander Lt. General Sarath Fonseka who visited Security Forces Headquarters in Vanni on April 18, discussed the operational plans at length and chose the 58 Division under the command of Brigadier Shavendra Silva to launch this most sensitive phase of the humanitarian operation to liberate Vanni civilians. The challenge before the 58 Division was so big that any mistake would undermine the entire effort the Sri Lanka Army in the event any civilian death during this military operation as it would bring disastrous consequences to the country as a whole as the entire international community was a keen observer of what was unfolding inside the No Fire Zone. It was decided to take the support of the Commando and Special Forces troops for this operation as it needed the contribution of specially trained troops to handle this situation. Therefore, Commando Brigade Commander Colonel Ralph Nugera assigned 2 Commando Regiment under the command of Major Shamal Silva to deploy his troops for the mission whilst Special Forces Brigade Commander Colonel Athula Kodippili assigning 1 SF troops under the command of Major Mahinda Ranasinghe to provide his troops for this operation. After lengthy discussions 58 Division GOC Brigadier Shavendra Silva, who prepared the operations plan after lengthy discussions with his Brigade Commanders and battalion commander, decided to deploy 9 Gemunu Watch battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Lal Chandrasiri, 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry Battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Kithsiri Ekanayake and the 8 Gajaba Regiment under the command of Lt. Colonel Chandana Wickremesinghe for this most sensitive operation. Those battalions were under the command of 581 Brigade Commander Lt. Colonel Deshapriya Gunawardena. As the operation was to be launched under very sensitive circumstances the firing of artillery, mortar and heavy weapons were strictly prohibited during this operation and all troops were strictly advised not to open fire under any circumstances at the civilians. Therefore, all the troops involved in this operation had to face great life threat as their hands were held back not to retaliate to LTTE fire ignoring the civilian factor. By Sunday the 58 Division, which was observing the situation inside the No Fire Zone through UAV visuals, had observed that the LTTE was not mindful of what was going outside the No Fire Zone as they did not expect such a military move at this point of time. So it gave an additional benefit to the Security Forces who were waiting to launch this sensitive operation. As troops were ready to take up the challenge the 58 Division GOC Brigadier Shavendra Silva decided to launch the operation before mid night on April 19 so that the troops could reach the earth bund which was located some 100 to 200 meters away from their forwards defences in Puthumatalan and Ampalavanpokkanai, at 2 a.m. in the morning. They had to move by night as they had to cross an open terrain and the lagoon to reach this earth bund. The 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry battalion went from the Southern part of the No Fire Zone in Ampalavanpokkanai along with the 1 SF troops, the 8 Gajaba Regiment troops advanced from the Northern part of the earth bund in Puthumattalan along with the 2 GR troops. The 9 Gemunu Watch battalion advanced from the centre independently. All troops reached the earth bund at 2 a.m. but there was huge resistance from two LTTE points delaying the capture of the Tiger earth bund by another 30 minutes. Therefore, Commando troops went around the two LTTE points and captured two points killing Tiger cadres inside. By this time the 58 Division operations room, busy observing the situation inside the No Fire Zone through UAV visuals, had seen panic stricken civilians inside the No Fire Zone by the thousands running amock, and had given instructions for the troops to announce through their public address systems for them to reach military controlled areas as the entire earth bund stretching more than 2.5 km had been completely captured by the troops. With that announcement, tens of thousands of civilians, who were living inside tents some 100 to 200 meters away from the earth bund, began moving into military controlled areas. The exact number of civilians living inside this area was really understood by the troops only when civilians poured into military controlled areas in thousands. Surprise It was a surprise to note more than 30 per cent of these civilians were small children. The 58 Division troops through their intercepted radio transmission had observed the desperate attempts made by the LTTE leader of the Intelligence Wing leader Pottu Amman to prevent those civilians fleeing the no fire zone. They had monitored that Pottu Amman was organizing suicide cadres to explode among the fleeing civilians and keep them inside the No Fire Zone. Three suicide cadres killed themselves among the fleeing civilians whilst firing artillery towards them killing 17 civilians and injuring large numbers. The troops rushed the injured civilians to safe locations and Air Force helicopters airlifted them to the hospitals for urgent treatment. As the huge civilian influx continued across the lagoon, the troops, who had captured the entire earth bund by 2.30 a.m. suspended their operation to facilitate the arrival of civilians. However, they observed the way the LTTE was moving their heavy weapons along the coastal belt of the No Fire Zone and firing towards the fleeing civilians and towards the troops dominating the earth bund. Even the President, who was overjoyed by the success of the military operation, visited the operations room of the Air Force Headquarters and watched the way civilians were reaching the military controlled areas in large numbers. Air Force Commander Air Marshal Roshan Gunatilleke was also there with the

SL Army shows its class to the world

President to observe that situation. Foreign correspondents based in Colombo were also given a chance to observe the correct situation there in Puthumattalan through UAV visuals so that they cannot speculate things about the situation. Even Foreign diplomats were given an opportunity to observe the situation and the way the Security Forces handled this operation successfully without causing any civilian casualty. Mechanisms were put in place to check all the civilians arriving at military controlled areas by deploying additional number of troops for this purpose. But it was a hectic task as the number of civilians arrived in the military controlled areas exceeded 35,000 on the first date alone. Another section of civilians opted to flee the No Fire Zone by boats towards Chalai and Chundikulam whilst another section of civilians travelled towards the 55 Division area North of Puthumattalan. The true spirit of a humanitarian operation was displayed by the troops engaged in this mission as they offered even their meals to the civilians who were waiting in Puthumattalan and Ampalavanpokkanai to reach welfare centres in Vavuniya. It was a difficult task for the troops even to distribute meals and water to these civilians as thousands flocked together in search of water and a meal. Troops attached to adjoining divisions immediately prepared thousands of lunch packets which were distributed among the civilians. Many of the malnourished women who were carrying two to three children in their hands, fainted in the unbearable heat. With throbs rushing to give them first aid. As the downpour of civilians continued, the 58 Division started the second phase of the operation to move inside to the No Fire Zone from the earth bund on Monday night. By Tuesday morning 58 Division troops managed to reach the Eastern coast of the No Fire Zone and commenced their operations towards the Northern section of the No Fire Zone. The 7 Sinha Regiment was deployed to continue their advance to the North and they faced stiff resistance from Tiger cadres trapped there. Few vehicles transporting Tiger leaders were attacked by the troops killing those leaders and destroying the padal gun which obstructed the troops advancement. The last Sea Tiger base in Puthumattalan was also captured by the 7 SR troops during this operation. It was around 7 a.m. on Wednesday morning that the 58 Division captured the entire Northern part of the No Fire Zone after marrying up with the 55 Division operating North of Puthumattalan after advancing some 3 km to the North. With the completion of the capturing the Northern part of the No Fire Zone the 11 Sri Lanka Light Infantry battalion was entrusted to move towards the southern part of the No Fire Zone. The infantry troops faced stiff resistance from the LTTE as they had deployed large number of snipers along that stretch. Later it was decided to deploy Commando and Special Forces troops along with the 10 Sri Lanka Light Infantry Battalion and 12 Gemunu Watch Battalion. As of yesterday they advanced some 2 Km towards the Southern part of the No Fire Zone confining the LTTE to 10 square kilometres stretch in Valayamadam, Vellamullivaikkal. However there was slow progress in their advance to the South as the LTTE further pushed thousands of civilians into the Southern part of the No Fire Zone. However, hundreds of Tiger cadres also arrived in Government controlled areas mingling with the civilians and surrendered to the Security Forces. LTTE media spokesman Daya Master and translator George Master were also among them. Daya Master had revealed that Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is still living inside the No Fire Zone along with Pottu Amman and Soosai. According to Daya Master, Tiger leader is waiting to flee the No Fire Zone at the last minute. The Sri Lanka Navy declared that it had strengthened its presence in the Eastern seas blocking the LTTE from fleeing from the No Fire Zone. However, by yesterday with around 110,000 civilians had already arrived in Government controlled areas, there was no possibility of the Tiger leader Prabhakaran surviving in the No Fire Zone with the 53 Division and the Task Force VIII under the command of Major General Kamal Gunaratne also operating in the Southern part of the No Fire Zone. Therefore, Prabhakaran was left with only a few hours for him to decide the way he should die as he had ruined the entire Tamil community putting them through hell on earth for years. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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Load-Date: April 27, 2009

Law of War

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 29, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 2236 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 29 -- The current violations of the laws or customs of war including murder, ill treatment and deportation of civilians, slave labour in camps and similar offences and atrocities are parts of war crimes, which are recognized under international law as crimes against humanity since World War 1, World War 2 and onwards. The current debate is the proposition and the revelations in the international media, especially among NGOs that the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE have committed war crimes.

The laws of war are guidelines to be followed and effective during wars and armed conflicts, especially for the protection of the sick, wounded, disabled and the affected persons such as civilians and citizens around war zones with no connection to the war or the conflicts. Why do US and some Western democracies treat Sri Lankan Government and equally are questionable as it is a banned terrorist organization considered to be the most ruthless and feared.

War is justifiable in certain circumstances for self-defence under International Law, and for the protection of citizens in a democratic society. There is no dispute that Sri Lanka and India are model democracies in South Asia in which the current President Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Government in power is democratically elected.

According to the US State Department the LTTE is the most ruthless, powerful and organized terrorist organization which is responsible for the killings of hundreds of thousands of civilians, destruction of national wealth and killing of two leaders of South Asia in Sri Lanka and India and wiping out the entire democratic elected leaders of the Tamil people and killing innocent civilians of Tamil and Sinhala ethnicity. It is legal and justifiable to take all appropriate steps to eradicate terror and terrorism, which has made life miserable and unsafe.

It is to the amazement, surprise and to the disbelief of many that President Rajapaksa with the help of the Armed Forces has wiped out LTTE terrorism by disproving the accepted norms and belief by the world that terrorism could not be eradicated militarily. There was no foreign intervention or there was hardly any support for President Rajapaksa and his brother Gotabhaya Rajapaksa - The Defence Secretary to achieve this unexpected and unbelievable goals and successes.

The Laws of War are codified in Hague in modern concepts conventions from 1898 and 1907. The modern concepts were developed under the auspices of 'Nuremburg' trials on the definitions of the London Charter of August 8, 1945. Nuremburg principals show what constitutes a war crime, the procedure and crime under International Law. International Law does not impose a penalty, yet the responsibility runs to the head of state.

There were a series of trials and prosecutions to the members of Nazi Government from 1945 onwards. They were dealt with conspiracy and crime against peace, wars of aggression, crime against humanity, war crime and dealing with civilians.

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These Laws of International Law gradually improved mainly from the World War Two having witnessed unprecedented and grave atrocities that shocked the world. Massacre of opponents and victims of wars were frequent and rampant and the need for Wars of Laws and guidelines were required when there was only total war especially in the West followed by international conflicts.

Geneva Convention and the Treatises of 1949 which is ratified by 194 countries have dealt with these aspects in detail. Article 27 of 4th Geneva Convention is produced as follows -

"Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices and their manners and customs.

They shall at all times humanely treated and be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity. **Women** shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault.

Without prejudice to the provisions relating to their state of health, age and sex, all protected persons shall be treated with the same consideration by the party to the conflict in whose power they are, without any adverse distinction based, particular, on race, religion or political opinion. However, the Parties to the conflict may take such measures of control and security in regard to protected persons as may be necessary as a result of the war."

The wordings here are beautiful and the meanings have deep and broad meanings based on humanity. But, are these adhered to in the wars and conflicts to the last word is a moot issue. We have a classic example in Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam and many other countries and colonies from the time of the World War One of treatment of victims of civilians affected by the war. These are excellent expectations which are difficult to put into practice. There are 4 treatises and additional protocol setting standards in treatment of victims of war and protecting of civilians in and around the war zone. and the basic rights of those who are captured during military conflict.

The world is aware that the **LTTE** was using civilians as a human shield which is a grave crime under International Law and a crime against humanity. The entire world was watching carefully as to how well the civilians were treated in Sri Lanka during the conflict and how carefully they were taken out of the conflict for protection and to safe enclaves, when the **LTTE** last stages resorted to self-destruction. These were civilians who were starving and living in fear amidst the **LTTE** fighters who are generally ruthless and brainwashed by the senior cadres.

It is amazing to note that until the USA report was prepared specifying a certain period of committing war crimes, neither USA nor any other country ever raised the issue at **LTTE** of war crimes although Sri Lanka as well as any other country fell victims of this menace. One of the main reasons is the enormous number of **LTTE** cadres and sympathizers who fled the country using various illegal ways and means of entering the Western green pastures. Today the immigrants of Sri Lanka in countries such as the EU, USA, Canada and Australia are in millions which are economically and politically powerful. The good news is that these people who are otherwise named as Sri Lankan Diaspora is day by day realizing the truth and look forward to considering Sri Lanka, victorious from war as their Motherland, again. For the Diaspora and especially the youngsters cricket and the winning of the war are, unbelievable. Coupled with peace, prosperity and a bright future they are the main attractions for Sri Lankans again despite vigorous anti Sri Lankan propaganda worldwide.

The Geneva Convention applies at times of war and armed conflict to governments who have ratified its terms. Sri Lanka has ratified the convention on February 28, 1959 having signed the instrument on December 8, 1949. Not only Sri Lanka, but 194 countries have ratified the instrument that means it has universal application which includes the USA Forces who are protected by the Patriotism Act where its Armed Forces are well protected by the Act. These are double standards and amount to throwing stones whilst in glass houses. Instead of appreciating the victory over terrorism and the steps taken for settlement of IDPs which costs billions of rupees and the way in which it is done should be investigated into by using proper channels. The Indians are interested and feel for the citizens of the North and East predominantly Tamil and Muslims. The leading Indian politicians who once criticized Sri Lanka having listened to hearsay information after having spent a number of days in Sri Lanka on the invitation of Sri Lankan President have given a full 'Bill of Health' to Sri Lanka and Sri Lankan Forces. After visiting Sri Lanka

Law of War

they submitted a fine report to the leaders of the Indian Parliament of the excellent treatment offered to the trapped civilians as a result of the war for which the LTTE is responsible.

Patriotic Act in the USA gives blanket immunity to war crime offenders of the USA. Wherever they are engaged in war either in US or outside they are patriots who are supposed to do no wrong, thereby even those who are supposed to have committed offences will not be prosecuted and enjoys unlimited immunity. USA ironically points the finger at others, especially those countries which are independently trying to stand with no support of the legitimate arms dealers.

The arms trade is one of the main lucrative and main sources of income of the Western countries, without which they will face unemployment and economic problems. These are matters that concern small, but proud developing countries such as Sri Lanka who is a senior member of the United Nations in which the reigns are in the hands of the main contributor of funds the USA and the five main world powers.

This is the ideal opportunity in Sri Lanka to enact and pass through a Patriotic Act in Sri Lanka as a matter of urgency under 'Urgent Bills' to give protection and immunity for the war heroes and also the political leaders who gave leadership for the Armed Forces, who gave the courage to achieve the success of succeeding the bitter war which was fought for 30 years in a short span of 2 1/2 years. No other party can oppose it as they too are mooting similar immunity for some war heroes.

The USA 72-paged document prepared by hearsay, e-mail, text messages and fat cat NGOs based on the North and the East and worldwide, which accuses the Sri Lankan Government. These NGOs await foreign funds by Euros, Pounds and US Dollars. NGOism is one of the most lucrative industries trained to snatch the share offered to NGOs for development and maintaining the protection of human rights. Genuine sufferers have no access to the sophisticated machinery which is in the hands of a few leaders of the industry and they get only a small percentage only at the last stages of drops of treacle.

The moot issue is whether the Sri Lankan Armed Forces are guilty of war crimes, and also whether it comes within the ambit of the Geneva Convention, International Law and the International Humanitarian mechanism. This is a political and factual issue of treating differently on double standards. The entire length and breadth of the US report is based on unlawfully taken aerial images by NGOs, text messages and e-mails and telephone calls from strong LTTE activists backed by the worldwide LTTE network in association with powerful fat cat NGOs. This is a sorry state of affairs yet a true series of events which the Sri Lanka Government, the opposition and those who love the country should get together and find a solution for, without which every citizen will be in difficulty as the current revelations are connected to the economy, development and the international relations.

The armed forces cannot be found fault or dealt with on the USA report alone, facts must be substantiated based on international standards. The LTTE network is still so strong worldwide that they are able to buy over the individuals and the organizations. It is time that the Sri Lankan professionals and intellectuals will have to be extremely alert, careful and to offer the fullest co-operation to President Mahinda Rajapaksa at this crucial hour.

It is very appropriate on the part of President Rajapaksa to visit Vietnam a member of the Security Council from 1/1/2009. Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey and Uganda will take over the Presidency of the Security Council on a monthly basis. We are pleased and fortunate to have good friends such as USSR and China who are ever prepared to help and protect us at crucial moments in this scenario. The most probable other avenue to pin us down is that some countries with vested interests may again try to use the Human Rights Committee and the Security Council of the UNO to accuse Sri Lanka of war crimes. It is also sad that they treat LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government equally as a result of the infamous ceasefire agreement in which the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE the most ruthless terrorist organization were treated on equal terms.

Therefore legally, morally or internationally there is no avenue either for the UN or any other machinery to accuse or deal with Sri Lanka based on Humanitarian Law, International Law or United Nation Mechanism if the Sri Lankan Government is vigilant and takes appropriate steps to protect and counter.

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It is to the credit of President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is always acting ahead of others to have visited Vietnam and other important countries which are most appropriate in terms of economy, international law and international relations as much as the visit and meeting of the President Gaddafi and leaders of China and many other countries and leaders. His approach on a modern and a unique model of International Relations for Sri Lanka to suit the current International Political Economic trend is excellent.

The writer is a Senior Solicitor, Attorney- At- law, Chairperson SAARC Centre United Kingdom a former Secretary of the Bar Association and a former Chairman Consumer Affairs Authority. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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End of Document

13th Tamil immolates self over Lanka issue

Hindustan Times

April 20, 2009 Monday

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Length: 432 words

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Apr. 20 -- Sivanandan (46), an unemployed textile worker in Chennai, on Saturday became the thirteenth Indian Tamil to immolate himself on the Sri Lankan Tamils issue.

Sivanandan succumbed to the 60 per cent burns he sustained on Friday night when he set himself on fire. Police said he was depressed by repeated telecasts on some channels of scenes of bleeding women and children. The Tamil press widely reported his statement that he was a completely apolitical person, only concerned about "saving the lives of the people in Tamil Eelam." The anguish over the plight of Lankan Tamils runs strongly across political parties in Tamil Nadu. The family of Muthukumar, the first to immolate himself (on January 29), refused to accept the Rs.2.5 lakh compensation offered by the ruling DMK government. Among those who have killed themselves is a Congress functionary from Mayiladuthurai constituency. The "Sri Lankan Tamils Protection Movement" includes the CPI, the MDMK, the PMK, the Viduthalai Chiruthaikal Katchi (VCK), the BJP and the P. Nedumaran-led Tamils Nationalist Movement among others. The AIADMK-led allies' rally in Chennai on April 16 also highlighted the issue, increasing pressure on the DMK and the Congress. The Centre's response could affect how Tamil Nadu and Puducherry vote for their 40 Lok Sabha seats in the General Election on May 13. Much before External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee asked for extension of a ceasefire against the LTTE, Colombo had rejected a similar appeal from Britain. Last Tuesday, foreign minister Rohitha Bogollagama had told British foreign secretary David Miliband that a "longer pause was not possible because the LTTE has so far failed to demonstrate any genuine goodwill on its part in allowing the civilians to have free movement and there was concern that the LTTE would continue to consolidate its fortification of the no-fire zone (NFZ). President Mahinda Rajapaksa had instructed the military to adopt a defensive posture during the Sinhala-Tamil new year celebrations on April 13 and 14. Foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee on Friday made a similar appeal to the Lankan government to extend the pause in hostilities against the LTTE to allow civilians to move to government-controlled areas. "The Government of Sri Lanka must extend this pause in hostilities to prevent further casualties," Mukherjee said. The Lankan foreign ministry refused to immediately comment on Mukherjee's statement. "The reaction will be delayed and careful," a spokesperson said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Hindustan Times.

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Load-Date: April 20, 2009

Lanka begins resettling war displaced

Times of Oman

August 5, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 203 words

Byline: AFP

Body

VAVUNIYA: Sri Lanka on Wednesday allowed 1,100 people displaced during the recently-ended ethnic conflict with the **Tamil Tigers** to return home, in the first phase of an ambitious relocation plan.

At a colorful ceremony, senior presidential advisor Basil Rajapakse presented gift packs of food to the group and pledged to resettle more people in the coming weeks.

Men, **women** and children, clutching their few belongings in canvas bags, boarded buses to return to Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara.

They had been housed in state-run camps in the northern district of Vavuniya, 260 kilometers (160 miles) north of Colombo.

Wednesday's batch of relocations was the first in the government's efforts to resettle by the end of the year at least 80 percent of the 300,000 displaced people.

Tens of thousands of those who fled the war zone are housed in tightly-guarded camps to which international observers and aid agencies have not been given free access.

The United Nations and western governments have urged Sri Lanka to allow people to return to their homes quickly. The government said it would allow resettlement once minefields were cleared and the refugees had been screened to weed out Tamil Tiger fighters.

Load-Date: August 5, 2009

Man cleared of helping Tamil Tigers

The Western Mail
April 7, 2009 Tuesday
First Edition

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Section: Pg. 13

Length: 169 words

Body

A man accused of supporting a Sri Lankan terrorist organisation has been cleared in a case with a Powys link.

Murugesu Jegatheeswaran, 34, from Mitcham, south London, had denied receiving electronic items for use in terrorism.

A jury of five men and seven women at Kingston Crown Court found him not guilty after five days' of deliberation.

The jury is still considering verdicts on three other defendants charged with offences relating to the Tamil Tigers.

Arunachalam Chrishanthakumar, 52, from Hornchurch in Essex, known as the head of the Tamil Tigers in Britain, is accused of conspiring to supply military equipment to the organisation.

He is also charged with amassing a hoard of military equipment, receiving terrorist documents, receiving money and belonging to a prescribed organisation, namely the Tamil Tigers.

Two other men, Jegatheswaran Muraleetharan, 46, and his brother Jeyatheswaran Vythyatharan, 40, from Newtown in Powys, are charged with receiving electronic items for use in terrorism..

Load-Date: April 7, 2009

Sports now free from terror

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 21, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 984 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 21 -- The entire country is celebrating the eradication of terrorism by our valiant Security Forces. Sri Lanka becomes the first country to eradicate terrorism, that too the most ruthless terror outfit in the world - the LTTE, which has claimed thousands of innocent lives.

Irrespective of their race, religion or political affiliations, Sri Lankans, both here and abroad, are jubilant that the LTTE is completely defeated and that all its leaders, including Velupillai Prabhakaran, have been killed. There is no exception in the sports arena. Sportsmen and women of different levels, including national players, Olympians and officials of the National Sports Associations (NSAs) hailed the great achievements of the brave sons of our soil. They pointed out that the eradication of terrorism would enable to make Sri Lanka a better sporting destination. Terrorism not only affected the day-to-day lives of our people and killed thousands and thousands of innocent civilians as a result of the barbaric acts of Prabhakaran, but also disrupted Sri Lanka's sports commitments. First it was way back in 1987 when New Zealand cricket team's tour here had a premature end when the LTTE exploded a bomb in Pettah. That prompted the New Zealand team to return home cutting short their three-Test series after the first match. When Sri Lanka co-hosted the 1996 World Cup, Australia and the West Indies did not come here to honour their first round matches due to security reasons. However, India and Pakistan extended their solidarity by coming here to play an exhibition match and it was a true morale booster. Incidentally, Sri Lanka went on to win the 1996 World Cup under Arjuna Ranatunga. The most recent setback in Sri Lanka sport was the withdrawal of South African cricket team halfway through a tour here due to a terrorist attack in Kollupitiya a couple of years ago. That disrupted a Triangular one day series we were to host along with India. However, neighbouring India came here for a series with Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has lost opportunities of hosting several other sports events due to LTTE terrorism as most visiting teams did not want to take a chance due to terror attacks. Sri Lanka had to face many problems in securing the Rugby Asiad but some of the top teams opted out due to security concerns. Even the Singer-Sri Lankan Rugby Sevens, Sri Lanka's annual international seven-a-side rugby spectacular in Kandy, too has had problems in attracting top teams such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong due to the terror acts of the LTTE. But the organisers have done a commendable job in attracting several foreign teams under difficult conditions. Apart from the great damage the LTTE has done to Sri Lanka for three decades, disrupting our day-to-day life, killing innocent civilians and affecting Sri Lanka's economic progress, the Tigers have also contributed to slow down the country's progress as an international sports venue. Hence, the eradication of terrorism and Prabhakaran's barbaric rule in the North would also be heartening news for Sri Lanka sports arena as well. We could now make an attempt to host many international sports events as possible, giving our sportsmen and women ample opportunities to take on world class players in home conditions. That would also be good news for local sports fans as well. The local sports family, be it sportsmen/women, officials and the sports loving public should be grateful to President Mahinda Rajapaksa and the Government for the courageous steps taken during the hard and strenuous journey to eradicate terrorism. They had to face all odds and heavy international pressure

Sports now free from terror

during the near three-year long 'humanitarian battle' which began from Mavil Aru. The right and far sighted political leadership that combined effectively with the right military leadership to free Sri Lanka from terrorism, a feat even the so-called big countries have failed to achieve. President Rajapaksa's able political leadership was a source of inspiration and motivation for the soldiers in the battle front. Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa gave the right leadership to the defence establishment. Their untiring efforts and the dedication of the Commanders of the Sri Lanka Army, Air Force, Navy and Police, helped the nation to achieve those great wins. On behalf of all sportsmen, sportswomen, officials, coaches and fans, we would like to express our gratitude and thank all those who made immense sacrifices to defeat the **LTTE**. The eradication of terrorism would enable a better future for Sri Lanka sport as well. We could expect more funds to develop sport and with the new trends in the local economy, the private sector too could make a better contribution to promote sport through larger sponsorships. It is high time that the local sports officials draw future plans and attract sponsors so that they could make the best use of the eradication of terrorism. Sri Lanka sports should now have a better future, provided our officials work sincerely with a vision. The sports officials must make every endeavour to get down more international tournaments here so that we could afford more opportunities for local sportsmen and **women**. Initially, we could host the South Asian and Asian level tournaments so that we could set our sights on the 2010 Asian Games in China. The Sports Ministry must immediately talk to the respective NSAs and draw a plan in consultation with the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka. We must make the best use of the latest developments to invest on the future of Sri Lanka sport. Sri Lanka's corporate sector too has a special responsibility to play as true corporate citizens and lend a helping hand to tomorrow's gold medallists. All of us must make a collective effort to secure a better future for Sri Lanka sport. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 21, 2009

End of Document

LTTEs Waterloo

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

April 12, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1238 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 12 -- The tracer lights continuously lit up the skies of the one square kilometre fierce battle front, indicating that the terrorists trapped in encircled land were trying to flee. The open ground and the jungle territory was half illuminated by moon light, and the shadows of terrorists was slightly visible. While the firing was going on continuously, the terrorists, who did not know that they were trapped from both ends, were trying to breakthrough from a short cut to the A-35 road leading to the No Fire Zone (NFZ), barely 2.5 kms from the point of fighting.

Though the troops were tired after days long non-stop fierce fighting in the encircled area, where the LTTE leader was hiding for months but fled just two days before the fighting erupted, the soldiers did not leave breathing space for the run away LTTE cadres. They attacked them from dawn to dusk. Last Saturday, after a continuous three-hour long battle, troops of 6 Gemunu Regiment of the Air Mobile Team under the directions of Lt. Col. Mohan Ratnayake, captured the entire encircled area - Anandapuram. It was the end game for nearly a dozen of top rung LTTE leaders including females. Mislaid, some recruited as child soldiers to the outfit, breathed their last helplessly after they were abandoned by their so-called leader, the 'sun God', who promised a separate land for them for decades. "We found 19 bodies and a large amount of weapons," said Major Nandana Weerasekara explaining the ground situation where they found a body with tubes and a cannula. Theeepan's body The body was LTTE's military leader Theeepan which was discovered after it was despatched to the camp. Theeepan, the ruthless terrorist was responsible for killing many soldiers in the Northern terrain. Initially, the terrorists, consisting of 600 cadres had planned to attack via A-35 to recapture Puthukkudiyiruppu (PDK). But the pre-monitoring foiled this as the troops of the Task Force 8, 58 and 53 Divisions had surrounded the terrorists from all directions, completely sealing off their supply routes in Puthumathalan. The troops successfully repulsed all the attacks and killed over 500 terrorists and encircled the rest into Anandapuram, an area of one square km in between Puthukkudiyiruppu and Ampalavanpokkanai road which was connected to the FDLs in the NFZ. Maj. Weerasekara said that Theeepan's body which was found near a shrub indicated that he was injured a few days ago and the terrorists had been trying to take him out of the fighting. "He was given blood and the two tubes were fixed to drain the blood caused due to internal bleeding. He was wearing an army shirt and a black trouser", he said adding that the name Theeepan was carved in the trouser belt and no tag hung around his neck. According to soldiers whom we interviewed soon after the victory of total liberation of the PDK, the terrorists prepared for a massive attack to capture PDK using almost all the sophisticated weapons, but could not achieve their target due to the correct leadership of the Army Commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka and the correct commands by the GOCs - Task Force 8 Col. G.V. Ravipriya and Brig. Shavendra Silva of the 58 Division and the Acting GOC of the 53 and Director Infantry Brig. Chagie Gallege representing the 53 Division GOC Maj. Gen. Kamal Gunaratne, who was on leave, and later joined the operation. In a sudden move the troops of 58 Division led by Brig. Shavendra Silva and 582 Brigade led by Col. Sanjaya Wanigasinghe and 581 Brigade led by Lt. Col. Deshapriya Gunawardane moved from North to South while troops of 53 Division led by Brig. Gallege made a South to North move from the A-35 and linked up with the 58 Division

LTTEs Waterloo

troops. Special forces, commandos and Task Force 8, with 681 Brigade under Lt. Col. Lalantha Gamage and 682 Brigade under Lt. Col. Subash Welikala were led by Col. G.V. Ravipriya joining the two divisions to capture the last junction of the PDK sealing off the last supply route of the terrorists from the NFZ. The advancing troops of the three fighting elements caused the **LTTE** leader and his deputy Pottu Amman to run for life leaving 150 cadres and the valuables of Prabhakaran. Captured The teams of 5VIR led by Lt. Col. Kalpa Sanjeewa were able to capture a large haul of weapons including a 30mm anti-aircraft machine gun, three 12.7mm anti-aircraft machine guns, seven multipurpose machine guns (MPMG), three light machine guns (LMG), 43 T-56 rifles, six T-81 rifles, two x 40mm grenade launchers, four 5.56mm weapons and three RPG launchers. Maj. Roshan Silva, who was in the Army for over 12 years, said that they commenced the military thrust on March 28 and advanced to the PDK East and then again to the North until they captured the Pachchapulmodei junction. "Over 500 terrorists attacked us over seven times using heavy weapons and on April 4 we continued fighting till 4 a.m. and killed over 400 terrorists. Later we recovered the bodies and weapons and advanced again further and recovered the anti-aircraft gun which was used by the terrorists", he said. According to Maj. Silva, the eight-man teams was able to repulse the terrorist, attempts to capture the junction to open a path towards the Valayamadam area to flee with their casualties. He said that the morale of the soldiers was high though they had encountered several strong attacks. Lance Corporal Ajith Bandara was one such brave soldier who did not abandoned the fight while he was bleeding from the neck and the leg due to mortar attack. "I told him to withdraw but he said, "No Sir. I can fight and I want to finish off these terrorists", Maj. Silva said. Terrorists running Corp. Bandara had fought with the terrorists for over six hours with his wounds. "I saw the terrorists running and some were committing suicide", Corp. Bandara who was examined by the doctor at the MDS of the 53 Division that morning, said. He had joined the group to exhibit the stock of weapons to the 53 Division, GOC Maj. Gen. Kamal Gunaratne said. According to Maj. Silva, the terrorists in the encircled area were just left by their leaders and even not aware that their leaders were killed. " "They did not have communication and were lost in the battle front. Their morale was down without command. They were just running and not fighting with us. We found the bodies of child soldiers aged 13 and 14", he said. This was the battle in the Eelam war history that the **LTTE** leader sacrificed nearly dozens of his top leaders to achieve his day dream - Eelam. It was confirmed that Theepan, **LTTE**'s military wing leader, Keerthi - intelligence leader of Batticaloa, Widhusha - head of the Malathi Regiment, Seelambu - head of the Radha Regiment, Amudha - a senior leader of Kutti Sri Mortar Regiment, Durgha - head of Sodiya **Women** Brigade, Mani wannan (In charge of Artillery), Anuthab (Head of Charles Anthony Brigade), Gopith (former head of Charles Anthony Brigade), Iniyawan - senior team leader of the Radha Regiment, Mankuil - **LTTE** intelligence leader and Anton - intelligence leader of Trincomalee had died in this battle. The saddest part of this end game in PDK was that these leaders died helplessly while they pleading for help from their leadership. The intercepted radio transmissions revealed how Vidusha was pleading of Pottu Amman, who ran with Prabhakaran which was to no avail. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka).

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Suspension GSP+ will have drastic effect: Italian FM

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

November 7, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 350 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 7 -- Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini met a delegation of inter religious of leaders led by Rev. Malcolm Ranjith Archbishop of Colombo regarding the decision of the EU to suspend GSP+ facilities to Sri Lanka.

The Minister explained it would be difficult to reverse the unanimous decision taken at the Foreign Ministers' meeting based on the prevailing human rights situation in Sri Lanka.

He added the decision would have a drastic effect on the country.

The Foreign Minister added the Italian Government had attempted to bring about dialogue between the diverse parties, through the Community of Sant'Egidio, but it proved to be fruitless. He said it was therefore a difficult task for the EU to change the decision taken on the GSP+ issue.

Ven. Bellanwila Wimalaratna Nayaka Thera said ".the inter-religious delegation is an independent, multiethnic and multi-religious organisation, representing the population of Sri Lanka.

The Ven. Thera said more than 250,000 people were displaced due to the actions of the LTTE. The Government had the onerous task of providing food, water and shelter to these IDP5.

Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith said the inter-religious delegation represented the position of the four major religions.

The Archbishop added the suspension of GSP+ concessions would only worsen the human rights crisis, and negatively affect women and children.

He added they had met leaders of the LTTE and insisted on dialogue. However it was dismissed by the LTTE hierarchy, which insisted on a separate state.

The Italian Foreign Minister assured the delegation 'the Italian Government would under no circumstances deprive of the benefits of the GSP+ concession to women and children'.

He requested the Sri Lankas Ambassador to Italy, Hemantha Waranakulasuriya to submit a report with statistics on the negative impact the suspension of the GSP+ scheme will have on the women, especially factory workers. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Suspension GSP+ will have drastic effect: Italian FM

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Troops foil Tiger's final attempt

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 18, 2009 Monday

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Length: 339 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 18 -- Troops operating in the western edge of the Nanthikadal lagoon yesterday foiled what was described by the troops as the final attempt by the **LTTE** to escape towards the jungles in Mullaitivu and Puthukudiyiruppu South killing more than 80 Tiger cadres who tried to breach the Security Forces' defences in the early hours of yesterday.

"More than 80 well trained Tiger cadres were killed and their bodies were recovered collected from the Nanthikadal lagoon as troops foiled the Tigers' attempt to breach the Security Forces defence around 2.30 am yesterday," military officials in Mullaitivu told the Daily News. The attempt to breach the Security Forces' defences came after launching four Tiger boats into the Nanthikadal lagoon from the Safe Zone whilst hundreds of other cadres crossed the lagoon to reach the Western edge of the lagoon. Troops attached to the 19 Sri Lanka Light Infantry Regiment under the command of the 5 Vijayabahu Infantry Regiment took the brunt of the attack killing scores of Tiger cadres and destroying boats heading towards the Security Forces' defences. The 5 VIR battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Kalpa Sanjeewa collected 40 Tiger bodies including that of nine **female** Tiger cadres whilst 19 SLLI battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Ravindra Perera collected more than 30 bodies of Tiger cadres. Acting Brigade Commander of the 592 Brigade Lt. Colonel Senaka Wijesuriya and 682 Brigade Commander Lt. Colonel Subashana Welikala commanded the infantry troops to foil this attempt by the **LTTE**. According to intelligence sources, Tiger leader Soosai and Jeyam had briefed the Tiger cadres before they launched the attack and their aim was to open a path towards the Mullaitivu jungles for their leaders to escape from the safe zone. "If they succeeded in their bid they would have escaped to the jungle patches in Mullaitivu once troops advanced into the last terrain of the **LTTE**," military officials added. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Terrorism will be defeated soon - FM

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

May 16, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 844 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 16 -- Sri Lanka will make a pitch for freeing its land from terror which has ravaged the country for more than 35 years, observed Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama during his visit Saudi Kingdom.

"All bad things have to come to an end and LTTE will soon bite the dust with our final onslaught, Bogollagama said in an exclusive interview with Daily News when he came to the Kingdom on Sunday on an invitation from his counterpart Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal. The current operations to wipe out the LTTE is due to the indefatigable efforts of country's President Mahinda Rajapaksa who is determined to liberate the Tamil people from the clutches of the terrorists who illegally occupied some of the crown lands in the north, the minister indicated. He said President Rajapaksa got a mandate from the people to eradicate terror from the country and it was endorsed from time to time during the local and provincial elections. The Minister said that Sri Lanka has taken centre stage in international affairs because of the current operations in the LTTE held areas.

"This is a war against terror not against the Tamil people. The Government is making every effort to counter terrorism in Sri Lanka as part of the global campaign against this menace." Victims of LTTE terror included former Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi, former Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, several Lankan ministers, innocent men, women and children in the island. The LTTE chased the Muslims living in Jaffna, northern part of the island and those Muslims are still living as Internally Displaced Persons in Puttalam for the past 20 years. Due to rebel atrocities, buses, trains and public transport carrying civilians were bombed killing hundreds of people. "Now we are on the brink of final victory where we could either capture or kill them totally," he said, adding that the delay in completing the battle is due to the fact that the LTTE has been using the civilian population as a human shield to safeguard their interests. "More than 150,000 Tamils have come to the government lands from the rebel held territory and this exodus has demonstrated the confidence they have in the government for their future. Stressing that his government's biggest concern is the safety of the civilians, he said: "If we wish, we can finish this war within hours but we are exercising maximum precaution to avoid collateral damage during our expedition and the civilians who have come back to the government lands will be given a new lease of life and they will be rehabilitated in their own lands to offer them a new lease of life. "However, he added that the terrorists who have been responsible for the loss of innumerable lives and movable and immovable properties have to pay the price for their actions. "Its leader Prabhakaran has to pay the highest price for his deadly criminal activities. He is a wanted criminal and his movement has been proscribed by several countries. Even Indian Premier Dr. Manmohan Singh has defined him as an 'offender'. Our judicial courts have passed sentence on him for his aggression on the Central Bank where the members of the public and bank employees lost their lives in Colombo. "We will arrest him and present him to our courts for necessary justice because we believe in the democratic process." "The Government works according to its national agenda without being subject to any international pressure. We have also educated the world community and made them understand the ground realities in our country. The international community has understood how we have

Terrorism will be defeated soon - FM

addressed this issue," he said. Regarding his visit to the Kingdom, he said he was here to strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. "We value our friendship with the Kingdom since it is home to 550,000 Sri Lankans and is blessed with the Two Holy Cities of Macca and Madinah which hosts millions of Muslim pilgrims from all parts of the world including Sri Lanka. He recalled that recently SFD, has given a grant of SR 40 million and SR 75 million for the construction of the National Neuro - Trauma Center in Colombo and for an Epilepsy Hospital in Colombo respectively. "Saudi Arabia is one of the countries which successfully wiped out terrorism from its land. Sri Lanka will also follow suit in days to come." He also said that the ministerial talks with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, were focused on regional cooperation between the GCC and the SAARC countries. Bogollagama said that the Saudi minister told him that the SAARC Food Security program is an example to be emulated by the GCCA A in the region. He also pointed out that the GCC secretary general Abdul Rahman Al Attiya had agreed to offer its membership support to enable Sri Lanka to gain an observer status in the Organization of Islamic Countries. He added that they discussed the areas where the GCC and the Asian bodies could cooperate with each other. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: May 16, 2009

HRW sees floods as manna from heaven

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

August 22, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1654 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Aug. 22 -- Rain is a blessing not only for the drought stricken farmers in several states of India. It is an even bigger blessing for Human Rights Watch (HRW). Last week we discussed how Amnesty International made its latest attack on Sri Lanka with a call to unlock the gates of the IDP relief villages in Vavuniya, to take the focus away from the arrest of KP, the most wanted figure in the LTTE after Prabhakaran. These organizations that claim to speak up for human rights (which they occasionally do) are ready to use anything and everything to attack Sri Lanka, for the benefit of the Western Governments, lobbyists, and the pro-LTTE expatriate Tamil community in the West, who are still unable to accept the reality of the LTTE's defeat and the new changes that are and will take place in Sri Lanka.

The recent rains in the North have come as manna from heaven to HRW. It has used the rains and so-called flooding of the IDP relief villages in Vavuniya as a convenient peg to hang its latest attack on Sri Lanka and the treatment of the IDPs.

The HRW statement of August 17 uses the recent rains and the inundation of some areas of the relief centres with rain water (not flood water) for its swing at the Sri Lanka Government and its treatment of IDPs. Its opening volley is: "Floods caused by heavy rains unnecessarily threaten more than 260,000 displaced Tamil civilians whom the Sri Lankan Government has unlawfully detained in camps in northern Sri Lanka". It is interesting to ask what it would say if heavy rains threatened such a large number of "lawfully detained".

In its persistent desire to attack Sri Lanka to achieve the goals that the LTTE and its foreign supporters failed through the use of arms, and its constant efforts to show that conditions in Sri Lanka are not good for tourism and foreign investment, HRW and similar groups do not bother to do any homework to know the facts of the situation in the IDP relief villages in Vavuniya.

It is a Goebbelsian approach to anti-Sri Lanka propaganda. Repeat lies about the country, its Government and its people as often and as long as possible to make the world believe it is the truth.

HRW gives its own answer and solution to the problem and also proceeds to make serious allegations against the Government. It states that: "Permitting displaced families to move in with friends and host families would quickly address the deteriorating conditions in the camps with the onset of the rainy season."

"The Government has detained people in these camps and is threatening their health and even their lives by keeping them there during the rainy season floods," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "This is illegal, dangerous, and inhumane."

HRW sees floods as manna from heaven

In violation of international law, the Government has since March 2008 confined virtually all civilians displaced by the fighting between Government Forces and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in detention camps, euphemistically called "welfare centres" by the Government.

Only a few thousand camp residents have been released and allowed to return home or to stay elsewhere" It is good to know what these international laws the Government has violated in keeping those who were freed from the clutches of ruthless terror in relief villages, where have every facility possible under the given circumstances of the surge of civilians to escape terror, the funds and other assistance available and the necessity to properly screen such a large number of people, many of who may have been involved in the LTTE's terrible record of terror, although a large number of them may have done so through coercion.

There is certainly a major problem in having the IDPs in areas from which they do not have the freedom to move out. This is a matter of serious concern which needs addressing, not in the manner that HRW or Amnesty International would want to, but in the manner best suited to the needs and realities in Sri Lanka.

For example, these Human Rights groups keep harping on the fact that persons over 60 continue to be held against their will in these relief centres.

One fact that is not mentioned is that the war with the LTTE went on for 30 years. A person who voluntarily joined the LTTE ranks or was forcibly conscripted into it when 30 years old, could well have been a fighter for 30 years, till reaching the age of 60. Are there to investigations to be carried out into the records of such people? Does the fact that one is 60 years old absolve anyone of the guilt of previous terrorist crimes, in which unarmed men, women, children, the clergy, intellectuals, trade unionists, teachers, elected democrats and so many others were brutally killed?

Has HRW raised one word of protest against the recent deporting of John Demjanjuk from the USA to Germany to stand trial on accusations of assisting in the murder of 29,000 Jews during World War II Going by the 60 years cut off age for the release in Sri Lanka demanded by the cry babies for human rights, does the 89 year age of Demjanjuk not hold as a mitigating factor in his favour? Or is it a case of the ethnic differentiation, where the killing of Jews in concentration camps deserve to be punished at whatever age, while the killing of Sinhalese, Muslims, Tamils, Burghers, and any others to serve the needs of the LTTE does not deserve any such investigation, trial or punishment, as is regularly done to the butchers of Jews under German Nazi rule, more than 60 years ago?

Brad Adams, Asia director at HRW says that keeping this large number of IDPs in the relief villages in "illegal, dangerous, and inhumane." It's nothing but unreal propaganda puff. It must be more specific about the laws being violated.

What are the dangers to the people in the relief villages? And how is it inhumane, considering the conditions they have escaped from, and the arrangements that are actually being made, with help from several foreign governments and genuine relief organizations too, to have them resettled, rehabilitated when necessary and provided with new livelihoods as soon as it is humanly possible. It is interesting that HRW has itself to now refer to around 260,000 people being in the relief villages, which is reduction of 20,000 from the earlier figure of 280,000. Which shows that resettlement is in fact taking place, but not at the pace at which HRW demands it.

In its rush to condemn the Sri Lankan authorities for temporarily keeping the IDPs in the current locations at Vavuniya, where they are alleged to have been affected by floods, one wonders what HRW and its ilk would have said, if by some huge misfortune, there was an earthquake that caused major death and destruction in such a place? There is hardly any doubt that an organization such as HRW would place the entire blame on the Government of Sri Lanka, for the earthquake. That is how these people think and act to serve the goals of the remnants of the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world.

As for the much criticized flooding at Menik Farm relief centre itself, it is useful to quote the Disaster Management and Human Rights Minister, Mahinda Samarasinghe's report to Parliament, Sri Lanka's supreme legislature, on August 19: "As of last evening, I have received reports from the DMC to the effect that there is no stagnation of

HRW sees floods as manna from heaven

rainwater inside the camps. I repeat that there is no large-scale flooding and as I have said earlier, construction work is ongoing to improve the conditions."

And it is not that no action is being taken to prevent possible, actual flooding when the monsoon breaks later.

The Minister has detailed all the actual steps that are being taken by the Government, together with relief working with it, to alleviate any major threat to the IDPs in such an eventuality.

This is what the Minister told Parliament: "I can report that we have made substantial progress in preventing and/or mitigating the risk of flooding in the camps in the Menik Farm area. In accordance with decisions taken to date the Disaster Management Centre's Disaster Risk Management program assisted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will bear the costs of developing contour maps for all IDP zones while the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) will support initiatives related to drainage system development.

The project will be implemented in two stages to minimize the delays that could occur between the planning and implementation periods." It is obvious that HRW had taken no trouble to make inquiries about these matters before issuing its statement about flood waters causing major problems for the IDPs at Vavuniya.

And about the health hazards that HRW has expressed concern, here is the actual situation. "Moving on to the health issue, Mr. Speaker, I am informed by the Healthcare and Nutrition Ministry that the moderate rain that occurred last week has not resulted in any major health or health related issues. None of the health centres were affected and all centres are functioning at normal capacity.

Health personnel are supplied with adequate protective clothing and are actively working. The communicable disease situation is monitored closely and, so far, there is no reported increase of any communicable disease."

We can be sure that HRW will issue more such statements about the situation of the IDPs in the North, which are total departures from the truth, as well as not being issued in the interests of the IDPs, but those who are those LTTE supporters who are living in great comfort and convenience abroad today, and have been living so, when the Tamils that they are crying about were undergoing the worst suffering under the LTTE for decades. HRW will be looking for more manna from heaven to attack Sri Lanka with. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: August 22, 2009

Migrants not likely to come to P.G.

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

October 23, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 4

Length: 519 words

Byline: The Citizen

Body

It is unlikely any of the migrants who arrived off B.C.'s coast in a rusty vessel will be housed in Prince George.

Nine years ago, the old corrections centre in Prince George was tapped to hold 195 men and 32 women who were smuggled with around 600 people on four ships that were discovered off the coast of Vancouver Island.

History appears to have repeated itself, though on a smaller scale. Over the weekend the Canada Border Services Agency and RCMP detained 76 males after law enforcement intercepted a ship scrawled with the name the Ocean Lady off the coast. But there is little chance any of the 76 - who are said to be from Sri Lanka - will be heading to Prince George since the old jail was decommissioned shortly after the last batch of migrants was processed in 2000.

"A portion of the old jail was renovated to provide secure work areas; the remainder was dismantled and razed," said Ian Indridson of the B.C. ministry of public safety, which oversees B.C. Corrections.

Indridson said the current jail - the Prince George Regional Correctional Centre - was opened in 1996 to replace the so-called old jail, which nevertheless remained intact next to the new facility. According to Citizen files, work was done on the old jail at the time due to two film productions using the site. Then in the fall of 1999, Prince George city council heard there was an 'outside chance' the site could be used to house illegal immigrants who had mostly been smuggled from China's Fujian province.

Prince George was eventually chosen for two reasons: Immigration Canada didn't have access to secure facilities and the old jail was one of the only such sites in the province that was empty at the time.

The Chinese migrants stayed at the old jail for around a year - a term punctuated by a hunger strike by some of the female prisoners protesting their year-long incarceration.

According to the Canadian Press, of the 577 migrants who applied for refugee status, 24 of their claims were successful and more than half were deported back to China.

The remainder are assumed to have left Canada, possibly for the United States.

Most paid thousands of dollars for the attempt to enter Canada. Three Chinese men were later convicted for their part in the smuggling operation.

Migrants not likely to come to P.G.

The origin of the current boatload of migrants is not known, though it is being widely reported they are Sri Lankans and specifically Tamils.

They are assumed to be fleeing the recently-ended civil war in Sri Lanka between the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, better known as the ***Tamil Tigers***, and the Singhalese-majority government. The last months of the bitter conflict was marked by accusations of atrocities on both sides, including the shooting and indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population. The Canadian Press put the death toll at up to 100,000 and upwards of 200,000 Tamils remain in an internment camp in Sri Lanka.

Any Tamil refugee claim may be complicated by the fact the ***Tamil Tigers*** are on Canada's list of banned terrorist organizations. The Tigers also have a reputation of extorting money from Tamils now living in Canada.

Graphic

Photo: Canadian Press; Would-be migrants are pictured through the tinted windows of a bus as two buses are escorted by RCMP officers through Surrey to an undisclosed location. Seventy-six males, believed to be from Sri Lanka, were found aboard the ship Ocean Lady that entered Canadian waters off Vancouver Island. ;

Load-Date: October 23, 2009

End of Document

Iniquitous duplicity of western policy

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

September 26, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1790 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 26 -- It was in the midst of the recent Afghan polls, which have become a worry to President Obama in convincing US citizens of the needs for the US to be more involved in Afghanistan, and indeed for the same reasons for Gordon Brown too, that German Officers of the NATO Command there called for US air support to retrieve two fuel tankers hi-jacked by the Taliban. The air attacks that followed killed more than 60 civilians, which led to the US Commander there making the usual apology and promising an inquiry.

President Kharzai once again condemned the attack on civilians with such great loss, but he has been sidelined by the US and its NATO allies that are carrying on policies of trying to bomb the Taliban, and possibly all resistance in Afghanistan, out of existence.

Those who do not learn the lessons of history will be compelled to face the consequences of such folly; but that's not our purpose today.

What this shows is the duplicity of the western military and economic powers, usually dubbed the international community, in dealing with matters that relate to the world outside their own, or those that are not their direct allies or suppliant dependents for aid, especially in arms procurement.

It was on Monday that the US State Department Report on the War in Sri Lanka was presented to the US Congress, without giving Sri Lanka the opportunity of being heard on its contents, although our Ambassador in Washington was informed of its presentation. Listening to the Sri Lankan side on what was also a war against terrorism that had dragged on for 30 years, making it one of the longest wars in modern times, may possibly have tempered whatever recommendations made to Congress.

But that is not the style of a super power that seeks to retain dominance over the world, especially for its military cum economic advantages.

In a strange twist of concern for human rights and all such important areas that the West is interested in, especially vis-a-vis Sri Lanka, what appears to matter is only what is alleged to have happened at the end of the conflict, but not what took place through the entire conflict that went on for so long, posing a threat to regional security too, and also building up dangerous criminal elements in the very capitals of the West, that are crying out loud for action against Sri Lanka, for allegedly what took place in the last 100 days of the war.

A crucial factor in this exercise of accusing Sri Lanka of everything from human rights violations in general to the larger charges of alleged war crimes, or as some who have cared little for humanity when Tamil leaders of all colour and persuasion were killed, ask for charges of crimes against humanity, is the lack of verifiable evidence.

Iniquitous duplicity of western policy

The upshot of this is the making of the absence of verifiability itself about the source of information on the alleged crimes, the cause for its credibility.

We do recall the several journalists who were claiming they had the right to report what the LTTE propagandists put out as the truth because they were not allowed, for reasons of their own safety, and yes, for security concerns of Sri Lanka too, to be at the war front, embedded or not.

They did not bother to state that they cannot vouch of the truth of what they reported at the time, but expected the world to believe it as the truth according to the gospel of any old news agency, network, of flyby night journalist, just because they were not there.

It was the absence from the scene that gave the touch of truth to the story, usually picked up in toto from the propagandists of the terrorist camp; and these were all journalists and news organizations that stood for democracy.

We saw this happen to politicians of the West too, and various big names of human rights and UN organizations, who came here almost in droves to lecture to Sri Lanka on how the final phase of the war had to be fought, always with the demands for a ceasefire, which was what the LTTE was seeking, through its many interlocutors on the west side of the world.

What we can now see is the United States joining the European Union in the duplicity over Sri Lanka's handling of terrorism in the country.

The US which launched its own war on terror after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre, and the EU states, many of them through NATO that were engaged in the regime change mission of the US-British alliance in Iran, and are now at a loss as to how they can overcome the Afghan insurgency, are together in what seems to be a concerted attack on Sri Lanka.

The EU is pressing on with the threat to withdraw the GSP+ tariff concession, which when granted had nothing to do with IDPs, or any such related matters they are now concerned with. The US, while blatantly violating all norms of international law and the various Geneva Conventions on War and the handling of prisoners by US Forces, at Guantanamo and Iraqi and Afghan prisons, is joining in the witch-hunt on Sri Lanka, allegedly because of its concern for human rights.

There is no doubt that the position taken up by many who point fingers at Sri Lanka, for the alleged, unverified and unproven excesses in the final stages of the war with the LTTE, (and certainly not a civil war as is often made out to be) has more than an element of correctness in expecting a government or State to act better than a terrorist organization. Of course, who would challenge that? This is unquestioned.

But at the same time it must be stated that this cannot be taken as a generally applicable rule across the board, without taking the specifics of each case into consideration.

The first is the nature of the enemy, and the next is not only the extensive use of violence by the enemy, but also how it acts in the given circumstances that are the cause of concern.

What the duplicitous West, prodded on by the pro-LTTE forces, whether they are Tamils for Obama, or those who made the infamous Channel 4 video, ignores in its entirety is what the LTTE was doing to the Tamils, who were under its thrall in the last stages of the battle.

It is well recorded how they were held hostage by the LTTE to force a ceasefire on Sri Lanka, and also how they were used as human shields for the protection of the LTTE leaders. Also, it is well known how the LTTE used every civilian it had to carry arms, irrespective of age, sex or physical condition, in its last attempts to compel a ceasefire and live to fight on another day.

These are inalienable facts that those who are now, directly or not, lobbying for the LTTE in the EU, and in the US, seem to wholly ignore.

Iniquitous duplicity of western policy

They are attaching themselves to a level of objectivity that does not stand the same tests in the objective conditions that actually prevailed at the time of their concern in Sri Lanka, nor are they borne out by the reality of how they treat civilians and non-combatant prisoners in their own wars on terror.

The deceit and deception of these 'champions' of human rights have made them blind to the enemy that Sri Lanka was fighting for so long; an enemy that was violating every norm of human rights and the very right to life, freedom of expression and the whole range of democratic rights that these powerful west side forces are using to try and batter Sri Lanka into submission to their will.

Their extensive use of child soldiers, many of whose mental health is possibly damaged for life, the use of women and children as suicide killers, the use of the elderly to carry arms and be in the front line of defence of the LTTE cadres - all this gross inhumanity against its own people, the Tamils and to its perceived enemy the Sinhalese, is forgotten or ignored, in the new interests of power politics; where they wish to see Sri Lanka as another supplicant State of the west that brazenly violates human rights, and not as a free, independent and sovereign nation, to serve the political and economic interests of the West.

In the face of two major emerging economic powers in Asia, India and China, Sri Lanka is seen as a good pawn to have under the control of the West through the threat, nay even the fact of many sanctions, over what these obscurantist forces, see as a means of continued geo-political strength.

The humanity of the West is lost when it concerns the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankan women, and the resultant effect of their families through the possible loss of GSP +. One should also note that many of these are women who have also lost their brothers and other loved ones in the battle to rid this country, and its neighbours of the terrorism of the LTTE.

But such realities are of no concern to those who believe in duplicity as the keystone of foreign policy when dealing with small, less powerful nations of the world.

The report to the US Congress is manifested by its lack of authenticity and verification of facts about what took place in the North of Sri Lanka, when nearly quarter of a million Tamil civilians, dared LTTE bullets and mortars to come to the safety to the Government held areas, where they are still looked after in safety. When considering the US reliance on facts in taking action against countries it believes should be penalized, it is apposite to recall that the US and Britain went to war for regime change in Iraq, based on their intelligence reports of the presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq, under the control of Saddam Hussein.

This has already gone down as one of the worst examples of national leaders being duplicitous towards their own citizens, in the desire to pursue a foreign policy that would not be approved by the people if they had all the facts before them.

It is the same today with the war in Afghanistan, when despite 'Wanted Dead or Alive, posters, his imminent capture in the mountain heights between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and all that schmuck about Osama bin Laden., he still remains the most wanted man in the West and the current nemesis of Barack Obama.

In its latest move against Sri Lanka, both by the EU and the US, we see that the foreign policy of the West, when dealing with small States that are not its willing and supplicant clients, is based largely on iniquitous duplicity.

It is certainly not the Politics of Change that Obama spoke of so eloquently when seeking election.

It is truly strange that the Politics of Change can ignore all the violence of a terrorist organization that has been defeated in battle, but still survives with its fund raising arms, against US law, and only looks at the conduct of a democratically elected government, the oldest democracy in Asia. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Iniquitous duplicity of western policy

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Load-Date: September 26, 2009

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Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka -- Tougher screening for Tamils

The Australian

June 30, 2009 Tuesday

3 - All-round Metro Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 2

Length: 634 words

Byline: Paul Maley, Patrick Walters

Body

FEARS that ex-Tamil fighters may be passing themselves off as refugees will lead to the latest boatload of unauthorised arrivals -- believed to be Tamils -- being subjected to a particularly rigorous security screening process.

The Australian has been told the recent defeat of the **Tamil Tigers** in their stronghold in northeastern Sri Lanka has led to concerns Tamil fighters may seek to flee the island amid fears of government retribution.

Tamils are understood to comprise most of the 194 asylum-seekers who arrived at Christmas Island on Sunday, the largest single group since the current influx began last year.

As the latest arrivals push the Christmas Island detention centre closer to capacity, the federal government yesterday formalised a five-year contract with Serco Australia, the local arm of British company Serco Group, to operate Australia's seven detention centres.

There were also reports last night that Indonesian authorities are bracing for a large influx of asylum-seekers, with up to 10,000 waiting in Malaysia to make the journey through Indonesia to Australia.

The five-year \$370 million contract with Serco will take effect next month, with the transition from existing operator Global Solutions Limited expected to be complete by November.

In announcing the decision to award the contract to Serco, a spokesman for the Immigration Department said there would be a "stronger focus on the rights and wellbeing of people in detention".

GSL was subject to criticism over its treatment of detainees after incidents such as the death of an Aboriginal man while being transported in extreme heat in a prison van without a functioning airconditioning system.

In 2005, GSL was fined almost \$500,000 over mistreatment of immigration detainees.

One senior government source told The Australian authorities were "conscious" of the potential security risk the situation in Sri Lanka presented.

"That's at the forefront of everyone's mind," the source told The Australian.

Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka -- Tougher screening for Tamils

``We're certainly conscious of the issue."

Almost 300 Sri Lankans have so far arrived by boat in the current wave of arrivals, including those on Sunday's boat. While some are understood to be ethnic Tamils, as opposed to Sinhalese, none has so far qualified as a refugee.

There is no specific suggestion that ex-Tamil Tigers were among the 194 intercepted on Sunday.

The government's concerns echo those expressed by the Howard government in the aftermath of the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan that defeated Taliban fighters might employ people-smugglers as a means of making their escape.

Yesterday, an Immigration Department spokesman denied the influx of boats threatened to overwhelm the detention facilities on Christmas Island.

The main centre can hold 800, while the island's total detention capacity is 1200.

The latest boat took the total number of asylum-seekers on the island to about 730, while most of the 194 who arrived on Sunday will join the 356 asylum-seekers already in the detention centre.

``We have contingency arrangements in place," the spokesman said. ``We are quite confident we will be able to manage the latest arrivals."

Sunday's boat, easily the biggest to arrive as part of this latest spate of arrivals, appears to have travelled from Sri Lanka to northern Malaysia.

The boat, the 16th this year, contained mostly men, although some women and children are thought to have been on board.

Yesterday, Immigration Minister Chris Evans blamed the surge in boats on instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, rejecting opposition claims a softening in policy had given the green light to people-smugglers.

``And of course the developments in Sri Lanka mean that there are a lot of people seeking safe haven throughout South East Asia, and many of them hoping to come to Australia," Senator Evans told the ABC.

Load-Date: June 29, 2009

Sri Lanka rejects Red Cross help; Humanitarian crisis in the north where 300,000 Tamils are displaced by battle

The Straits Times (Singapore)

May 21, 2009 Thursday

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Section: ASIA - ASIA

Length: 588 words

Byline: Ravi Velloor, South Asia Bureau Chief

Body

COLOMBO: An immense humanitarian crisis has taken shape in Sri Lanka's north with thousands of innocent Tamils suffering from malnutrition and disease, taking the shine off a military victory against separatist rebels that is being toasted elsewhere on the island.

A day after President Mahinda Rajapakse declared victory over the Tamil Tiger rebels and vowed to protect the island's minority Tamils, the Red Cross was forced to suspend emergency support to about 300,000 people displaced by the battle.

Colombo has blocked the agency's access to government relief camps housing Tamils displaced by war, saying it was capable of handling matters on its own.

'Eradication of terrorism was something everyone wanted,' Mr V. Anandasangaree, president of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), told The Straits Times. 'But the last lap of war has caused too many civilian casualties because things were done in a hurry. The government had sent food for only 20,000 when there were more than 100,000 civilians. What is the harm in getting help from the United Nations?'

The TULF was one of the earliest groups to speak out for Tamil rights before the movement was taken over by more militant groups such as the **Tamil Tigers**. Mr Anandasangaree, a former MP, lives in Colombo under government protection.

'**Women** are being sent back to (refugee) tents two days after giving birth, only to be left baking in the sun along with their newborns,' he said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was the only non-government outfit allowed into the conflict zone, where the Tigers' quarter-century-old rebellion ended on Monday with the deaths of chieftain Velupillai Prabhakaran and his top colleagues.

Images of the body of Prabhakaran, dressed in camouflage fatigues, were repeatedly broadcast on Sri Lankan television. Some sources in Colombo said his wife and second son were also killed, although this could not be independently verified.

An Indian medical camp has been established some distance from the war zone, where eight doctors operate in a field hospital environment on people evacuated there on Red Cross vessels.

Sri Lanka rejects Red Cross help Humanitarian crisis in the north where 300,000 Tamils are displaced by battle

As Sri Lankans toasted the military victory with a national holiday yesterday, pouring into the streets with national flags in hand, information filtering to Colombo suggests a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions.

Food is in short supply, diseases including dysentery and chicken pox have broken out, and people are said to be living amid a sea of human waste.

Analysts said one reason the government has blocked the Red Cross is that troops are still looking to flush out sympathisers of the **Tamil Tigers** or Tiger cadres who may have gone into hiding among the displaced Tamils.

The defence ministry said seven more dead Tiger leaders had been identified yesterday. There is no estimate of the total number of Tamil Tiger soldiers killed.

The government may also be desperately trying to paper over things before the weekend visit of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon to the area.

Mr Ban will probably visit the conflict zone on Saturday. In Geneva on Monday, he said he wanted to see quick progress on humanitarian relief, reconstruction and a political solution between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils: 'All three of these fronts must move forward in parallel and it must begin now.'

The UN Human Rights Council is scheduled to hold a session on Sri Lanka next Monday.

The UN yesterday said an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 people have been killed over the course of the nearly 30-year war.

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Load-Date: May 20, 2009

Tigers in truce call to UK, France

The Australian

May 4, 2009 Monday

2 - All-round First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 606 words

Byline: Correspondents in Colombo

Body

THE cornered ***Tamil Tigers*** in Sri Lanka have appealed to Britain and France to broker a ceasefire to bring the government military offensive to a halt before the rebel forces are wiped out.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam said yesterday in a letter to the British and French foreign ministers, who visited Sri Lanka last week, that they wanted to end decades of fighting.

"We are ready to engage in the process to bring about a ceasefire and enter into negotiations for an enduring resolution to the conflict," said the letter, which was emailed to news organisations.

The rebels offered a truce last Sunday, but the Sri Lankan Government rejected the bid, saying the separatist fighters wanted time to rearm and regroup, and vowed to fight on until they were defeated.

British Foreign Minister David Miliband and his French counterpart, Bernard Kouchner, left Sri Lanka last Thursday after urging the Government to halt the attack on the rebels and allow humanitarian access to the conflict zone.

A special envoy sent by Japan, Sri Lanka's main foreign aid donor, wrapped up a three-day visit on the weekend by calling for civilians caught up in the fighting to be protected.

Yasushi Akashi pressed the remaining Tigers fighters, who are holed up on the island's northeast coast, to allow tens of thousands of trapped civilians out of the conflict area.

And the Japanese envoy asked the Government to improve conditions for more than 100,000 Tamil civilians held in state-run camps.

Mr Akashi said he had heard the reports of renewed artillery attacks in the war zone, but he had no way to confirm them.

The Government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

"I hope the Government is adhering to its positions," Mr Akashi said.

A rebel-linked website claimed Sri Lankan forces shelled a makeshift hospital in the war zone on Saturday, killing 64 civilians, despite a pledge to stop using heavy weapons.

Tigers in truce call to UK, France

A health official in the war zone confirmed the hospital was hit twice by artillery on Saturday, but the military denied launching the attack, and the rebels also have heavy weapons.

The TamilNet website said government fire hit the makeshift hospital at Mullivaaykkaal twice on Saturday morning.

The attacks killed at least 64 patients and bystanders and wounded 87, according to a government health official.

Shells killed a **female** volunteer doctor and wounded three medical workers, the rebel website said.

Although the hospital is in territory still held by the rebel forces, it is run by government doctors.

The Government denied the army had shelled the war zone, saying soldiers were only using small arms in the fight to destroy the rebels.

“There is absolutely no truth in these reports,” Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama said yesterday.

Government officials and rights groups accused the rebels of holding civilians in the war zone as human shields.

The Government airdropped leaflets on the region on Friday, appealing to trapped civilians to flee across the front lines and promising to ensure their safety.

Army troops then pushed further into the rebels' remaining territory, triggering battles in which at least 14 insurgents were killed, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said.

Government forces have ousted the rebels from their northern strongholds in recent months, and appear on the verge of ending the nation's quarter-century-long civil war.

The **Tamil Tigers**, listed as a terrorist organisation by many Western nations, have been fighting since 1983 for a separate Tamil state in the north and east of Sri Lanka, claiming decades of marginalisation by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority.

Load-Date: May 3, 2009

Tougher screening for Tamils - Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka

The Australian

June 30, 2009 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. 2

Length: 598 words

Byline: Paul Maley, Patrick Walters

Body

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As the latest arrivals push the Christmas Island detention centre closer to capacity, the federal government yesterday formalised a five-year contract with Serco Australia, the local arm of British company Serco Group, to operate Australia's seven detention centres.

The five-year, \$370 million contract will take effect next month, with the transition from existing operator Global Solutions Limited expected to be complete by November.

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``We're certainly conscious of the issue."

Tougher screening for Tamils - Fears of an influx of ex-Tigers fleeing Sri Lanka

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"And of course the developments in Sri Lanka means that there's a lot of people seeking safe haven throughout South East Asia, and many of them hoping to come to Australia," Senator Evans told the ABC.

Load-Date: June 29, 2009

Light at the end of the tunnel for Jaffna - Mayoress

Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)

October 4, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 1436 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 4 -- Yogeswari Patkunaraja was elected as the 25th Mayor of Jaffna, at the Local Government polls to the Jaffna Municipal Council (JMC) held recently. The second woman to be elected to this position. she will be sworn in as the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Mayoress for Jaffna before President Mahinda

Rajapaksa on October 12. In an exclusive interview with the Sunday Observer, Yogeswari Patkunaraja outlines her vision for Jaffna.

Q: You have been elected as the Mayoress of Jaffna. How do you see your new position?

A: First of all, I thank my people for electing me as their Mayoress. The Jaffna Municipal Council, which is one of the oldest Local Government bodies in Sri Lanka, had been defunct for more than two decades. Three Mayors, Alfred Duraiyappah, Sarojini Yogeswaran and K. Sivapalan were assassinated by the LTTE. The majestic Jaffna Municipal Council building, which was identical to the Jaffna Public Library, was also blown up by the LTTE in the early eighties.

Now, with the end of LTTE terrorism, the city of Jaffna and the entire Northern Province have to be rebuilt to regain their former pristine glory. Therefore, as the new Mayoress of Jaffna, I see there is a huge task lying ahead of me in rebuilding the city of Jaffna which was known to be a clean and highly cultured city in the good old days.

Q: What are your priorities as the new Mayoress of Jaffna?

A: There are several. Jaffna was a 'ghost city' for the past three decades. The Municipal Council limits of Jaffna had suffered severely due to the war.

A large number of heritage sites including the Dutch Fort, schools, hospitals, business establishments, houses, streets and places of worship were damaged.

There was also a large scale loss of lives. However, with the return of peace, we have to bury the past and energise ourselves to rebuild Jaffna.

Rebuilding the old Jaffna Municipal Council building to its precise old structure along with giving a facelift to the Jaffna market complex and reconstructing the damaged canals and drainage system are our priorities.

During the tenure of late Mayor Alfred Duraiyappa, a plan was worked out to build a modern market complex in Jaffna. Before the completion of the plan, Mayor Duraiyappa was assassinated.

Light at the end of the tunnel for Jaffna - Mayoress

Since then the Jaffna city began to deteriorate in every way. But now, with the return of peace, the new Municipal Council administration under me will continue to go ahead with new plans and ideas to design a new Jaffna retaining its old values.

Q: Could you elaborate on the setbacks faced by the Jaffna Municipal Council during the dark period which haunted the entire peninsula for the past three decades?

A: First of all, there was no proper Municipal Council administration. Several areas which remained under the purview of the Jaffna Municipal Council were in negligence.

A fear psychosis reigned with explosions and clashes within the Jaffna city limits. People were scared to come to the Jaffna city even for medication, banking, schooling or to make purchases.

I would say the entire city was in total mess with huge pot holes on the streets and bunkers built for civilians to take cover in case of any untoward incidents.

There was not even any entertainment such as cinemas or cultural and sports events within the Jaffna city like what was experienced three decades ago.

So I would say that this period was like a hell in every aspect in the life of Jaffna citizens, with deaths and destruction occurring every now and then.

Q: As a prominent Jaffna citizen, how do you see President Mahinda Rajapaksa's victory over LTTE terrorism?

A: The victory over terrorism has made Jaffna see the light at the end of the tunnel! The people of Jaffna, especially the younger generation, was deprived of many good opportunities due to the conflict situation. The entire North was traumatised. But now, with the end of war, new vistas have opened for the Jaffna youth. They could now look forward to pursue their interests in various fields and enhance their lives.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa has highlighted his statesmanship by utilising all his resources in rebuilding the North. We appreciate his efforts in creating a new era in Jaffna.

Q: Being a person who had seen the worst period in Jaffna, do you have any personal experience with regard to the turbulent days?

A: Like the others in Jaffna, my family and myself also suffered a lot during the darker days. We had to find shelter inside the Nallur Kanthaswamy Kovil along with thousands of others when the Indian Peace Keeping Force embarked on their operations against the LTTE. Later in 1994, the whole of Jaffna was forcibly evacuated by the LTTE and we were made to walk several miles towards Chavakachcheri in the Thenmaratchi region. It was horrible. Women, elders and children suffered immensely and some of them died while they were heading towards Chavakachcheri.

Q: The areas in Jaffna where the Muslims were domiciled were also badly affected when the LTTE forcibly evicted them in the early eighties. As the vast Muslim population in Jaffna remains within the Jaffna Municipal limits, how is your new administration going to address their grievances?

A: We are in the process of protecting the immovable assets of Muslims in Jaffna. There was an incident recently when a person was attempting to purchase a property in the Muslim area. We found that his attempt was illegal and our timely action prevented the deal. So we have taken every measure to ensure the safety of the Muslims once they begin to rebuild their lives in Jaffna.

Q: What is your assessment on the post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the North?

A: I would say the entire process is progressing in a remarkable way. Restrictions for fishing in the northern seas have been removed and the farming community has also been encouraged with their products going out of Jaffna for good prices.

Light at the end of the tunnel for Jaffna - Mayoress

Trading activities have been launched and essential food items are now flowing into Jaffna following the opening of the A-9 highway. Earlier the prices of essential commodities had sky-rocketed. Now we could buy whatever items we want at very reasonable prices.

The Minister of Social Services Douglas Devananda also played a very commendable role in ensuring the flow of essential items into Jaffna, not only during the post-war period, but even during the dark days. As far as the reconstruction activities are concerned, under the 'Vadakkinn Vasantham' (Spring in Jaffna) program, plenty of constructive things have been implemented. Ministers and officials representing various ministries are visiting Jaffna on and off and we are very happy to see that they are making genuine efforts in rebuilding the North.

Q: The Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which was once known as proxies for the LTTE, is the main opposition party in the Jaffna Municipal Council. What is your message to them?

A: Well, we cannot live in the past. We have to charter a new path for our future generations. It is time for us to think constructively. We should make a collective effort in reaching our goals. Instead of dabbling in petty politics we should act with a broader outlook to regain the lost glory.

The opposition members of the TNA have pledged their support for the new Jaffna Municipal administration and we look forward to greater cooperation from the TNA.

Q: Since you are going to be the first post-war Mayoress of Jaffna, could you say something about yourself?

A: Well, I am from Nallur, Jaffna. I was an old girl of Vembadi Girls High School, Jaffna and I had the privilege of studying during the period of the late Mabel Thambiah and Ms Arumugam as principals.

The late Jaffna Mayoress Sarojini Yogeswaran, was also my teacher at Vembadi. She was assassinated by the LTTE, the outfit which even gunned down her husband and Jaffna Parliamentarians V. Yogeswaran along with the TULF leader A. Amirthalingam in the early nineties.

My mother Mrs. Annapoorani Somasundaram was a Director of Education and my father 'Kalabooshanam' A. Somasundaram was also a teacher.

My husband Patkunaraja is a planning officer at the Jaffna Municipal Council and he is now my Personal Assistant. I have two sons and they are students of Royal College, Colombo.

I graduated from the University of Peradeniya with an honours degree in geography. I am an M.Phil holder with a Diploma in Education. I was a teacher by profession and taught at my alma mater until my entry into politics. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka). For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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News Analysis: Winning the Tamils -- a challenge awaiting Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

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Dateline: by M. Gunadilaka COLOMBO May 19

Body

Sri Lanka has seen the end of its three decades full of a brutal civil war. But what of the future?

It is time to rebuild the island of 20 million people more particularly the war ravaged northern and eastern regions. Among the foremost needs are to improve living conditions in the Tamil regions and bring separatists and Tamil minority nationalists into the political process.

President Mahinda Rajapakse minced no words when he said "the responsibility that we accept after freeing the Tamil people from the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eealm) is a responsibility that no government in the history of Sri Lanka has accepted."

The country has been bitterly polarized along ethnic lines. The war victory would only become meaningful if ethnic harmony in a democratic environment were created. The challenge therefore is to eliminate the root causes, which contributed to a debilitating war.

"This country is too small to be divided along ethnic lines but certainly large enough for all communities to live in together as one," the newspaper "The Island" noted.

The Tamil nationalists wouldn't buy the argument - they could hardly trust the Sinhala majority led governments to confer any kind of recognition on the Tamil community as was demonstrated throughout since winning independence from Britain in 1948.

Suren Surendiram from a Tamil nationalist group said, "We are ever determined and resilient to continue our struggle for political freedom."

Tudor Weerasinghe, a Sinhalese academic noted, "Addressing the root cause of the problem would be as formidable as militarily defeating terrorism. We need to examine at very close range the root causes for Tamil terrorism."

Dhamma Disanayake, another academic opined "the absence of a democratic vehicle to resolve the ethnic conflict was the reason for its transformation into a violent form. This is a multi-ethnic country. A political process to safeguard the different political and cultural identities is a must."

Professor Tennyson Perera said, "we must strive to build a Sri Lankan nation by fostering cordiality between all races and communities. In a common identity there will no longer be reasons for an ethnic strife."

News Analysis: Winning the Tamils -- a challenge awaiting Sri Lanka

The ultra-nationalist JHU or the Heritage Party is one of Rajapakse's government allies. They are not exactly in tune with plans to offer political autonomy to Tamil regions. They would rather offer benefits to regions under a central rule.

"The so called Tamil intelligentsia are crying for a political solution to the ethnic problem. But it will not be at the dictates of western powers," Champika Ranawaka of JHU who is a government minister said.

Rajapakse's success in his military campaign has been largely attributed to his policy of paying no heed to western dictates. Norway, the facilitator in the failed 2002 accord with the Tiger rebels backed a federal solution to the conflict. Rajapakse's election as the island's president in 2005 was on a platform, which was anti-federal and rabidly anti-devolution.

Rajapakse commenting on the job in hand said, "It cannot be an imported solution. We do not have the time to be experimenting with the solutions suggested by other countries. Therefore, it is necessary that we find a solution that is our very own, of our own nation. It should be a solution acceptable to all sections of the people. We expect cooperation for it from the international community and not obstruction."

Even if the Sri Lankan government were to improve the infrastructure in the war ravaged areas and bring separatists into the political process, it might not be enough if the Tamil diaspora continued to side with the independence doctrine of the late Tiger leader Velupillai Prabakaran. Prabakaran was uncompromising on a federal solution.

"Everytime we discussed a federal solution he seemed very uncomfortable," Erik Solheim, the Norwegian Minister of International Development who was the special peace envoy during the failed peace bid said.

The government's challenge therefore is massive - getting the protagonists to come on board for a home grown solution which meets aspirations of every community.

What are the reasons for Rajapakse's military success? He was backed by a Commander of the Army who understood the LTTE's every move.

General Fonseka braved the LTTE's era of military successes over a rather unprepared Sri Lankan military. He had learnt his lessons and moulded his troops to a forward looking, disciplined outfit which knew no fears.

For the first time in the conflict the troops were moving out seeking the enemy with new found determination in the knowledge that they were being backed by a resolute Commander in General Fonseka and a Commander-in-Chief, the president.

"The president was able to defeat the LTTE's attempt to internationalize the military campaign. He was unbowed by international pressure", Dew Gunasekera, the Minister of Constitutional Affairs noted.

He said many local and international figures made every attempt to bring pressure on the government to stop the campaign citing human rights violations. Ignoring such pressures had gone a long way in achieving the military success.

Prabakaran and his outfit's downfall was its own making, "they fell into their own grave," Douglas Devananda, a fellow Tamil and a government minister noted. "The Island" newspaper was more explicit, "Prabakaran's downfall had to do with his hubris racial hatred and unspeakable cruelty. No liberation movement harms innocent men, women and children."

The defection of the LTTE's eastern commander Karuna who later became a minister in the government meant that the rebel outfit had lost one of its most able battle commanders. His exit had the spiralling effect of drying up of recruitment resources from the Eastern Province in to the LTTE's fighting cadre.

News Analysis: Winning the Tamils -- a challenge awaiting Sri Lanka

"Please tell our king to save all our people," an elderly internally displaced woman said referring to the president soon after arriving in areas of government control from the last hold of the **LTTE**. This echoed depths of despair the Tamil minority was driven under by the decades old conflict.

"The curse of terrorism that was crippling Sri Lanka is no more and it is certainly a matter that everyone should feel happy about, but the wounds will take several months or even years to heal," Veerasingham Anandasangaree, a veteran Tamil politician noted.

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Where will all the young girls go?

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

July 8, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1035 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 8 -- The words of Pete Seeger's famous post World War II track suddenly popped into my mind, as I watched the girls bent double copying a simple recipe for a Malu Ambul thiyal.

These girls with fresh pottu's and thick oiled braids are among 31 former **LTTE female** cadres, who are at the Ambepussa rehabilitation centre. Although the centre is primarily for children, there are no special centres to house adult **females**. According to the Bureau of the Commissioner General for Rehabilitation there are over 2000 **female** surrendees who have to be helped with the re-integration process. There is an urgent need to focus on their special needs.

There are four infants who have been born in the Thellipillai rehabilitation centre in Jaffna. According to Captain Weerasinghe, a rehabilitation officer at Ambepussa there was a 17 year old pregnant girl who had surrendered and was united with her family later. Another 21 year old pregnant surrendee will be re-united with her aunt in Vavuniya soon. "The war had resulted in social deterioration in war affected areas as mothers had attempted to give their daughters in marriage at a very young age as a means of protecting them from forcible recruitment. Another factor we have realized is that, although the **LTTE** cadres had strict vows of celibacy enforced on them, it wasn't practical. Many of the pregnant **female** cadres who have surrendered have husbands within the movement," he said. The cooking instructor at Ambepussa has grand plans of teaching them how to bake cakes and make icing design. He gives recipes to the students in English. His team leader Darshini* translates it into Tamil. Darshini is a qualified English teacher trained at the Jaffna Higher Education Institution. She also did an internship as an English teacher for one year. But due to a cruel twist of fate, she had to join the **LTTE** after they pronounced an ultimatum demanding that at least one child from each family must join the outfit. "My brother and sister were still schooling. I wanted them to continue with the education. I felt that because I had some qualification, I could rebuild my life once this ordeal was over. So I volunteered myself as the eldest in the family," Darshini said. Darshini's family had always stressed on education as the only means of escaping their tumultuous surroundings. However, her Sister missed the opportunity to enter the College of Education in Batticaloa after her ALs as she was not allowed to leave the **LTTE** controlled area. Her brother is a trainee at the nurse training school in Batticaloa. Darshini was still recovering from her mother's sudden death about 10 days ago, when we met her. "My mum suffered a sudden heart attack while at the displacement camp in Vavuniya. The officers here took me to her funeral," she said with a blank look in her eyes. However Darshini's courage has not waned and there were tell-tale signs of hope after this darkest hour in her life. "The Commissioner General for Rehabilitation has promised to find me a job soon as an English teacher. I would like to teach somewhere in the central province, some place like Kandy or Nuwara Eliya," she said, with a thin smile lightening up her face. The Commissioner General Suhadha Gamlath confirmed that he has taken the necessary steps to find a quick placement for Darshini. In her five months at the Ambepussa camp Darshini has also tried to teach a bit of English to her friends at the camp. "I am still afraid to return to my home

Where will all the young girls go?

town. I want to start a new life here," she said. Darshini was trained for several months before being pushed into the front line. She was captured by the army while hiding in a bunker. "It was the first time I went to fight. We were inside a bunker. We were too afraid to look out so we just fired indiscriminately. Soon two of my friends died. The three of us who were left in the bunker decided to stop shooting. We heard voices and heavy boots approaching the bunker. We shouted saying that we wanted to surrender," Darshini said, her face taut, eyes expressionless. Darshini has been used extensively for propaganda both by the government and LTTE. State media picked up her story to highlight the sad plight of an educated girl with much promise. The LTTE, after her capture by the army launched a global smear campaign claiming that she was raped and killed by the government forces. "A person from the Tamil diaspora came to visit the centre with a prominent EPDP politician and he was astonished to see Darshini amongst the inmates. All this time he had believed she was dead as per LTTE propaganda. He was flushed with relief to see her doing so well at the centre," a centre officer quipped in. The girls also learn tailoring. Their tailoring instructor, A.P Perera travels from Colombo daily to instruct his chargers. A retired instructor of the Vocational Training Authority, Mr. Perera has watched them blossom with time. "Many students who leave the centre, find their first employment as tailors. There was one girl, who had lived in India and had come here to see her grandparents. She was abducted while she was here. She followed the tailoring course for three months, while her family arranged for her return to India. I heard that she had started her own tailoring shop there," he said. However, Mr. Perera is concerned about the challenges these girls would face as they go back to society. "Many of them are from poor families. Some of their parents would find it difficult to arrange a dowry for their marriage. Several girls worry about this. All we can do is to help them stand on their own two feet, so that they can slowly build a new life for themselves," he said. The classes conclude with a song. As their melodious voices sing a popular movie song "kaathelenum thevezhuthi kaathiruntha maanavan naan," which translates as "I'm a student awaiting my results having written an examination called love...." It is evident that there is still a glimmer of hope in everyone's heart about rebuilding a better tomorrow. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Building social capital on the foundation of national unity

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

November 13, 2009 Friday

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Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Nov. 13 -- The following are excerpts from this year's D. A. Rajapaksa memorial oration delivered on November 11 at the BMICH by Professor Karunaratne Hangawatte of the Department of Criminal Justice, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, US.

I am honoured humbled by the invitation to deliver this year's Hon. D.A. Rajapaksa oration on this solemn occasion commemorating the life and legacy of the late Mr. Rajapaksa.

This year's commemoration ceremony is very significant, because the year 2009 marks an important milestone of the history of Sri Lanka.

Driven by the legacy of the Late D.A. Rajapaksa, his progeny have led the way to finally free the nation from the grip of violent and vicious terror that has plagued Sri Lanka for several decades.

It is no secret that the national and international community stands in gratitude and salutes Your Excellency for your unwavering leadership, our defense leaders and personnel for their enormous sacrifices, the public servants, and the civic community that bore the burdens of untold suffering.

The late Hon. D.A. Rajapaksa has left an exemplary legacy of public service and a set of values rooted in Sri lankan heritage.

Sri Lankan heritage is rooted in Buddhism, and is influenced by the philosophical doctrines and practices of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam.

It is particularly characterised by the values of compassion, unity and caring for others.

Over the last three decades **LTTE** terrorism has for the most part retarded this legacy, destroyed the economy and economic development, and severely damaged the social capital of Sri Lanka.

Social capital in this context refers to social networks, community and civic order that strengthen and integrate communities while helping individuals achieve their goals. In this sense social networks have value just the same way economic capital has value.

Social capital comprises the networks of association and cohesion between people.

These include social, cultural and community networks, and community relations that foster trust and a sense of belonging.

Building social capital on the foundation of national unity

The norms, values and networks developed within and between different ethnic and religious communities, and the personal relationships that aid in achieving community goals can generally be conceptualized as social capital. Social contacts that occur through social networking have value because they affect both individual and collective productivity.

Social capital is not a single explanation or variable, it is how informal human social relationships are important to the quality of life of the entire community.

Just as economic capital and investment brings economic riches, social capital building by improving social networks and cohesion improves the quality of life for everyone throughout the country.

The next logical step is to eradicate any lingering terrorist environments and violent ideologies from our culture and society.

In this respect it is very heartening to notice that, in the noblest traditions of our heritage, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has no dedicated the legacy and the spirit of public service that he has inherited from his father, the late D.A. Rajapaksa to develop "social capital" through unity. In my view, carrying the military defeat of terrorism to its ultimate goal of establishing peace, unity and prosperity through social capital building will be the best celebration of the life of late D.A. Rajapaksa.

Over the course of centuries Sri Lankan communities have been bound in cohesion and enriched social capital.

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society. Buddha preached (Atthahi Atthano Natho) the importance of compassion towards others while having faith in self and the importance of self examination of truths. The Bhagwad Gita is a set of teachings about the performance of one's duties, without attachment and without any heed to the rewards that might follow. It is a sense of duty towards our fellow beings, both human and non human. The Biblical concept of covenant teaches love, loyalty, responsibility, and compassion among those who join in covenantal relationships. It is a bond of belonging. North African Scholar Ibn Khaldun referred to *asabiyya*, an Arabic term for the spirit of kinship or social bonding in fourteenth century Islam.

Human relationships in Sri Lanka are heavily influenced by these ethos and values that are built into our mixed heritage.

This is our heritage and it runs in our blood. Our heritage has evolved over thousands of years. Colonial influences could not destroy our heritage.

The Sri Lankan people have weathered foreign invasions, incursions and encroachments, and various communities have lived together in harmony for centuries bound by a common social experience.

The strength of Sri Lankan social capital has gradually developed and shined through thousands of years. But it has been weakened and damaged by the **LTTE** in just three decades.

LTTE routinely perpetrated horrific violence against innocent civilians of every communal and religious group of the country.

These violent crimes include large scale massacres, murder, decapitation, drug smuggling, gun running, violent suppression of dissent, bombing civilian targets, child recruitment and kidnapping, and caused mayhem.

The **LTTE** randomly targeted **women** and children, rural communities, places of worship, and mass transportation including trains, buses and bus stations. Babies were separated from breast feeding mothers and hacked to death.

Their purpose was to cause havoc through random fear. This was their morality. But at what cost! Do any events that happened in the past justify this horrific violence against innocent Sri Lankans?

The worst consequence of **LTTE** terrorist campaign has been the destruction of our long-developed social capital.

Building social capital on the foundation of national unity

For example, personal relations between friends, neighbours and families have been affected due to growing mistrust and suspicion among ethnic groups, police and community relations have suffered due to detachment of police from the community, political leaders have become isolated from the public, people have lost access to their representatives and public servants, barriers have prevented free movement and socialization, multi community integration through participation at religious ceremonies such as Vesak and Madu celebrations and visits to multi religious places of worship such as Kataragama, Sri Pada and Anuradhapura have been adversely affected, and people have kept away from large community gatherings due to fear of violence.

Loss of contact among people and between communities have affected individual and collective productivity due to loss of employment, trade and commerce.

Social functions such as Shrama Dana, through which people help each other with various projects by donating labour, have ceased. Many social, cultural and public institutions have crumbled under the weight of terror.

As a result of **LTTE** terror, communities that have the capacity to peacefully co-exist have become sharply divided and grown suspicious of each other. Violence has become a common norm in some urban areas. There is a decline of civic engagement and our social and cultural institutions have begun to crumble. Consequently it has created a political culture that is authoritative and repressive. This transformation seems to have occurred during the last three decades at an accelerated pace. What should a democratically elected Government do under these circumstances?

Successive governments in the last three decades have attempted to tackle the **LTTE** problem.

They have attempted military and non-military options including peace negotiations and the introduction of new constitutional and legal frameworks. None of these were successful for various reasons. Peace negotiations were unsuccessful mainly due to lack of forthright dealing by the **LTTE**.

Finally the present Government led by President Mahinda Rajapaksa has managed to wipe out **LTTE** terror from Sri Lanka by acting with laser like focus and sheer determination on the task at hand.

The feat of the **LTTE** and the eradication of terrorism from our soil are significant historical events because the major cause of the dissipation and destruction of social capital has been removed.

We have reached an important milestone in our history. Presently we are passing through a time when the hard fought victories against vicious terror must be solidified to ensure that terrorism will never again raise its ugly head in Sri Lanka.

We have suffered enough. It is crucial that every peace loving Sri Lankan bond together with the Government in its effort to guarantee everlasting peaceful co-existence under one banner of unity.

Otherwise all of the valuable lives, limbs and property lost and the sorrow of families disjointed and scattered in the last three decades, and the valiant efforts of those who fought will be in vain. May not the lives and tears of innocent mothers, fathers and children go to waste.

It will be the worst crime against humanity ever in the history of Sri Lanka.

Obviously rebuilding social capital by improving trust among and within communities and by improving the sense of personal security takes more hard work than building economic capital.

Nevertheless building social capital will enhance personal and collective productivity, bring lasting peace and prosperity, and improve the quality of life of every Sri Lankan citizen.

Crushing the **LTTE** terrorism militarily was a daunting task that required enormous sacrifices and hard work.

Building social capital on the foundation of national unity

Now, the same leadership can take us to a resurgent Sri Lanka through building social capital on a foundation of national unity. Social capital can be revitalised through economic development and through social and legal frameworks. First I will discuss economic development.

Now that the military war is over it is time to rearrange budgetary priorities and spend the war capital wisely.

In this respect it is laudable to note that the Government in cooperation with the private sector has already embarked on various development projects aimed at erecting infrastructures, building homes, schools and places of worship in the areas of the North and East that have been seriously affected by war.

In addition, various development schemes are under way to bring economic well being to rural areas specially in the dry zone and at the periphery that have been neglected for a long period of time.

Successive Governments of Sri Lanka have neglected development at the periphery. Industrialization has focused around urban centres. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Tamil rebel raised formidable force before demise

The Associated Press

May 18, 2009 Monday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

The portly rebel leader with the bushy mustache and trusty Browning pistol turned a small band of poorly armed guerrillas into one of the world's most sophisticated and ruthless insurgencies.

But Velupillai Prabhakaran also made a series of mistakes that led the *Tamil Tigers* to total defeat and his own death at age 54.

At the height of his power, Prabhakaran ruled as a virtual dictator over a shadow state of hundreds of thousands of people in northern Sri Lanka with its own flag, police and court system.

Sri Lanka said Monday that it had finished off the last of the rebels in the northern war zone and killed Prabhakaran and his top deputies.

To his followers, Velupillai Prabhakaran (pronounced ve-LU-pi-lay PRAH-bah-ka-ran) was the steadfast heart of the battle to establish a breakaway state for Sri Lanka's ethnic Tamil minority. But his many detractors saw him as the brutal ruler of a suicide cult who repeatedly sabotaged peace deals in pursuit of power.

In more than a quarter-century of civil war, his Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam perfected the art of suicide bombings, assassinated top politicians including former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and fought the Sri Lankan government to a near-standstill.

Prabhakaran's guerrilla force was armed with heavy artillery, a rudimentary air wing that once bombed Colombo's international airport, and a squad of suicide attackers. Its navy consisted of small attack craft, suicide boats laden with explosives, crude submarines and huge smuggling ships.

The rebels reportedly earned as much as \$300 million a year from arms and drug smuggling, fake charities and donations from Tamil expatriates.

Prabhakaran rarely appeared in public, preferring to communicate via radio addresses delivered every November.

Tamil Tiger troops, some forcibly recruited when they were children, saw Prabhakaran as their unquestioned leader. He ordered them to abstain from sex, cut personal ties and carry glass vials of cyanide on a necklace so they could kill themselves upon capture.

Tamil rebel raised formidable force before demise

"He is their brain. He is their heart. He is their god. He is their soul. And the whole organization runs around him," said Indian journalist M.R. Narayan Swamy, who wrote a biography of Prabhakaran.

The rebel leader orchestrated surprise attacks on Sri Lankan bases that killed hundreds of troops and retaliated against government offensives with devastating counterattacks.

The group's penchant for suicide attacks including the 1998 bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist shrine led the United States, European Union and India to outlaw it as a terror organization. The group also assassinated several politicians, including former President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Though Prabhakaran was sometimes hailed as a master strategist, he also made a series of misjudgments that eventually led to his downfall.

He alienated his strongest allies in India by sending a **female** suicide bomber to kill Gandhi in 1991, apparent retaliation for sending an Indian peacekeeping mission to Sri Lanka that turned sour.

During negotiations that followed a 2002 cease-fire, he rejected a deal that would have given the rebels broad autonomy over the north and east but not full independence. It was widely seen as the best deal he could ever get.

Prabhakaran said he could not accept anything less than a separate Tamil state, dubbed Eelam. "Thousands of my boys have laid down their lives for Eelam," he told Indian journalist Anita Pratap in 1990. "Their death cannot be in vain."

In 2004, a top commander known as Col. Karuna ran afoul of the Tiger leadership and split from the group with thousands of his fighters.

Prabhakaran called a Tamil boycott of the 2005 presidential election, which helped propel the hard-line Mahinda Rajapaksa to victory. After new peace talks failed, the rebels cut off the water supply to more than 60,000 people in eastern Sri Lanka, provoking an unrelenting government offensive that drove the group out of the east, captured their administrative capital of Kilinochchi, and eventually destroyed them on the battlefield.

Prabhakaran was born on Nov. 26, 1954, and grew up on the Jaffna peninsula, the Tamil minority's cultural heartland, amid the emerging independence movement. Many Tamils felt their culture and rights had been marginalized by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority and wanted a country of their own.

He rose to prominence after killing the mayor of Jaffna in 1975 and used his new militant credentials to create the **Tamil Tigers**. He and many of his fighters received training from sympathizers in neighboring India, according to Swamy.

The militants waged increasingly brazen attacks against the government in the north, capped by a 1983 ambush that killed 13 soldiers and sparked anti-Tamil riots in Colombo that killed an estimated 2,000 people and are generally seen as the start of the war.

Even as he fought the government, Prabhakaran waged war on rival Tamil militant organizations and any Tamils who dared criticize him consolidating power and making his group the unquestioned representative of the minority's political aspirations.

Prabhakaran has largely led the **Tamil Tigers** from fortified underground bunkers rather than the front lines.

"I am like a spider at the center of the web," he told Pratap.

On the run for decades, Prabhakaran reportedly destroyed all photos of himself, leaving police referring to an outdated school picture in their hunt for him.

Tamil rebel raised formidable force before demise

But in later years, photos surfaced of him meeting with commandos before suicide missions or laying wreaths at the funerals of slain fighters. He held a rare news conference in 2002, but went underground again when a cease-fire broke down three years ago.

Prabhakaran met his wife, Madivadani, in 1984 after she and eight other Tamil students protesting the government defied his orders to end a hunger strike. The couple had three children, a daughter, Dwarka, and sons Balachandran and Charles Anthony, who was killed in fighting Monday.

Load-Date: May 19, 2009

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SECRETARY-GENERAL TO DISPATCH UN RELIEF TEAM TO SRI LANKAN COMBAT ZONE

States News Service

April 23, 2009 Thursday

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Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

The following information was released by the United Nations:

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today announced that he will immediately send a United Nations humanitarian team to the shrinking conflict zone in northern Sri Lanka, calling for the mission to be allowed into the area as soon as possible.

The dispatch of the team to the five square-mile pocket of land where fighting rages between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) was agreed upon recently between President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Mr. Ban's envoy, Vijay Nambiar, who also serves as his Chef de Cabinet.

The purpose of the team will be to assess the situation and provide assistance to civilians, the Secretary-General told reporters today in Brussels.

"It is critical that this team be allowed into the zone as soon as possible and I am asking for strong support and speedy assistance of the Sri Lankan Government," he said, adding that, for its part, the **LTTE** must put down its arms and protect civilians.

"So many lives have been sacrificed and there is no time to lose," Mr. Ban stressed, calling on the parties to respect the call issued by the Security Council yesterday, in which it urged both sides to respect international humanitarian law and allow aid agencies access those affected by fighting.

Yesterday's statement, read out by Ambassador Claude Heller of Mexico, which holds the Council's rotating monthly presidency, also strongly condemned the **LTTE**'s use of civilians as human shields and its actions that block people from leaving the conflict area.

The 15-member body also appealed to the Tamil rebels to "renounce terrorism, allow UN-assisted evacuation of remaining civilians in the conflict area and join the political process of dialogue in order to put an end to the conflict."

Today, a senior UN relief official put the number of civilians still trapped in the conflict zone in the Vanni region at 50,000.

Catherine Bragg, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, said that the Government has reported that 103,000 people have left the area and are in transit to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs)

SECRETARY-GENERAL TO DISPATCH UN RELIEF TEAM TO SRI LANKAN COMBAT ZONE

"We hope that those numbers are accurate," but the world body cannot verify them, she said at a press briefing in New York.

The most current information also points to 26,000 new arrivals at transit centres, as well as 95,000 IDPs seeking refuge in camps, up from 80,000 yesterday, Ms. Bragg said at a press briefing in New York.

She also underscored the need for extra camps to accommodate the expected influx of more than 100,000 people, noting that the UN has been pressing the Sri Lankan Government for additional sites and relocation of IDPs now in camps to live with host families.

"It is in the interest of the Government and the IDPs to be able to leave these camps as soon as possible," Ms. Bragg said.

She emphasized that both the Government and LTTE are violating international humanitarian law regarding the protection of civilians, with heavy weapons being used in the so-called no-fire zone and the LTTE preventing people from fleeing the "very horrendous situation" in the region.

Also today, the UN issued an urgent plea for funds to meet the needs of IDPs who have fled the combat zone, with less than one-third of its \$155 million appeal having been met to date.

The exodus of tens of thousands of people has stretched humanitarian and Government capacities, according to a statement issued by the world body's Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka.

Many of those who escaped conflict "were forced from their homes more than a year ago, and it is something of a miracle that they have survived such a terrible ordeal," said Neil Buhne. "We need to ensure that no more lives are lost by meeting their immediate needs, and beyond that to help them get back on their feet, so that they can eventually return to their homes."

He said he recently saw first hand how relief teams are scrambling to provide assistance to "crowds of weary and hungry people."

At camps at the town of Vavuniya which is housing most of the civilians who fled fighting, "I saw infants with dysentery, malnourished children and women, untended wounds, and people dressed in the ragged clothing they've been wearing for months," Mr. Buhne said.

The funds requested by the UN are intended to cover the costs of basic needs, such as food, medicine, water, sanitation, shelter and clothing, and also to help put children back into school to "give them some semblance of normality."

Load-Date: April 23, 2009

Salients of the Media briefing

Colombo Times

April 29, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 583 words

Body

Colombo, April 29 -- When the **LTTE** terrorists were confined to 6 km area, Security Forces stopped using heavy weapons like artillery guns and also stopped air strikes. Since then, the Security Forces had advanced one more km. confining the terrorists to a mere 05 km.

Then the government officially announced the end of use of heavy weapons, The ground realities do not permit the use of heavy weapons. Further the government has concentrated on rescuing the civilians trapped in the 05 km area. In this context, the interpretation that a ceasefire is in operation is clearly malicious propaganda said Hon. Minister Keheliya Rambukwella Defence Spokesman addressing the media briefing held today (29) at MCNS.

185,781 civilians have been rescued and are registered at the welfare camps. The government has made arrangements for the well - being of the IDPs. The rescue mission will continue until all civilians trapped are rescued asserted the Defence Spokesman.

The issue of visa to Foreign Minister of Sweden has been delayed because essential diplomatic protocol has to be observed as in case of foreign diplomats. So it is totally false to interpret it as a refusal of visa, the Defence Spokesman explained.

Military Spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara

Troops recently captured an 700 m long earth bund 10 ft high and 08 ft deep ditch at Rektarvaikkal which had been built to prevent the exodus of civilians.

An explosive - laden truck driven to prevent the advance of troops was destroyed by troops. Seven suicide attempts had taken place last 24 hours, four of them human suicide attacks two suicide motorcycles and one a suicide cab Several soldiers paid the supreme sacrifice a few injured while advancing, facing the suicide attacks. Recently two six - wheel vehicles were found by troops. The Military Spokesman added

According to military intelligence sources terrorists' leadership ordered to set fire to all boats Vellamullavaikkal to prevent civilians fleeing via sea. There are six boats stand by for the use of **LTTE** leaders stored with essential items like food, intelligence sources have revealed. Welfare Camps have been set up in Mannar, Vavunia, Pulmudai and Jaffna 185781 civilians are registered at these Camps, he added.

Yesterday troops who concluded a search operation had found 15 claymore mines, 11 land mines, 19 suicide kits, troops of 51 Division had found a suicide kit. Troops of 58 Division in Rekktaivaikkal the troops of 58 Division inflicted heavy damages to the **LTTE** terrorists in the confrontations in subsequently troops recovered 06 **LTTE** male dead bodies and 03 **female** dead bodies along with the following military items in a search operation

Salients of the Media briefing

conducted in the area. Claymore mines 11, C4 Explosive 01kg, Detonators 75, Arul bombs 53, Hand grenades 46, T56 weapons 15, Sniper weapons 01, Antipersonnel mines 260, Exploding equipments 26, Communication sets 02.

Air Forces Spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara

Air operations continue to support the rescue mission essential items including 350 metric tons of food stuffs were airlifted. The Air Force will continue the humanitarian role in the rescue mission and also continue aerial surveillance.

Police Spokesman SSP Ranjith Gunasekara refuted the accusations against the STF troops posted in Tamil net about a murder of a woman T. Mahadevi. He pointed out consequent to investigations the husband of the victim K. Siveram had been arrested.

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Load-Date: May 18, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lanka 'reviewing' UN official expulsion: official

Agence France Presse -- English

September 7, 2009 Monday 6:48 AM GMT

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Length: 363 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sept 7 2009

Body

Sri Lanka is reviewing a move to expel a senior United Nations official over comments he made during the final weeks of the country's decades long ethnic war, a senior official said Monday.

James Elder, communications chief for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was ordered out of the country for allegedly being biased towards the separatist Tamil Tiger rebels.

"Mr. Elder's case is under review," Sri Lanka's foreign secretary Palitha Kohona told AFP.

The move comes after UNICEF on Sunday sought more details on Elder's visa status after immigration officials instructed him to leave within two weeks.

"They (UNICEF) are talking to us, and we are listening," Kohona said.

An Australian passport holder, Elder had been working for UNICEF in Sri Lanka since July last year and had a residency visa valid until 2010.

He and other aid officials spoke on civilian casualties towards the end of the war, before Sri Lankan troops finally beat the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) in a massive offensive in May to end decades of fighting.

Sri Lanka took a dim view of international criticism over its conduct of the war. The government blocked independent media access into the conflict zone, while the few journalists who had access were taken on military conducted tours.

"Mr. Elder was doing propaganda in support of the **LTTE**," Kohona told AFP on Sunday. "It was unacceptable. UN officials are meant to be impartial and the government took a very dim view of it."

"Towards the end of the conflict, he issued statements that were not researched, not exactly based on fact, but reflective of the **LTTE**."

Before the government's defeat of the Tigers, Elder spoke of the "unimaginable hell" suffered by children caught up in the last stages of the war.

Sri Lanka 'reviewing' UN official expulsion: official

"James Elder has been UNICEF's voice advocating on behalf of those who do not have a voice -- children and the most vulnerable," Sarah Crowe, UNICEF's South Asia regional chief of communications, told AFP from New Delhi on Sunday.

"We strongly feel that he should continue to act as an impartial advocate on behalf of Sri Lanka's most vulnerable women and children."

Elder was not available for comment, when contacted by AFP.

Load-Date: September 8, 2009

End of Document

Tamils' concerns over Sri Lanka fighting

Watford Observer

May 12, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS (NEWS)

Length: 214 words

Byline: John Harrison

Body

Members of a Sri Lankan group in Watford have expressed their increasing concern about the civil war that is ravaging their homeland.

Women from the town's Tamil community say fighting between the government and the rebel **Tamil Tigers** has left them "very concerned" about their native country.

More than 100,000 people are estimated to have died since the conflict escalated earlier this year.

Kamaladevi Shanmugana, from the Herts Tamil Centre, said: "We are very concerned. Everyone is very sad.

"So many people in Sri Lanka are dying every day.

"We all have relatives there and we want some kind of peace in Sri Lanka as quickly as possible so we can have peace in the country. That is all we want."

The Herts Tamil Centre meets at the Holywell Community Centre and has already sent supplies back to Sri Lanka and met Watford MP Claire Ward to discuss the issue at Westminster.

The group was formed in November 2007 and now meets every Friday morning at the Holywell Community Centre, in Tolpits Lane.

The group, which currently has almost 30 members, has a luncheon club, a keep fit club and organises trips away.

The group has received funding from the Hertfordshire Community Foundation.

Mrs Shanmugana says anyone of any race or nationality can join the club by phoning her on 01923 235552.

Load-Date: May 12, 2009

Sri Lanka may pardon surrendering rebel fighters

Associated Press International

May 3, 2009 Sunday 2:23 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 222 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The Sri Lankan government is considering an amnesty for Tamil rebel fighters who surrender, a Cabinet minister said Sunday, as the separatists appeared on the verge of defeat in the island's civil war.

Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said officials from the attorney general's department are studying the legal basis for a possible pardon but a final decision has not been made.

He said any such offer would not be open to rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and others convicted in Sri Lanka for various attacks or wanted in neighboring India for the 1991 assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"The leadership will be dealt with under the laws of the country," he said.

Gandhi was blown up by a suspected Tamil Tiger **female** suicide bomber at an election rally in southern India in apparent revenge for sending a peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka in 1987.

Samarasinghe said the government also plans to offer vocational training for surrendering rebels to help them reintegrate into society.

The Sri Lankan military says the **Tamil Tigers** are now confined to a 2.8-mile (4.5-kilometer) stretch of the island's northeastern coast after a 25-year civil war that killed at least 70,000 people.

The government has rejected rebel and international appeals for a cease-fire to let thousands of civilians leave the war zone.

Load-Date: May 4, 2009

US 'leading crusade against Pakistan'

Cape Times (South Africa)

July 16, 2009 Thursday

e2 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 233 words

Body

Al-Qaeda's second-in-command accused the US of leading a crusade to turn Pakistan from a Muslim nuclear power into a divided nation and urged Pakistanis to join a jihad to resist. Ayman al-Zawahri said in an audio recording on an al-Qaeda-linked website: "It is the individual duty of every Muslim in Pakistan to join the Mujahedeen."

Sri Lanka has cancelled a \$200 million (R1.6 billion) purchase of ammunition from Pakistan and China after the end of its war with the **Tamil Tigers**.

The UN Observer Mission in Georgia says all of its observers have left the country following last month's veto by Russia on extending their mandate.

Thirty-two suspected mobsters held in Italy

Italian police say they have arrested 32 suspected mobsters with close ties to the Casalesi clan.

Palestinians ban Al-Jazeera over 'plot'

The Palestinian Authority banned Al-Jazeera television from operating in its territory yesterday and said it would take legal action over its broadcast of allegations against President Mahmoud Abbas.

Eight Indonesians killed in boat collision

Eight Indonesians - four **women** and four children - were killed while another is missing after two boats sank following a collision in waters off Malaysia's state of Sabah on Borneo island.

Malaysia 'losing battle' to save tigers

Malaysia is losing its battle to save its dwindling population of wild tigers, a conservation coalition warned yesterday.

Load-Date: July 16, 2009

The IDPs: urgent steps needed for their welfare

Right Vision News

September 12, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 2177 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Oct. 12 -- TULF President V. Anandasangaree wrote this letter last week to President Mahinda Rajapaksa. In utter desperation, disappointment and disgust I am writing this to you, having failed to bring relief for several thousand IDPs who are facing innumerable problems, some of which were brought to your notice off and on by me during the past few months. You are aware that many people in the IDP camps were my constituents of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. You and I entered Parliament in July, 1970. You were the youngest of the MPs at that time; I was senior to you in age, experience and in politics. Some of the things that I tell you may not be palatable to you. But please be assured that I will not misguide you and that my advice will be beneficial and also help you to promote unity among all sections of the people in Sri Lanka.

As I often say, I love my country and its people and cannot under any circumstances be classified as unpatriotic or as a traitor. Furthermore I am neither a stooge of anybody nor a flatterer for personal gain. You and the country knew very well that I am one who always call a spade a spade. Being from the majority community, you were fortunate enough to reach the top position as the Head of State and serve the country while I being one from the minority community have been deprived of serving the people even through a local body. However much you may say that there are no minorities in this country, which is yet to be proved beyond any doubt, no member of the minority community will dare to cross your path. You should pave the way (for there to be no minorities in Sri Lanka) and it is the people who should feel so and say so. At the last general election held in April 2004, another armed group virtually took control of conducting the elections against the Government's writ. Under threat and intimidation it secured for another political party, with a majority of its own Members in the list, 22 of the 23 Tamil majority seats in the North and East. Based on the strong reports and recommendations given by various election monitoring missions, if the Government in power at that time had really wanted, it could have easily rectified the position and put democracy back on proper track. I hope you will not dispute my claim that the present Parliament itself is not a properly constituted one and should have been dissolved by you and fresh elections held soon after you became President in November, 2005. You cannot be unaware of the opportunities that came my way to enter Parliament even after my defeat, deliberately and fraudulently caused by the LTTE, at the April 2004 elections. You could not have forgotten what I told you when a couple of years back you offered me the post of Governor of the North and the reluctance I showed when the same offer was repeated on January 22, 2008. Reference to these facts are to impress on you that I am not after positions and only interested in creating a non-communal, peaceful and a united Sri Lanka. Otherwise they have no relevance at all to the issue at hand. In this connection, first of all I wish to draw your attention to your address to the Nation on the occasion of the 59th Independence anniversary, the first after your election as President on November 18, 2005. In the course of your speech reported on "The Island" of February 5, 2006, you had said, "Similarly, we should now take speedy action to establish Democratic Governance in areas liberated from the clutches of the terrorists in the East and the North. It is our duty to protect the lives and property of the Tamil and Muslim people, and bring sanctity to the future world of their children. You certainly know

The IDPs: urgent steps needed for their welfare

as to what views I held and still hold about the average Sinhalese. Anyone going through the print media and recorded electronic media will see hundreds of glowing tributes I had paid to the Sinhala people. I had not failed to do the same in my statements, interviews, discussions with the Diaspora and various diplomats at seminars, workshops etc. The events of July 1983 earned a bad name for the country due to the communal riots that followed the killing of 13 soldiers in Jaffna. But during the past few years, despite several unpleasant and provocative incidents, the country was spared of any communal violence. A number of appeals were made by me to the Sinhala people following every major or minor tragic incident that took place in their midst caused by the LTTE to keep calm and look after the Tamils living among them. You too had done that many times. The Sinhala people responded favorably and showed much tolerance. Your Excellency, with great reluctance I wish to point out that some of your advisers do not seem to be briefing you properly. I do not certainly expect you to have all information at your fingertips. You will recall an incident that took place on Mar. 26, 2009, at Temple Trees. At a briefing for leaders of Tamil political parties, you said that already 55,000 people had crossed into the Government Security Zone and that only about 85,000 were still left in the LTTE held area. It was I who pointed out that there were still over 250,000 people stranded in the LTTE held area. Most of those around you disputed my figures; and later nobody ever explained from where the 300,000 IDPs came. On May 7, a top ranking officer of the Government at a press interview claimed that there were only about 20,000 people still left with the Tigers and found fault with me over how I got the figure as over 100,000. Within a few days, in one night alone over 85,000 IDPs broke the LTTE cordon and crossed over to the Government controlled area. Several thousand followed them later. This is why I say that your advisers should be very cautious in briefing you without causing you any embarrassment. The people of Vanni lived under LTTE terror for more than quarter of a century. They had undergone untold hardships for several years. Till the LTTE came and took over Vanni the people there were living in peace and harmony. The co-operation given to the forces by the Vanni people made things easy for the forces to win the war. I do admit that a large number of soldiers sacrificed their lives to liberate the country and the people of Vanni in particular. But it is also equally true that the people of Vanni too, amidst fear and tension, had made their contribution for the war to win. The way they and their innocent children, who were compulsorily recruited by the LTTE are treated now make them feel that they are punished for the co-operation given by them without which war could not have been won easily. Service personnel of the opposite sex took excellent care of the children, pregnant women and the elders. Many of them had admitted that they are not at all happy with the manner in which these people are treated. There are so many people to boast about themselves and pretend to know about everything happening in the camps. Some talk through their hats. But such people hardly know of the ground situation. The soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Vanni people know how the Vanniars suffered during the last few days of the war. Most of them are not alive to tell us their pathetic stories. Your Excellency, please silence all those pretenders who claim to be patriots or good Buddhists and talk out of turn. You have claimed it as your duty to protect the lives and property of the Tamil and Muslim people. I wrote to you after Kilinochchi was taken over, that the war is now won and it is the Government's duty to see that not a single innocent life is lost in vain even if the war is prolonged for one year. Unfortunately my advice was not heeded to. If my advice had been taken seriously several lives could have been saved along with the limbs of many and billions worth of private and public property could have been saved. They underwent the worst agony in their lifetime, unheard of in any part of the world. It is our duty to look after them well without claiming that they are better off than some who are refugees in other countries. The question often asked by these refugees is why the Government had brought them to places over hundred miles away from their homes when all of them could have been easily accommodated at various places in their own districts. The claim that these areas are heavily land-mined, they say, is not at all acceptable to them. I too fully agree with them having discussed this with people from various parts of these two districts. If the task of resettlement is assigned to the respective Government Agents they, with the help of their Grama Sevakas and some local volunteers would have identified the spots where land-mines remain buried. It is a mystery that the advice and assistance was not sought in this connection from a person who knows these areas well and represented them in Parliament. I hope no one will brand me as an old Tiger in search of prey. The government should settle these people without any delay and without giving any excuse. Your Excellency you have committed to protect their property as well. I hardly met a beggar in the past in any of the two districts of Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu. Most of them had been living comfortably. Some owned big mansions, tractors with trailers, lorries, cars, vans, two wheel tractors and thousands of motorcycles. Some were engaged in extensive cultivation, dairy farming and poultry farming. They left behind everything including their lifetime savings invested on articles of gold. When they get back to their homes hardly anything will remain there. If you allow them to go and take possession of their movables and preserve them in a

The IDPs: urgent steps needed for their welfare

common place, it will be a great boon to all of them. The whole world including you know that almost all young LTTE cadre were conscripted children from poor families much against their wishes and the wishes of their parents. There are parents who have committed suicide protesting against conscription. Many parents had been severely punished for objecting to recruitment. Some parents stopped the children from going to school and kept them in bunkers. All those recruits, when an opportunity came their way, came out and surrendered to the security forces. Many others surrendered in the camps when told that even those who had one day's training from the LTTE should surrender. The hard core LTTE cadres have escaped from the camps and fled the country. It is only the innocent children who have now been branded as LTTE cadre and kept in rehabilitation centers. Most of them are very bright children and should be sent to schools for studies. After the 2nd World War a lot of Malaysian born students who returned to Sri Lanka were accommodated in schools, the age requirements dispensed with for the five year period during which they did not attend school. Such age concessions should be given to students who lived in LTTE controlled areas and lost their schooling. Except those who do not want to study, all others should be released to go to school. There are several hundred students who had been selected for various course in the Universities, Technical Colleges etc. They should be released to attend the respective institutions to which they had been selected. There cannot be any more hardcore Tigers left in the IDP camps. Most of them had been identified and the authorities were informed. Please release all of them who are still in the IDP camps or in Rehabilitation Centres who had very little training or no arms training at all. Furthermore, I strongly urge that you should without any delay order the immediate release of the injured person, the old and the feeble, pregnant women, women with children, disabled persons, mentally retarded persons, the insane, orphans, destitute persons and such others who deserve release. Also reunite members of the same family from various camps and send people from various districts to their respective districts. I am acting on the assumption that many happenings in the IDP camps are not brought to your notice. Seeing is believing and a visit to some of the IDP camps by you is long overdue, but not any in the Menik Farm. These things cannot and should not happen in our country with you as the Head of the State. Your decision which I am sure will open the eyes of some, who think that we can play with the lives of over 300,000 odd IDPs who are suffering for no faults of theirs. We are a proud nation in which small children used to save the lives of cows from the butchers with their pocket money. In conclusion I appeal to you to order the authorities to pay a small amount as dole to each one of the IDP families to meet some requirements of the small children and elders, many of whom had not seen a red cent since they came to the IDP camps. If you want to win over the Tamils, do this first, resettle them soon and think of any development later. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 22, 2009

**Comment & Debate: The idealist I once knew became the Tamils' Pol Pot:
This paranoid tyrant has led his people to disaster - but once I believed he
could shape a future for them within Sri Lanka**

The Guardian - Final Edition

June 2, 2009 Tuesday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 26

Length: 940 words

Byline: N Ram

Body

The bloody end came in a sliver of nondescript coastline near the fallen garrison town of Mullaitivu in Sri Lanka's north-east. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the founder and supremo of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam - one of the world's most feared extremist organisations - had made a last stand that had pointlessness writ all over it. The charismatic 54-year-old perished along with his senior commanders and hundreds of fighters - including his elder son - with hardly anyone able to figure out what the final strategy was. Prabhakaran's war of "national liberation" for a separate, Pol Pot-ist state of Tamil Eelam was over. Belying conventional wisdom, the Sri Lankan state had found a military solution to what used to be regarded as an intractable secessionist and terrorist challenge.

There has been justifiable international concern over the humanitarian crisis that came to the fore during the endgame. The civilian toll has by no means been light, and the challenge of dealing humanely and justly with nearly 300,000 displaced Tamils, including those who supported the LTTE - willingly or under duress - faces Sri Lanka. The task of relief, de-mining, rehabilitation and reconciliation is daunting. The situation cries out for massive external assistance to Sri Lanka - but also for an approach that looks sympathetically ahead instead of obsessively going over what went wrong.

In my opinion, the international - and especially west European - response has got it wrong on two counts. There has been a tendency to mechanically balance responsibility for the crisis, and therefore to equate the desperate, last-ditch actions of an extremist organisation - banned or designated as terrorist by some 30 countries including India - with the responses of a legitimate government. Second, justice has not been done to Mahinda Rajapaksa's government for its astonishing feat of rescuing by military means close to 275,000 civilians who were, in the view of the whole world, confined by the Tigers for use as a human shield.

But as I watched the images of terrified men, women and children fleeing their "protectors" across the lagoon, I reflected on how it might have all been so different.

If only the organisation that started out in the 1970s with some kind of emancipatory political vision, and even idealism, had not turned Pol Pot-ist in its horrific disregard for human life and welfare. If only its leader, a military

Comment & Debate: The idealist I once knew became the Tamils' Pol Pot: This paranoid tyrant has led his people to disaster - but once I believed he could shape

and organisational genius - whom I interviewed in Chennai in the mid-1980s and met one last time, at his request, in Jaffna in August 1987 - had not turned into a tyrannical practitioner of the end justifying the means.

The circumstances in which I got to know Prabhakaran in the mid-1980s seem a world apart from last month's poignant scenes. The July 1983 pogrom against Sri Lankan Tamils generated in India, and especially in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, a tremendous amount of emotional sympathy, practical solidarity - and clouded judgment. Re-reading my interviews I am struck by how clouded the assumptions behind India's post-1983 policy were, and how tragic the effects on the ground.

On the one hand, the basic political objective of India's activist policy was moderate and constructive. It was to help win security, justice and a decent measure of self-administering opportunities for the Tamils living in the north-east, within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity. On the other hand, the policy worked on the assumption that in order to put pressure on the Sri Lankan government, it was necessary to build up the armed militant groups, and above all the LTTE, in various controlled ways. Among other things, it involved the old-fashioned dilemma of ends versus means.

But it was not just a case of official policy gone wrong. Along with many journalists and intellectuals in south India, I shared these assumptions. We believed that Prabhakaran, despite contra-indications, would work with India to shape a future for his people based on equality, democratic and human rights, and devolution or autonomy along federal lines within a united Sri Lanka.

Subsequent events demonstrated that for this man there would be no alternative. As the years went by and several opportunities for a negotiated political solution fell by the wayside, the one thing that remained constant was the LTTE's uncompromising secessionism and militarism. Along with this came a rising graph of terrorist crimes.

Most insurgent leaders, you would think, would have seized the opportunity offered by the ceasefire agreement of February 2002, which was criticised for being overly generous to the LTTE. Tragically, Prabhakaran - seeing it mainly as an opportunity to re-arm his organisation and strengthen its parallel state structure in the territory it controlled - did everything conceivable to make the peace process falter and fail.

"It was worse than a crime, a blunder" is a saying of the Napoleonic era, attributed to Talleyrand. If the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE squad dispatched by Prabhakaran made a permanent enemy of India; if his paranoiac suspiciousness and intolerance of dissent triggered a revolt in 2004 by his powerful military commander, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan - aka Colonel Karuna - and fractured the organisation; if all this was the case, then the boycott enforced in LTTE-controlled areas during the 2005 presidential election - which facilitated Rajapaksa's victory over the ceasefire architect, Ranil Wickremasinghe - was an akratic act that defied all rational explanation. It proved to be the blunder of a lifetime.

N Ram is editor-in-chief of the Hindu

Load-Date: June 2, 2009

Returning to the broken palmyrah

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

September 14, 2009 Monday

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Length: 2005 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 14 -- Twenty years after the assassination of human-rights activist Rajani Thiranagama, her prophetic words could inspire a new generation of activists in Sri Lanka.

In September, many will remember Rajani Thiranagama, the feminist, activist, Marxist, scholar, doctor and teacher who was assassinated 20 years ago, on 21 September 1989. Among the reasons for her assassination was the publication of *The Broken Palmyrah*, which she had co-authored with three other academics from Jaffna University. While Southasians commemorate the life and work of Rajani at a time when the war in Sri Lanka has come to an end, in many ways the metaphorical palmyrah is still broken. It is in this context that we can return to that inspiring work, carrying as it does a message of hope, an analysis of possible ways forward, and faith in the resilience of ordinary people in the face of the cruelties of war.

Co-authored with Rajan Hoole, K Sritharan and Daya Somasundaram (two mathematicians and a psychiatrist, respectively), *The Broken Palmyrah* was written during and following the months of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force's (IPKF) offensive against the **LTTE** beginning in October 1987. It is a work that brought out the horrors of war through the voices of ordinary people, rich in analysis and, even two decades after it was published, prophetic on the issues facing the Tamil community and Sri Lanka at large. It is the kind of work that can only come out of an uncompromising commitment to one's people. This commitment has, over the last two decades, also been exemplified by the three co-authors - two of Rajani's colleagues in the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) who continued the work underground, and the third who chose to remain in Jaffna for most of the wartime period, providing invaluable trauma counselling and psycho-social care to the victims of violence.

The book makes a particularly important contribution to an understanding of trauma and psychological devastation of different communities by the war. Today, the psychosomatic consequences and social repression can be seen as having broken society as much if not more than the physical devastation brought by gunfire and bombings. It is to those individuals and communities that have remained resilient and kept society going despite the great losses that the Tamil community owes it future.

'Theoretical vacuum'

By 1988, the authors of *The Broken Palmyrah* were despairing about the changing nature of Tamil militancy. "It was now the end of an era," they wrote.

A struggle that had, in its dawn, been fired by several noble ideals, and called forth courage and much sacrifice from young persons irrespective of group, had now reached a point where the community was powerless and voiceless. The tragedy is that the armed struggle led by the **LTTE** had by then already consolidated its fascist political culture, one that would continue for another two decades. In the face of the escalation of violence by the

Returning to the broken palmyrah

LTTE, the Sri Lankan state, which was after all at the root of the conflict due to its discrimination against minorities and state-, responded. Inevitably, the people bore the brunt.

Like Rajani, there were hundreds of other dissenters and writers who were assassinated, disappeared, tortured and otherwise destroyed by the violence unleashed from within the Tamil community. C.E. Anandarajan, this writer's uncle and the principal of St John's College, where I attended school, was assassinated by the LTTE in 1985. Thus, for all of us, there existed experiences and journalistic writings alerting us to the disastrous turn in Tamil politics. But it was perhaps only The Broken Palmyrah that fully grasped the malaise that had eclipsed the Tamil community and the country. Its prophetic potential is that many of the themes it highlighted - the importance of democratisation, the critique of narrow nationalism, the dangers of militarisation, the national question and class struggle, the concerns of the Muslims and Up-country Tamils, the cruel use of children in war, the need for alliances with Sinhalese progressives - seem as relevant today.

For Rajani, the fate of the LTTE was clear twenty years ago: The Tigers' history, their theoretical vacuum, lack of political creativity, intolerance and fanatical dedication will be the ultimate cause of their own break up. The legendary Tigers will go to their demise with their legends smeared with the blood and tears of victims of their own misdoings. A new Tiger will not emerge from their ashes. Only by breaking with this whole history and its dominant ideology, can a new liberating outlook be born.

Indeed, over the years, one has been deeply troubled by the help extended to the LTTE by sections of the Tamil community, particularly those affluent sections of the Tamil diaspora who were so fanatic in their support. The ignorance of those who are still thinking in terms of reviving the LTTE and its political project is more worry that has been added.

The perceptive analysis of the LTTE also came out of the authors' experiences during the height of devastation of two military actions. The first was the Sri Lankan Army's offensive in May and June 1987 called Operation Liberation; the second was the Indian Army's offensive of October and November 1987. The authors also did not miss the cynicism of the LTTE, which was all-too-ready to put non-combatants at risk by firing from civilian areas, including hospitals and other places of refuge. The LTTE's approach was retuned in kind, as both the Sri Lankan and Indian armies unleashed untold suffering and violence with their shellings. The Broken Palmyrah is thus a diary of war and a reminder of the very nature of the brutality of conflict.

Rajani's chapter on the experiences of women during the war of October 1987, titled "No More Tears Sister", is a profound analysis of how women's survival in war and their resistance is intertwined with class and caste. She questions the simplistic idea that the 'liberation struggle' was also a process about the liberation of women. She offers a strong political critique of not only the armed movements and narrow nationalism, but also brings to light the limitations of the social movements of the time. Rajani is perceptive in her attempts both to soothe those who suffered from the war, and to find out the consequences of the war, in order to distinguish between the different forms of resistance of middle-class and marginalised women against the armed actors. Finally, Rajani questions the short-sightedness of women in the Tamil militancy:

It is tragic that these women's sections themselves did not make any attempt to grasp their reality. They confessed to much confusion within the movement regarding the women's question. But they ultimately ended the argument with an expression of faith in their leader's ability to solve all problems.

It is important to note that after the initial IPKF offensive, there was space for dissent in the Tamil fold. However, this freedom quickly disappeared. Rajani herself was assassinated the day after the IPKF's announcement that it would leave. The Broken Palmyrah does not fail to pay tribute to the many individuals and community leaders that toiled hard with a sense of commitment to the people. That was all the more important at a time when the LTTE's perspective was that "the propaganda thrust of the struggle must hinge around the two words 'Traitor' and 'Martyr'".

The list of those labelled traitors and killed is long and longer still when we look back from 20 years on. The despicable label of traitor was a sign most of all of the deterioration of Tamil politics. In looking for an inclusive vision of Sri Lanka beyond the myopic politics within the Tamil community, the book also importantly pays tribute to the many visionary leaders of the south who took up the Tamil question with sincerity.

Returning to the broken palmyrah

Third force

Like most boys, I romanticised the armed struggle, which had its early rumbling during my childhood in Jaffna. But I was fortunate to read this book in my late teens, which had a lasting impact in addressing critical questions about Tamil militancy. The Broken Palmyrah and the assassination of Rajani, whose home was next door to our own in Jaffna, had a tremendous impact on me. In re-reading the book, I am struck by its relevance for the debates in Sri Lanka today. Two decades ago, the authors saw how the Tamil community, in placing its faith on deliverance by an external actor such as India rather than on its own politics, was going to lose grasp of its aspirations. They saw clearly the dangers of narrow Tamil nationalism and Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism as destructive ideologies that reinforced each other. They captured the arrogance and the hegemonic power of the Tamil elite over the oppressed castes, the Muslim community, the Up-country Tamils and the Eastern Tamils.

The authors understood how fractured the idea of the Tamil 'nation' already was, even in its attempted construction. The Broken Palmyrah saw the dilemmas facing the Eastern Tamil youth in their relationship with the Tamil armed movements, and questioned even the viability of the merger of the North and East. It analysed not only totalitarian and fascist tendencies within the Tamil armed movements, but was conscious of the play of class, caste and patriarchy within these movements.

Most of all, this clairvoyant work saw clearly the problem of the Sri Lankan state and the Sinhalese elite that controlled it, using state power and attendant violence towards the destruction of the entire society. It attempted to analyse Sri Lanka in the context of the global political economy; of colonial, capitalist and imperialist expansion. It saw how the politics of the minority communities - be it their historical grievances relating to language policies, issues of land and access to employment and education, or aspirations for devolution of power - were inextricably tied to the democratisation of the entire country. Finally, it clearly saw the need to challenge the authoritarian tendencies of successive ruling regimes.

At the moment, the major challenges facing the Tamil community, other minorities and even sections of the south is how to bring class and democratisation into the devolution debate. This clearly calls for a third force - a democratic force for justice, equality and reconciliation in the post-war era. The Broken Palmyrah goes beyond narrow legalistic views of devolution, and took on the challenges of democratising society:

What is more important than laws to Tamils and to everyone else in this country, is a public conscience that is willing to fight continually to ensure justice for everyone. We need a more active form of democracy than the public merely electing governments and then going to sleep and leaving the rest to politicians and lawyers. The laws that ensure fair play may come if trust is established between the several communities of people in this island and democracy is re-established.

Twenty years ago, The Broken Palmyrah reported on the war in the island like no other work in the country before or since. One could go as far as to say that this book is one of the most insightful chronicles of war in modern times. It set out an analysis of the causes and consequences of the brutality, which generations of Lankans are now condemned to endure. It captured the voices that must be remembered as we mourn those who were decimated by the war. Importantly, written two decades ago, The Broken Palmyrah has defined the tasks for the younger generations, and set out the kind of politics that can lead the country out of violence under the mantle of justice and democratisation. Such politics should challenge the continuing repression and authoritarian politics that pervades Sri Lanka in its post-war moments. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: September 14, 2009

Returning to the broken palmyrah

End of Document

Over 100 civilians seek Forces' protection

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

April 17, 2009 Friday

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Length: 201 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 17 -- Around 135 civilians sought protection with the Security Forces in Ampalavanpukkerni on Wednesday.

Military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said 135 displaced civilians fleeing Puthumathalan and Valayamadam amidst shelling by the Tigers have reached the cleared area with troops of the 58 division throughout Wednesday. "The civilians included 55 children, 38 **females** and 42 males," he added. Nearly 69,000 displaced civilians escaping the **LTTE** have sought protection with the Security Forces. "The Government has made arrangements to meet the exodus and provide all needs," he added. Navy spokesman Captain D.P.K.Dassanayake said the Navy evacuated the 21st batch of 514 wounded and sick civilians accompanied by their relatives on Tuesday from Puthumathalan by the ICRC chartered vessel Green Ocean. The Navy as part of its humanitarian operations has put in place a number of comprehensive evacuation measures to facilitate the evacuation process. Naval personnel and vessels along with stand-by rescue and medical teams are on special deployment in the North-eastern seas to assist civilians fleeing the **LTTE**. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 17, 2009

378 killed by Sri Lankan assault on 'safe zone'

The Irish Times

May 11, 2009 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

Length: 613 words

Byline: GETHIN CHAMBERLAIN in Delhi

Body

HUNDREDS OF civilians were killed when the Sri Lankan army launched a concerted assault on an area it had just designated a safe zone, a doctor working inside the so-called no-fire zone in the north of the country said yesterday.

He claimed at least 378 people were killed and 1,212 injured in a series of attacks on Saturday night, which included shelling from positions held by government forces. If true, that would make it the bloodiest day since the government launched its campaign to destroy the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) at the start of the year.

The death toll is likely to rise because the figure from the medical staff only includes bodies brought to the hospital.

The assault started on the same day the Sri Lankan government ordered the tens of thousands of civilians still trapped by the fighting to move into an area just 1.2 miles [1.9km] long and less than a mile wide to enable it to flush out the remaining rebels. The shrinking of the safe zone meant some families had to abandon bunkers they had dug in the sand.

According to a UN source, most of the people who were killed were inside the new no-fire zone. The official said many were believed to have died in an airstrike at about 5.30am yesterday.

Medical staff working in makeshift facilities inside the zone said the shelling began on Saturday evening. One doctor said shelling started at 5pm and continued until 9am yesterday. It appeared the shells were fired from government positions in Mullaitivu, he said.

He said the dead included a man who worked as a nurse at the hospital and seven members of his family, who were killed when a shell hit the bunker where they were sheltering. The shells were landing about 300m from the hospital, he said. All the time, we have casualties coming in. We don't have time to think. He said the dead were being buried in large pits holding 30 or 40 bodies.

He ended the telephone interview without giving his name, saying he had to deal with an eight-year-old boy who had just been brought in and required immediate surgery on his wounds.

Another doctor, V Shanmugarajah, said 1,122 people had been wounded in the artillery barrage. We are doing the first aid and some surgeries as quickly as we can. We are doing what is possible. The situation is overwhelming. Nothing is within our control, he said. The pro-**LTTE** TamilNet website claimed about 2,000 people had died, while the government denied having anything to do with the shelling. The claims cannot be verified because independent journalists are barred from entering the area of the fighting.

378 killed by Sri Lankan assault on 'safe zone'

The difficulties in reporting the situation in the north of the country were highlighted yesterday by the deportation of three members of a news team from Channel 4 arrested in Trincomalee, south of the no fire zone, on Saturday. The government accused them of fabricating a report that women were subjected to sexual abuse in the internment camps holding fleeing civilians.

The number of people trapped inside the no fire zone is in dispute, with the government putting the figure at no more than 20,000, while a UN official said up to 100,000 might still be trapped.

The government has repeatedly denied using heavy weapons against civilians inside the zone. Last month, it said its forces would use only small arms in pursuit of the LTTE. However, reports from medical staff, supported by pictures and videos apparently showing explosions and large-scale casualties, contradict those claims. A report from Human Rights Watch on Saturday accused the government of hitting hospitals with air and artillery attacks.

The government says the attacks are the work of the LTTE. (*Guardianservice*)

Load-Date: May 11, 2009

End of Document

Congress bleeds over Lanka war

The Financial Express

April 27, 2009 Monday

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Length: 593 words

Byline: Gopu Mohan

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Militarily, said Union Home Minister P Chidambaram referring to the LTTE, they have reached their endgame. In electoral terms, that could well be the fate of Chidambaram's party in Tamil Nadu.

After a gap of 18 years-a period that saw five general elections and three Assembly elections-the conflict in Sri Lanka between the Government forces and the guerillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is back in focus in Tamil Nadu. And according to observers, the development will primarily harm the interests of the Congress that has fielded 16 candidates for this Parliamentary election on May 13.

Till a few months ago, the Congress was seen as a prized electoral possession because it had a traditional votebank and also because aligning with it carried the prospect of sharing power at the Centre. Arch rivals AIADMK and DMK wanted an alliance with it and the PMK wanted it to lead a different alliance altogether.

Now, the Congress finds itself at the receiving end of not just politicians and chauvinists but also a motley crew of rights activists, lawyers, students, traders and women's organisations.

"The anti-Hindi imposition agitation reduced the Congress to the fringes of state politics till the advent of coalition politics. Even now, the party is a minor partner whichever alliance it is in," said a political observer, drawing parallels to the present pro-Tamil sentiment that is developing into an anti-Congress wave.

If assassinating Rajiv Gandhi was the historic blunder that the Tigers made, it is the end of the Tigers that is changing the game for the Congress. Even as the rebels reach their end of history, the real cause behind decades of violence and thousands of deaths is now in the spotlight.

Since Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, many in Tamil Nadu saw the issue in Lanka as either a rebels' war or a separatists' fight. But for the past few weeks, CDs and emails with images from the war field have been making the rounds in Tamil Nadu.

These are frames of misery. They show the dead: some purportedly at the hands of the Lankan army, others due to lack of adequate facilities at refugee camps.

The local Congress was rattled by the CDs, along with the campaign by rival parties and fringe organisations that accused the Centre of lending covert support to the Lankan army. The party approached Chief Electoral Officer Naresh Gupta with the demand that the circulation of the CDs be banned, who in turn forwarded it to the State DGP. After several raids and seizures, there is now a case in the Madras High Court, seeking permission to release the CD to public.

Congress bleeds over Lanka war

All Opposition parties, including the stridently anti-LTTE AIADMK, have adopted an aggressive position on the issue, flaying the DMK and the Congress for their alleged indifference. All want a piece of the pro-Lanka votes.

Though some among the pro-Lankan Tamil and pro-LTTE parties explored the potential of a platform based on the issue in the beginning of the year, there were not many takers for an alliance without the DMK, AIADMK or Congress. In the later months, these parties gravitated towards different alliances: MDMK and CPI decided to continue their alliances with AIADMK, while VCK remained a part of DMK-led alliance.

As the pro-Lanka bloc got split between the alliances, outfits like Periyar Dravida Kazhagam and parties like MDMK are focussing their energies on the 16 constituencies where the Congress is contesting.

Ahead of a crucial election, the war in Lanka has left the Congress bleeding; ironically, what could deal the final blow is the end of the LTTE.

Load-Date: July 28, 2010

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*Tamil hunger strikers agree to sip water as MPs hold out hope of protest to
UN*

The Times (London)
April 11, 2009 Saturday
Edition 1

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THE TIMES

Section: NEWS; Pg. 14,15

Length: 743 words

Byline: Jack Malvern; Emily Gosden

Body

Two Tamil men on hunger strike were seriously ill last night as hundreds of protesters gathered opposite the Houses of Parliament for a fifth day, demanding a ceasefire in Sri Lanka.

A week of peaceful protests, the largest in Parliament Square since demonstrations there were banned in 2005, is due to culminate today in a march through Central London.

Sivatharsan Sivakumaravel, 21, and Parameswaran Subramaniam, 28, vowed on Tuesday to go without food or water until they died unless the international community intervened to halt the Sri Lankan army's campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

They were persuaded to drink a small amount of water early yesterday morning to prevent them slipping into unconsciousness and so stop paramedics intervening and taking them to hospital. The London MPs Siobhain McDonagh and Simon Hughes had visited them and promised to try to take them to the UN.

On Thursday night doctors had warned that the pair were in a critical condition, severely dehydrated and at risk of renal failure and hypothermia.

Their condition had improved slightly yesterday but they remained seriously ill, with dangerously low blood sugar.

Mr Subramaniam, a student who arrived in Britain three weeks ago, told The Times on Wednesday, 36 hours after beginning his fast, that five members of his family had been killed in the past few days as the Sri Lankan Army closed in on the rebel fighters' stronghold. "I heard yesterday that my mother, my sisters, my brother and his son are dead," he said.

"One of my sisters and my brother were members of the LTTE. They are not terrorists - they are freedom fighters. I want answers for my family's death, otherwise I will not leave here." Mr Sivakumaravel, a British citizen who came from Sri Lanka five years ago, claimed that the Sri Lankan Army was responsible for killing children in an enclave on the northeastern coast of the island, where the LTTE are pinned down. "They say our people are terrorists.

Tamil hunger strikers agree to sip water as MPs hold out hope of protest to UN

Do you think the kids living there are terrorists?" Another protester, Jey Perayeravan, 23, a database administrator for a British telephone company, wept as he described how his father, who is in the enclave, told him that he feared for his life. "I talked to my dad last week.

He told me that they have been hiding under bunkers for three months. They don't have any food or any medicine." Wiping tears from his eyes with an **LTTE** scarf, he said: "All we ask is for the Government to stop the genocide.

We just want to save our people." The Sri Lankan military have said that **LTTE** troops are deliberately preventing civilians from leaving the area, effectively using them as human shields. Protesters deny this.

Mr Sivakumaravel's mother, Vanisri, sat in tears beside him yesterday, too upset to speak. She stroked his hair as he slept on the makeshift bed set up by fellow protesters, while chants of "ceasefire" rang around them.

Mr Hughes, the Liberal Democrat MP, told The Times: "There's very wide political support for urgent action in Sri Lanka to avert a terrible crisis in lives and liberty." He added: "I hope, by the end of today, a political strategy for delegations to the UN, Washington, Brussels and the Commonwealth secretariat in London will be in place to take place next week.

"The evidence from Sri Lanka is that we're on the edge of more serious loss of life and real urgency is needed if we are to have a chance of avoiding more bloodshed and the loss of hundreds more lives." Demonstrators believe that Britain has a responsibility to save its former colony because it did nothing to protect the rights of Tamils when the country became independent in 1948.

The island, formerly known as Ceylon, has been ruled by the Sinhalese majority since independence.

About 100 police officers were on duty at the protest yesterday, down from about 400 on Tuesday night.

Officers said that they were reluctant to break up the protest because it was being conducted in a good-natured way and included **women** and children.

Chief Inspector Chris Allmey told The Times on Tuesday that he had the manpower to move the protesters "within minutes" but preferred to let the protest run its course.

Police expect most of the protesters to leave Parliament Square today and join a planned protest from Embankment to Hyde Park, though the hunger strikers will remain. If large numbers return the police will have to review their strategy as the protests, though peaceful, remain unlawful.

Graphic

Protesters in Parliament Square are calling for a halt to Sri Lanka's offensive against the Tamil rebels. Civilian casualties are soaring, rights groups say

PICTURES: JACK HILL

Parameswaran Subramaniyan: five members of his family were killed

Load-Date: April 11, 2009

US State Dept document tainted

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

October 23, 2009 Friday

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Length: 625 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Oct. 23 -- The Foreign Ministry yesterday rejected allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka in the document titled 'Report to Congress on Incidents during the recent conflict in Sri Lanka' as unsubstantiated and devoid of corroborative evidence.

It noted that there was a track record of vested interests endeavouring to bring the Government of Sri Lanka into disrepute through fabricated allegations and concocted stories.

"Thereby these interests hope to fan once again, the flames of secessionism and undo the concerted efforts of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, for rehabilitation and national reconciliation.

The people of Sri Lanka therefore have every reason to be concerned that this report to the US Congress, may be abused for a similar end, the Foreign Ministry said in a news release.

The United States has forwarded to the Sri Lanka authorities a document captioned 'Report to Congress on Incidents during the recent conflict in Sri Lanka', which contains a report from the US State Department to the Appropriations Committees of the US Congress.

The Foreign Ministry wishes to point out in this regard that the document relates to a period when the Security Forces of Sri Lanka were engaged in a humanitarian mission through operations in the North and in the East of the island, to free the members of the Tamil community and the members of other communities living in those areas, from the clutches of the terror of the LTTE.

The great relief with which the populace in those areas greeted the success of the operations was manifest when, within the space of a few days between the end of April and the start of May this year hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who were being used as human shields by the LTTE, escaped towards the security afforded by the Armed Forces, once the Army breached the LTTE lines.

During the security operations, the message by the President of Sri Lanka to all ranks of the Armed Forces, was that the military endeavour must at all times be directed against the armed terrorism of the LTTE.

Therefore, the Sri Lanka Armed Forces were scrupulous in affording protection to the civilians and safeguarding their welfare. At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to point out that Sri Lanka has since gaining independence, maintained an unbroken commitment to democratic governance, with the rule of law remaining paramount.

US State Dept document tainted

Hence, the practice of the Government of Sri Lanka is always to subject to investigation under domestic law and process those allegations that prima facie appear to be credible and well substantiated.

Moreover, Sri Lanka's domestic jurisprudence provides all the necessary scope for those perceiving themselves subjected to a violation of their human rights, to obtain redress through judicial directives to the concerned authorities.

It must also be said that the allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka in the document 'Report to Congress on incidents during the recent conflict in Sri Lanka', appear to be unsubstantiated and devoid of corroborative evidence.

There is a track record of vested interests endeavouring to bring the Government of Sri Lanka into disrepute, through fabricated allegations and concocted stories.

Thereby these interests hope to fan, once again, the flames of secessionism and to undo the concerned efforts of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, for rehabilitation and national reconciliation.

The people of Sri Lanka therefore have every reason to be concerned that this report to the US Congress, may be abused for a similar end. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 23, 2009

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More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

April 15, 2009 Wednesday 1:17 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 401 words

Dateline: COLOMBO April 15

Body

The military in Sri Lanka said 135 civilians fled the No Fire Zone (NFZ) controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels in the north to the area controlled by the security forces on Wednesday, the first day after the ending of a two-day truce declared by the government.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that 42 men, 38 women and 55 children escaped from Puttumatalan and Valayarmadam areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and sought protection with 58th Division troops operating in the general area of Ampalavanpokkanai.

On Tuesday, 239 civilians escaped from the NFZ to government controlled area, said the ministry.

Meanwhile, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara told reporters on Wednesday that the troops are observing the NFZ after the two-day government called truce came to an end at midnight of Tuesday.

Nanayakkara said the Army's 53rd Division and Task Force 8 are placed west of NFZ while 58th and 59th divisions have positioned themselves north and south respectively of the NFZ.

"They are also helping out civilians who leave the NFZ to safety," Nanayakkara added.

The government said the truce was aimed at allowing people trapped in the NFZ time to celebrate the traditional Sinhala and Tamil New Year and the LTTE to release the civilians.

The actual number of civilians trapped in Mullaitivu district's NFZ of some 20 sq km is being debated.

The government argued that only 120,000 people lived there, out of which more than 60,000 had already left. But international agencies said some 230,000 people had been originally trapped.

A concerned international community has pleaded with both the government and the rebels to care for the safety of civilians amid allegations that a large number of them are receiving injuries or getting killed in the crossfire.

The troops said the rebels' near three decade old armed campaign would soon end when the Army cleared the remaining part of the northern Mullaitivu district.

The LTTE began to rebel against the government to set up a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east in the mid-1980s, based on claims that the island's Tamils had been discriminated by the majority Sinhalese dominated governments.

More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka

More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict since mid- 1980s in one of the world's longest civil wars.

Load-Date: April 17, 2009

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Canada at a Glance: AM

Resource News International
April 16, 2009 Thursday 9:15 AM EST

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Length: 1141 words

Byline: Resource News International

Dateline: WINNIPEG, MB

Body

The following is a quick glimpse of the news making the headlines in Canada.

PLOURDE TO BECOME 1ST FRANCOPHONE BLACK WATCH LEADER

KANDAHAR, AFGHANISTAN - A well-earned gift awaits Lt.-Col. Bruno Plourde when he returns from Afghanistan - command of the Royal Highland Regiment, also known as the Black Watch.

Plourde's ascension to top rank of the Montreal reserve unit this October will be a first in Canada - no other francophone soldier has served as commander of a highland regiment.

"I'm happy, but I don't think it's the be-all and end-all," Plourde said in a recent interview just outside Kandahar, playing down the significance of the precedent his promotion was setting.

"It's part of my job ... To command your unit in your military career is the highest responsibility you could have."

The regiment, based in downtown Montreal, was founded in 1862 as the 5th Battalion, Volunteer Militia Rifles of Canada.

Black Watch volunteers have fought in the Boer War, both World Wars and the Korean War. They have also served in United Nations peacekeeping efforts, NATO missions and humanitarian interventions.

The regiment's colonel-in-chief is Prince Charles.

Plourde will lead some 250 soldiers when he replaces Lt.-Col. Thomas MacKay.

Canada at a Glance: AM

"Commanding a reserve infantry battalion is working with the community, is working with the soldiers ... so they live their civilian life and manage their availability," he said.

"And that goes as far as preparing them for deployment there, in Afghanistan."

Married with three children, the well-travelled Plourde has served in missions in Bosnia and the Congo over the course of a 30-year military career that has allowed him to avoid the one place he never wanted to be: stuck behind a desk.

Plourde now serves as a liaison officer with Regional Command South, the component of the International Security Assistance Force that includes Kandahar province, and is second in command with the US team mentoring Afghan police and security forces.

He speaks passionately about his work and his interactions with Afghan National Police officers.

"It's like a little community here, a village," said Plourde, noting that soldiers from several nations work together.

"Here, there are no Dutch, British, Canadians or Americans. Everyone helps each other. That's the mission. We're a small group. If we didn't work together, it would be hell." (The Canadian Press)

OTTAWA WON'T BUDGE ON BANNING TAMIL TIGERS

CALGARY Canada has done its best to end the long-running conflict in Sri Lanka, but will not bow to

pressure to remove the Tamil Tigers from the list of banned terrorist groups, a federal cabinet minister said April 15.

For more than a week, Tamil supporters have been gathering around Parliament Hill to protest the war in the South Asian country and ask Ottawa to intervene. On April 10, more than 1,000 people lined Wellington Street in front of the Parliament buildings waving Tamil flags. Five people are on a hunger strike.

"We have done everything that these protesters are asking Canada to do - namely call for a ceasefire - except we will not respond to a demand of anyone to legalize a banned, illegal terrorist organization," Immigration Minister Jason Kenney told reporters in Calgary.

In 2006, Canada placed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on a list of banned terrorist organizations under the federal Anti-Terrorism Act, which prohibits financing such groups.

Protesters are angry about what they see as hostilities by the Sri Lankan military, which has moved onto land historically held by the country's Tamil minority. The Tamils have been fighting for independence.

Kenney said Canada has called for a ceasefire from both sides, asked the Sri Lankan government to ensure international support reaches people in need and increased Canada's humanitarian aid.

But the Tamil Tigers are responsible for suicide bombings, and the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians, he said. (The Globe and Mail)

2 ARRESTED IN SLAYING OF AFGHAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST

AFGHANISTAN - Two men have been arrested in connection with the slaying of a women's rights activist in Afghanistan last week, Afghan officials said on April 16.

Sitara Achakzai, a member of Kandahar's provincial council, was killed April 12 when four gunmen on motorcycles opened fire as she got out of her car outside her home in Kandahar City.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the death.

Canada at a Glance: AM

Achakzai, a dual German-Afghan citizen, spent the yearsof Taliban rule in Germany and returned to her native countryfive years ago to fight for women's rights, her relativessaid.

Her mother, two sisters and extended family live inMarkham, northeast of Toronto. Her family in Canada saidAchakzai was planning to visit them in May and was consideringnot returning to Afghanistan.

The Afghan Interior Ministry did not identify thesuspects and gave no further details about the arrests. (CBC)

MISSING GIRL'S STORY FEATURED ON AMERICA'S MOST WANTED WEBSITE

TORONTO America's Most Wanted has made the disappearance of Victoria Stafford the top story on its website, eight days after the girl from Woodstock, Ont., vanished while walking home from school.

The story headlined Video may hold clues in Canadian girl's disappearance details how the eight-year-old was last seen on a surveillance video in the company of a mystery woman.

The popular website for the Fox television show included descriptions of Tori and the woman she was spotted with, as well as photos of the girl and her purple Bratz-brand purse.

Meanwhile, Tori's family remained steadfast in their belief the missing girl will be found safe.

"She could be anywhere," Tori's aunt, Rebecca Stafford said. "I have so many feelings, I can't narrow it down. There are too many possibilities. The only thing that I feel in my heart is that she is OK and we are going to get her back."

A ground search for the Grade 3 student was called off April 12, but police continue to canvass her neighbourhood and follow up on the 500 tips they have received.

Tori's father Rodney Stafford, her mother Tara McDonald and James Goris, McDonald's boyfriend, took lie-detector tests last weekend, McDonald has confirmed.

Stafford and McDonald are estranged.

More than 60,500 children were reported missing in 2007. Runaways made up 76 per cent of cases and most were found within days.

There were 285 parental abductions reported and 56 children were considered kidnapped by a stranger, classified as anyone besides the custodial guardian, such as a grandmother or family friend, said Barbara Snider, of the Missing Children Society of Canada.

While stranger abductions are relatively rare, they cause the greatest anxiety for parents, Snider said, noting the first 72 hours are critical in any investigation.

Tori was last seen on a blurred surveillance video walking without a struggle with an unidentified woman just before she went missing after classes were let out last Wednesday.

Load-Date: April 17, 2009

Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack

Associated Press Online

May 13, 2009 Wednesday 4:37 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1083 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Shells hit the only hospital in Sri Lanka's northern war zone Wednesday, killing at least 50 people in the second such attack in two days, a doctor said. Medics at the makeshift facility said they were using brief lulls between explosions to tend to patients but had little to offer beyond gauze and bandages.

It was the third attack this month on the hospital and comes on the heels of shelling this past weekend that killed as many as 1,000 civilians. On Tuesday, shells struck the admissions ward, killing 49. But trapped in the tiny coastal strip as the government presses ahead with its offensive against the rebels, the wounded had little alternative but to converge by the hundreds to seek treatment.

Scores of people crowded beneath tarps outside the hospital building waiting for care as a person wailed in grief in the background, according to a video footage.

The military has denied firing any heavy weapons in recent weeks, but Human Rights Watch says both sides are using the estimated 50,000 civilians packed into the last rebel-held territory as "cannon fodder." The Red Cross said one of its workers was killed in shelling Wednesday.

The **Tamil Tigers** are cornered in a two square-mile (five square-kilometer) pocket of land. The military said it pressed ahead with its offensive into that strip Wednesday, capturing one of the rebels' heavy guns and fending off a suicide attack launched by the group's naval wing.

On Wednesday afternoon, the area around the hospital came under heavy shell attack, Dr. V. Shanmugarajah told The Associated Press by telephone the third time it has come under fire this month and just one day after the last attack. One shell landed in an administrative office of the hospital, while another hit a ward filled with patients already wounded by previous shelling, he said.

Dr. Thurairaja Varatharajah, the top health official in the war zone, said the attack killed at least 50 people, including patients, relatives and a health aide, and wounded about 60 others.

He said heavy shelling continued throughout the day.

"We are unable to treat the people properly because a lot of aides have fled the hospital. We go into bunkers when there is shelling and try to treat them as much as we can when there is a lull," he said by telephone.

Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack

More than 1,000 civilians many with amputations or chest wounds were waiting for treatment at the hospital when it was struck, and every 10 minutes or so another one or two died, according to a third hospital official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized by the government to speak to the media.

Overwhelmed doctors have been reduced to handing out gauze and bandages to the seriously wounded, the official said. More than 100 dead bodies have been left inside the compound because no one will risk burying them amid the constant shelling, he said.

Rebel spokesman Seevaratnam Puleedevan said shells also hit a home for mentally handicapped women, killing 38 and wounding more than 40. The health officials said they were not able to confirm that attack.

Shelling also killed Red Cross worker Mayuran Sivagurunathan and his mother and prevented a Red Cross ferry off the coast from delivering food aid and evacuating the wounded, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The aid group said it was not sure if its employee was killed in the hospital attack.

"There are many shells falling. I don't know if it was the same attack," Red Cross spokesman Marcel Izard said.

Reports of the fighting are difficult to verify because the government has barred journalists and aid workers from the war zone.

The government has come under heavy international criticism for the large civilian toll of its offensive against the Tamil Tiger rebels. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband called the conflict zone "as close to hell as you can get," and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton joined him in expressing alarm at the civilian casualties.

The European Union condemned the Tamil Tigers for holding civilians against their will but said the Sri Lankan government as a "legitimate authority" has an obligation to protect all its own citizens.

Diplomats in Geneva said the United Nations is preparing for an emergency meeting of its Human Rights Council next week to discuss the worsening conflict. At least 16 countries must back the motion for the meeting to be held, and 15 are already on board, European diplomats said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Human Rights Watch said witness testimony and satellite images of the area taken Sunday and analyzed by experts "contradict Sri Lankan government claims that its armed forces are no longer using heavy weapons" in the war zone.

The group also accused the rebels of using the civilians as human shields and shooting those who try to escape.

"Neither the Sri Lankan army nor the Tamil Tigers appear to have any reluctance in using civilians as cannon fodder," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science analyzed satellite photos of the area taken Sunday morning after a night of heavy shelling was reported in the area and compared it to an image taken four days before. The report was done at the request of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

"By comparing before-and-after satellite images, we were able to see a significant movement of the region's human population, suggesting widespread displacement. We also saw destroyed structures and circular, crater-like features consistent with widespread shelling," said Lars Bromley, director of the association's Geospatial Technologies and Human Rights project.

One area, which had been densely packed with tents and other structures in the earlier photo was nearly empty Sunday morning. Another photo provided by Amnesty showed two white circles near a cluster of trees that were identified as impact craters.

Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack

While Bromley said the images did not show who was behind the destruction, Human Rights Watch said a health official in the area had told them the artillery was being fired from an area under government control.

Military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara denied troops were responsible for any shelling, saying the war zone had grown too small for the use of such weapons. He said exploding booby traps set by the rebels could account for the craters and the reports of shelling.

Associated Press writer Frank Jordans contributed to this report from Geneva.

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

End of Document

International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualties

The Guardian - Final Edition

May 11, 2009 Monday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 19

Length: 745 words

Byline: Gethin Chamberlain, New Delhi

Body

Hundreds of civilians were killed when the Sri Lankan army launched a concerted assault on an area it had just designated as a safe zone, a doctor working inside the so-called no-fire zone in the north of the country told the Guardian yesterday. He claimed at least 378 people were killed and 1,212 injured in a series of attacks on Saturday night, which included shelling from positions held by government forces.

If true, that would make it the bloodiest day since the government launched its campaign to destroy the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) at the start of the year. The death toll is likely to rise because the figure from the medical staff only includes bodies brought to the hospital.

The assault started on the same day that the Sri Lankan government ordered the tens of thousands of civilians still trapped by the fighting to move into an area just 1.2 miles long and less than a mile wide to enable it to flush out the remaining rebels. The shrinking of the "safe zone" meant some families had to abandon bunkers they had dug in the sand.

According to a UN source, most of the people who were killed were inside the new "no-fire zone". The official said many were believed to have died in an air strike at about 5.30am yesterday.

Medical staff working in makeshift facilities inside the zone said the shelling began on Saturday evening. One doctor said shelling started at 5pm and continued until 9am yesterday. It appeared that the shells were fired from government positions in Mullaitivu, he said.

He said the dead included a man who worked as a nurse at the hospital and seven members of his family, who were killed when a shell hit the bunker where they were sheltering. "The shells were landing about 300 metres from the hospital," he said. "All the time, we have casualties coming in. We don't have time to think."

He said the dead were being buried in large pits each holding 30 or 40 bodies.

International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualty....

He ended the telephone interview without giving his name, saying he had to deal with an eight-year-old boy who had just been brought in and required immediate surgery on his wounds.

Another doctor, V Shanmugarajah, told the Associated Press that 1,122 people had been wounded in the artillery barrage. "We are doing the first aid and some surgeries as quickly as we can. We are doing what is possible. The situation is overwhelming; nothing is within our control," he said.

The pro-LTTE TamilNet website claimed about 2,000 people had died, while the government denied having anything to do with the shelling. The claims cannot be verified because independent journalists are barred from entering the area where the fighting is taking place.

The difficulties in reporting the situation in the north of the country were highlighted yesterday by the deportation of three members of a Channel 4 news team arrested in Trincomalee, south of the no-fire zone, on Saturday. The government accused them of fabricating a report that women were subjected to sexual abuse in the internment camps set up to hold civilians fleeing the fighting.

Lakshman Hulugalle, the head of the government security information centre, said the journalists had admitted they had "done something wrong".

Nick Paton Walsh, the channel's Asia correspondent, said the government claims were "complete rubbish".

The number of people trapped inside the "no-fire zone" is in dispute, with the government putting the figure at no more than 20,000, while a UN official said yesterday up to 100,000 might still be trapped.

The government has repeatedly denied using heavy weapons against civilians inside the zone. Last month, it said its forces would use only small arms in pursuit of the LTTE. However, reports from medical staff, supported by pictures and videos apparently showing explosions and large-scale casualties, contradict those claims. A report from Human Rights Watch on Saturday accused the government of hitting hospitals with air and artillery attacks.

The government says the attacks are the work of the LTTE, which it claims is firing on its own people to gain a propaganda advantage. It accuses the doctors of siding with the rebels.

Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, the military spokesman, yesterday denied that there had been any shelling in the "no-fire zone". He said the military's radar had detected firing from rebel positions into the civilian areas and had intercepted radio conversations between LTTE cadres. "They said they were firing on the people to control them," he said.

Load-Date: May 12, 2009

Doctor says 50 killed in Sri Lanka hospital attack

Associated Press International

May 13, 2009 Wednesday 4:38 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 1083 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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Associated Press writer Frank Jordans contributed to this report from Geneva.

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

End of Document

More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service

April 15, 2009 Wednesday 11:55 AM EST

Copyright 2009 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 401 words

Dateline: COLOMBO April 15

Body

The military in Sri Lanka said 135 civilians fled the No Fire Zone (NFZ) controlled by Tamil Tiger rebels in the north to the area controlled by the security forces on Wednesday, the first day after the ending of a two-day truce declared by the government.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that 42 men, 38 women and 55 children escaped from Puttumatalan and Valayarmadam areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and sought protection with 58th Division troops operating in the general area of Ampalavanpokkanai.

On Tuesday, 239 civilians escaped from the NFZ to government controlled area, said the ministry.

Meanwhile, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara told reporters on Wednesday that the troops are observing the NFZ after the two-day government called truce came to an end at midnight of Tuesday.

Nanayakkara said the Army's 53rd Division and Task Force 8 are placed west of NFZ while 58th and 59th divisions have positioned themselves north and south respectively of the NFZ.

"They are also helping out civilians who leave the NFZ to safety," Nanayakkara added.

The government said the truce was aimed at allowing people trapped in the NFZ time to celebrate the traditional Sinhala and Tamil New Year and the LTTE to release the civilians.

The actual number of civilians trapped in Mullaitivu district's NFZ of some 20 sq km is being debated.

The government argued that only 120,000 people lived there, out of which more than 60,000 had already left. But international agencies said some 230,000 people had been originally trapped.

A concerned international community has pleaded with both the government and the rebels to care for the safety of civilians amid allegations that a large number of them are receiving injuries or getting killed in the crossfire.

The troops said the rebels' near three decade old armed campaign would soon end when the Army cleared the remaining part of the northern Mullaitivu district.

The LTTE began to rebel against the government to set up a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east in the mid-1980s, based on claims that the island's Tamils had been discriminated by the majority Sinhalese dominated governments.

More civilians flee to gov't-controlled area in northern Sri Lanka

More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict since mid- 1980s in one of the world's longest civil wars.

Load-Date: April 16, 2009

End of Document

Another bloody trail in July 1986

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

June 17, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 597 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 17 -- When the euphoria of victory dies down, and together with it the media hype ceases, when the guns do not rattle and boom anymore, and the sky, the land and the sea become calm and serene, when tranquillity reigns through it is natural to live in the present moment and forget the past. But one cannot live in the present without a past. Nor can one envision the future discarding the experience of the preceding events.

Hence the Daily News is serialising the Chronicle of **LTTE** Terror taken from our own archives which would remind our readers how it all began. An awareness of the chronology of terror would help us prevent the recurrence of such terror and frustrate any attempts by misguided elements to repeat history to suit their evil designs. It was not simple terror. Nor was terror sporadic. It was all pre-planned, pre-determined, well-calculated terror. The victims were innocent people. Though it is too many innumerate we would like to recall the major episodes in the Chronology of Terror. -----***** The month of July 1986 or three years after the terrorists came out in the open to wage war against the government was becoming more and more bloody as the month progressed. Most of the attacks of the terrorists were concentrated on civilians in remote villages though there were sporadic assaults on people in towns too. On July 20 terrorists attacked Medirigiriya division in the Polonnaruwa district killing 21 civilians, villagers and also set 20 houses on fire in a night attack. The terrorists had stealthily come through jungle paths from the east to this predominantly farming area where people's homes were scattered among the sprawling paddy fields. At the very first reports that came in there was some confusion as some reports said 19 villagers in Beruvila, Depangama and Debarawewa in the division were killed while 11 were injured. The group of terrorists who came to attack comprised 30 to 40 members who attacked and fled through the jungle paths. But in a few days time the number of deaths rose to 30 as several persons among the injured succumbed to their injuries later. Then a few days later terrorist violence shifted to the north with a parcel bomb planted in a CTB bus at Dikwewa, Vavunia that killed 29 persons including 10 **women** and two children. The number injured in the attack on the bus was 24 and the bus was torn apart in the explosion. However among the injured were several in critical condition. Two days later on July 22 the death toll in the parcel bomb explosion in the bus rose by another eight people who were in a critical condition and died at the hospital bringing the total up to 37 dead. Again on July 23 another bomb went off in a CTB bus at Vavunia and 12 persons were killed and 20 people were injured. The **LTTE** was the suspect in the two cases as it was active in the district during this time. Two people Marikkar Thamby Sahabdeen and Nagalingam Thiyagalingam were both tied to lamp posts and shot dead by the **LTTE** and notes claiming they had betrayed the terrorist group were left near their bodies. Violence did not stop at that. The **LTTE** boarded a van carrying passengers at Mannar and ordered the passengers out excluding one identified as Abdul Nazzar and took the van away. They had killed Nazzar and robbed his cash before he was killed, the reports said. When the third week of July was over more than one hundred civilians mostly villagers had been killed by the terrorists who had also burned down twenty houses. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

Another bloody trail in July 1986

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: June 17, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan government exterminating Tamils in bombings

The Herald (South Africa)

April 29, 2009 Wednesday

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THE HERALD

Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 257 words

Byline: Nash Vandayar

Body

Sri Lankan government exterminating Tamils in bombings

THE Sri Lankan army has continued with its mandate to exterminate the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka despite international pressure including that of our government to stop the genocide. Tamil civilians continue to face cluster bombs dropped into "safety zones", with news of horrific suffering, injuries and thousands of casualties, including women and children, with schools and hospitals being targeted.

Arundhati Roy, a writer and activist, wrote in the Indian press: "While the killing continues, tens of thousands of people are being barricaded into concentration camps, while more than 200000 face starvation, and genocide waits to happen, there is dead silence from this great country (India). It is a colossal humanitarian tragedy. The world must step in. Now. Before it is too late."

The world's media is unable to report fully on the humanitarian crises as a result of the refusal by the Sri Lankan government to allow them access to the relevant regions. President Mahinda Rajapaska and the rest of his Sri Lankan government must be held accountable for these atrocities and must face genocide prosecution for each and every crime committed against the Tamil people.

In the words of the immortal Che Guevara: "Against brute force and injustice the people will have the last word, that of victory."

, Port Elizabeth

Tamils gather around a truck to receive food at a camp for those displaced by the Sri Lankan government action against Tamil Tigers guerillas. Picture: AP

Load-Date: May 2, 2009

Sri Lanka begins resettling war displaced

Right Vision News

July 7, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 232 words

Dateline: VAVUNIYA

Body

VAVUNIYA, Aug. 07 -- Sri Lanka on Wednesday allowed 1,100 people displaced during the recently-ended ethnic conflict with the **Tamil Tigers** to return home, in the first phrase of an ambitious relocation plan. At a colourful ceremony, senior presidential advisor Basil Rajapakse presented gift packs of food to the group and pledged to resettle more people in the coming weeks. Men, **women** and children, clutching their few belongings in canvas bags, boarded buses to return to Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara. They had been housed in state-run camps in the northern district of Vavuniya, 260 kilometres (160 miles) north of Colombo. Wednesday's batch of relocations was the first in the government's efforts to resettle by the end of the year at least 80 percent of the 300,000 displaced people. Tens of thousands of those who fled the war zone are housed in tightly-guarded camps to which international observers and aid agencies have not been given free access. The United Nations and western governments have urged Sri Lanka to allow people to return to their homes quickly. The government said it would allow resettlement once minefields were cleared and the refugees had been screened to weed out Tamil Tiger fighters. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: August 6, 2009

ROUNDUP: UN calls Sri Lanka fighting "bloodbath" for civilians

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

May 11, 2009 Monday 11:58 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 647 words

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts ROUNDUP: UN calls Sri Lanka fighting "bloodbath" for civilians
Eds: Adds Defence Ministry, rebel comments =

Colombo (dpa) - The United Nations Monday described heavy shelling in north-eastern Sri Lanka as a "bloodbath" after over 400 people were killed and more than 1,200 injured in the fighting.

The government and Tamil rebels accused each other of causing civilian casualties over the weekend in a narrow land strip near the coast of the Mullaitivu district, 395 kilometres north-east of the capital.

"We can call it a bloodbath," UN spokesman in Colombo Gordon Weiss told German Press Agency dpa.

He explained that although he had no confirmation of who was responsible for the killings, both parties were responsible for the well-being of civilians caught in the conflict.

Defence spokesman Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said that the rebels were firing at the civilians and trying to tarnish the image of the government.

A government statement issued Monday said Tamil rebels had opened fire on fleeing civilians towards the military controlled areas.

On Sunday as many as 1,500 civilians had escaped from the zone.

The statement said intercepts of guerrilla communication showed the rebels had fired mortars into populated areas, killing or injuring as many as 250 civilians.

"It is believed that scores of civilians were killed while many others sustained injuries due to the deliberate attack launched by the terrorists to gain media mileage against government forces," the ministry said.

But medical doctor Veerachchami Shanmuagaraja told dpa by phone from the conflict zone that at least 400 people were killed and more than 1,200 injured in the incidents.

ROUNDUP: UN calls Sri Lanka fighting "bloodbath" for civilians

He said more wounded were being brought to a makeshift hospital set up in the Mullivaikal junior school.

The doctor said women and children were among the casualties, and that he was unable to provide proper treatment for lack of medicines and other supplies.

"The fighting ceased in the morning hours on Monday and people are moving away further towards the beach," the doctor said.

The government statement said the doctor was not in a position to give an independent account because he was virtually another captive of the rebels.

A statement by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) claimed that more than 2,000 civilians were killed due to shelling by the army Sunday in an area demarcated as a "safety zone" for civilians by the government. The rebels say the zone is not free of fighting.

It was not possible to independently confirm the claims made by the government or the LTTE, as journalists are denied access to the combat zone.

Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa told the Island newspaper that the rebels were "making a desperate attempt to force the international community to stop the offensive."

"The LTTE and its supporters were trying to influence international opinion by propagating lies," he said, adding that the government had irrefutable evidence of an attempt to force international intervention.

Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the head of the LTTE's international relations division Monday urged the world's governments to prevent Sri Lanka's leaders from "causing a collective tragedy."

An estimated 20,000 civilians are trapped in the last rebel-held area which extends to about six square kilometers according to the government, but UN agencies estimate that there are around 50,000 civilians.

Meanwhile a ministerial-level meeting at the United Nations Security Council in New York is to take place later Monday where the Sri Lankan issue is to be discussed.

The military says it is in the final phase of a major operation to crush the Tamil rebels, who have been fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and eastern parts of the country for the last 25 years.

May 1109 1158 GMT

Load-Date: May 12, 2009

ROUNDUP: UN calls Sri Lanka fighting "bloodbath" for civilians

End of Document

G2: A long, slow descent into hell: The decades of bitter fighting between the Sri Lankan army and Tamil rebels has left a beautiful country bereft and thousands caught in the crossfire. Novelist Romesh Gunsekera mourns his island's fate

The Guardian - Final Edition

April 30, 2009 Thursday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN FEATURES PAGES; Pg. 4

Length: 2014 words

Byline: Romesh Gunsekera

Body

Twenty six years ago, I was writing the earliest of the stories that would end up in my first book, in which

a man called CK dreams about opening a guest house on the east coast of Sri Lanka. If one tries to pin his dream down on a map, I guess it would be just a few miles from the so-called "no-fire zone" today, a place where Tigers are said to be shooting Tamil hostages who do not want to be human shields, and the government of Sri Lanka is accused of bombing civilians; the strip of land where the BBC says the endgame of this long civil war is being played out, and from where 160,000 men, women and children have fled in the last couple of weeks. The heart-wrenching images of those refugees are superimposed for me on CK's dream and an idyllic sepia photograph, in a family album, of the small town of Mullaitivu, where an uncle and aunt lived 60 years ago.

Between my first draft of CK's story in the spring of 1983 and the second in the summer of that year, Sri Lanka went into freefall. Tension had been building up for some years

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Although there had been a precursor in the serious communal riots of 1958 (in part flowing out of the controversy over the national language issue), 1983 was a horrific watershed. In July that year, the ambush of 13 soldiers in the north sparked anti-Tamil riots all around the country, especially in the capital, Colombo. Hundreds, some estimate 2,000, ordinary Tamils were killed, and many tens of thousands were made homeless.

G2: A long, slow descent into hell: The decades of bitter fighting between the Sri Lankan army and Tamil rebels has left a beautiful country bereft and thousand....

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Today, we do know all of that, and more. We know that in the 26 years since 1983 at least 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict. Another 6,500 have died in the last three months, as reported by the UN. Large numbers of both government soldiers and Tigers who had not even been born at the time the story was written are dead. Their lives, as well as the foreshortened lives of thousands of ordinary people, had never known anything but the war. Tanks have rolled, fighter jets have roared, and suicide belts and trucks have exploded.

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I have been back to Sri Lanka twice in the last six months, trying hard to find something of the optimism I felt writing my last book, *The Match*. I started writing it when peace had unexpectedly broken out in 2002. The novel was going to be like a bookend to the story I mentioned at the beginning of this piece, to celebrate a new beginning. But soon after it was published in 2006, the peace talks floundered. A few months later, the war entered a new and more fearful phase.

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On the web

The latest news, audio and an interactive guide to the Sri Lankan conflict

guardian.co.uk/srilanka

Load-Date: April 30, 2009

A shipment of sanitary items for IDPs

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

April 29, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 215 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 29 -- The Child Development and Women's Empowerment Ministry and the institutions under its purview have already sent a shipment of sanitary items for women rescued from the LTTE clutches. About 60 per cent of the IDPs are women and sanitary wear is one of their main requirements, Chairperson, National Committee of Women, Dr. Neela Gunasekara said.

Dr. Gunasekara said private sector institutions, other organizations and donors can donate these items to the Ministry to be sent to women in welfare camps. It is one of the essential items that required to maintain personal hygiene. According to Dr. Gunasekara, the National Committee and the Women's Bureau jointly arranged the shipment. Some women who had been held captive by the LTTE for long time do not know much about the importance of maintaining personal hygiene. Donations can be handed over during office hours to the Child Development and Women's Empowerment Ministry at No.177, Nawala Road, Narahenpita. Meanwhile, a Ministry spokesman said that Probation and Childcare Services Department has already sent 5,000 milk powder packs for the use of children in welfare camps. Donors who wish to send relief can obtain more details on 0112368363. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka.

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Load-Date: April 29, 2009

Rajiv Gandhi assassins continue protest fast

Indo-Asian News Service

September 22, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 426 words

Dateline: Chennai

Body

Chennai, Sep. 22 -- S. Nalini and Robert Payas, in prison for the 1991 killing of former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, Tuesday continued their fast demanding their immediate release.

While Nalini began her protest at the Vellore jail Monday, Payas has been on hunger strike since Sep 17. Vellore is 130 km from Chennai.

Both Indians are undergoing life imprisonment for Gandhi's assassination and contend that they have spent more than 14 years in jail. Nalini's husband, Murugan, a Sri Lankan, is also in jail.

The superintendent of the women section in the prison, Vellore Jeyabharathi, told IANS over telephone: "Nalini is still on fast. She said she will fast till her release."

The official added that under prison rules no one can meet a fasting prisoner.

Both Nalini and Payas were first sentenced to death. Later their sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Last week, Nalini filed a petition in the Madras High Court asking the Tamil Nadu government to convene an advisory board to consider her case for release.

Nalini said that she had been entitled for release in 2005 because she had completed 14 years in prison.

In 2007, the Tamil Nadu government rejected her application for freedom. She filed a case the next year in the high court, which directed the state government to reconsider her request for release.

As the government has not constituted an advisory board yet, Nalini asked the court to form a board and submit a report to the state.

On Monday, the court asked the state government to respond in two weeks and posted the next hearing for Oct 6.

Gandhi was killed by a woman suicide bomber belonging to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at an election rally near Chennai on May 21, 1991.

Nalini had accompanied the killer squad to the venue. She helped the suicide bomber, known as Dhanu, to get to a spot at the rally ground where she (Dhanu) could access Gandhi on his arrival.

Rajiv Gandhi assassins continue protest fast

Dhanu, who wore a jacket strapped with explosives under her clothes, bent before Gandhi pretending to touch his feet. She then activated a toggle switch, setting off the explosives that killed Gandhi, herself and several others. Nalini and the others fled in the ensuing confusion.

Robert Payas was accused of providing a hideout to Sivarasan, a member of the **LTTE** intelligence unit who oversaw Gandhi's assassination.

The Sri Lankan military destroyed the **LTTE** in May. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Indo-Asian News Service. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: September 22, 2009

End of Document

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Gunesequera laments the fate of his homeland

Guardian Weekly

May 15, 2009 Friday

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***The*GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 25

Length: 1979 words

Byline: Romesh Gunesequera

Body

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Although there had been a precursor in the serious communal riots of 1958 (in part flowing out of a controversy over the issue of a national language), 1983 was a horrific watershed. In July that year, the ambush of 13 soldiers in the north sparked anti-Tamil riots all around the country, especially in the capital, Colombo. Hundreds, some estimate 2,000, ordinary Tamils were killed, and many tens of thousands were made homeless.

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'We had to throw the bodies into the sea' Read how Indra Menon fled Sri Lanka in a boat - a journey that claimed the lives of ten people

<http://bit.ly/GWTamilBoat>

Load-Date: May 15, 2009

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Gunesequera laments the fate of his homeland

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By the time the story became the core of a book, *Monkfish Moon*, in 1992, the earlier lines had expanded: ". . . the east coast, like the north, would become a blazing battleground. Mined and strafed and bombed and pulverised, CK's beach, the dry-zone scrub land - disputed mother earth - would be dug up, exploded and exhumed. The carnage in Colombo, massacres in Vavuniya, the battle of Elephant Pass, were all to come. But that day . . . in the middle of May, we knew none of that."

Today, we do know all of that, and more. We know that in the 26 years since 1983 at least 70,000 people have been killed in the conflict. Another 6,500 have died in the last three months, as reported by the UN. Large numbers of both government soldiers and Tigers who had not even been born at the time the story was written are dead. Their lives, as well as the foreshortened lives of thousands of ordinary people, had never known anything but the war. Tanks have rolled, fighter jets have roared, and suicide belts and trucks have exploded. Sri Lankans of every kind, overwhelmingly the poorest, have been bombed by one side or the other for decades. Many MPs and ministers, too - Sinhala and Tamil, hawks and moderates - have been murdered in this conflict.

For 26 years the main story in Sri Lanka has changed little: bombs, bullets, carnage and suffering. **LTTE** suicide bombs on buses, at train stations, suicide trucks at the Temple of the Tooth, the central bank, the assassination of one president, the wounding of another, and government military campaigns with increasing firepower and increasing casualties, terrifying air strikes and massive bombardment. Sadly, there have been other spikes of horror with tens of thousands of dead - the 2004 tsunami, floods, the 80s insurrection in the south, disappearances, abductions - but the war has gone on relentlessly, in one area of the north or another, with only short periods of truce.

In those 26 years the great map of the 20th century was transformed: the Berlin wall came down, Germany was reunified, the Soviet Union disappeared, China became the factory of the world. But in Sri Lanka, the story remained the same.

A country that was once an admirable model of democracy, leading the way in agrarian reform, quality of life indices, and health and education services, got stuck as the prototype for suicide bombers, and the new benchmark for "shock and awe" tactics with unbridled military muscle.

Sri Lanka is an island that everyone loves at some level inside themselves. A very special island that travellers, from Sinbad to Marco Polo, dreamed about. A place where the contours of the land itself forms a kind of sinewy poetry. Even those who plant landmines, blow up innocents, destroy villages or ravage the jungle, still love the place. They love the sight of it, the sound of it, the smell of it, the taste of it, the memory of it, the dream of it. Whether they carry coconuts or grenades, poems or bombs, cyanide or charms, there is a deep affection for the place that is an unbreakable common bond. Every Sri Lankan, and almost every visitor to Sri Lanka, carries a longing for the place in some small form - hiraeth, the Welsh call it - wherever they go and whatever their background. It binds them, however much the war and politics might try to divide them. In recent years, despite the escalating violence, I found it bubbling up in so many places in Sri Lanka: in ethnically mixed children's peace camps, in young writers' imaginations, Sinhala and Tamil, in cricket crowds that brought everyone together.

Only a few months ago, an armed soldier I spoke to on the street put it very simply: "There is no country like Sri Lanka anywhere in the world, is there? That is why everyone wants to come here, no?"

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Guneseckera....

These days, watching video clips on the web of the grim situation on the east coast, the demonstrations around the world, the half-reports, the exhortations, the accusations, the propaganda, the excuses, I don't know what to make of the future. Is there anyone now who "can look into the seeds of time, and say which grain will grow and which will not"?

Under a pile of newspapers, I find a copy of the old tragedy from which I filched that quote. I open it and find Macbeth in the second act, speaking after he had killed the men he wished to pin Duncan's murder on. His cunning excuse sounds familiar: "Who can be wise, amazed, temp'rate and furious,/loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man./The expedition of my violent love/ outrun the pauser, reason." It doesn't tell us much about how to live, but we can certainly see how not to live. Disturbing, traumatic events do not reduce the relevance of poetry and fiction. For me, they make imaginative writing all the more urgent and necessary. I have been back to Sri Lanka twice in the last six months, trying hard to find something of the optimism I felt writing my last book, *The Match*. I started writing it when peace had unexpectedly broken out in 2002. The novel was going to be like a bookend to the story I mentioned at the beginning of this piece, to celebrate a new beginning. But soon after it was published in 2006, the peace talks floundered. A few months later, the war entered a more fearful phase.

Wherever I went on these last two visits, no one - Sinhala or Tamil - wanted to talk about the war. They were fed up with the war. It had gone on too long, cost too many lives, hurt too many families. They all wanted it over one way or another. Taxi drivers, waiters, businessmen, writers, journalists, cobblers, farmers and even soldiers. No one wanted to talk because no one believed it was nearing an end. No one believed anything about the war in the news. Too many journalists had been intimidated.

A famous editor had just been killed by yet unidentified gunmen. The concern I heard was about corruption and censorship.

Even when government forces finally took Kilinochchi, the LTTE administrative headquarters for years, my trishaw driver did not believe it. Now, it seems, there is a growing belief that the war, at least the one of tanks and planes and artillery bombing, will soon be over. The government is determined to completely destroy the military capability of the LTTE under its present leadership, and is unlikely to deviate from that mission. It has made single-mindedness one of its core characteristics and an electoral attraction. The paradigm has shifted.

What comes next? Some fear a dangerous mix of triumphalism and chauvinism; entrenchment of resentments; internment, radicalisation and insurgency. Others see an opportunity for reconciliation, reconstruction and a slow, painstaking path towards real respect. The compassionate and exemplary treatment of the hundreds of thousands of displaced people would be the first step.

The other night, in London's Nehru Centre, I heard the Bengali poet Sunil Gangopadhyay recite a powerful poem against the warped beliefs we use to excuse our sometimes atrocious behaviour. It made me think: what should I believe in now? What can I believe in? What must I believe in?

So, here is a list to start with:

- I must believe that the fighting will be over tomorrow and there will be no more killing, indiscriminate or discriminate.
- I must believe that those who have the power will ensure that future generations will not be brought to this point of suffering again.
- I must believe that everyone believes murder is wrong.
- I must believe that aid will flow into the country and that it will go wholly and directly to those who have suffered most.
- I must believe that money for war will be converted into money for peace and reconstruction.

Guardian Weekly: Weekly review: Caught in the crossfire: Decades of bitter fighting have left Sri Lanka adrift in an ocean of sorrow. Novelist Romesh Gunsekera....

- I must believe that a military victory will not lead to triumphant jingoism.
- I must believe that all those who have been trained only to fight will be found gainful civilian employment.
- I must believe that the ambitions of the military will not grow ever larger.
- I must believe that a just and democratic society nurtures and protects all its people and treats them equally.
- I must believe that dissent will not be punished.
- I must believe that the press and media will be free and fair and brave.
- I must believe that journalists will not be intimidated.
- I must believe that good will is stronger than ill will.
- I must believe that good leaders are honourable people who will always place the interests of their people before the interests of themselves.
- I must believe that the young will learn from the mistakes of the elders.
- I must believe that we will not be fooled again, wherever we are and whoever we are.
- I must believe in the human capacity for compassion and reconciliation.
- I must believe that in words we will find what in fury we cannot.

But must I also believe - as leaders on all sides seem to - that the end justifies the means? Does it, really?

guardianweekly.co.uk

'We had to throw the bodies into the sea' Read how Indra Menon fled Sri Lanka in a boat - a journey that claimed the lives of ten people

<http://bit.ly/GWTamilBoat>

Load-Date: May 15, 2009

Humanitarian task needs wide support

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

April 27, 2009 Monday

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Length: 884 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, April 27 -- Confirming the widely held public opinion, the government has gained a convincing victory at Saturday's western provincial council polls. It was clear that even the opposition parties that campaigned for their success, did not expect to make much headway at this election in view of the steady progress that the security forces have made in recovering territory that the **LTTE** had gained control over by means of violence and terrorism over several decades.

Whatever the sins of omission and commission that the Mahinda Rajapaksa Government is accused of, and guilty of, it undoubtedly deserved the public support and it received people's gratitude in ample measure as manifested at the recently held elections. The government did well in courageously and determinedly marching towards its goal withstanding pressures the local and foreign forces had exerted in their contemptible campaign to prevent the **LTTE** terrorist outfit being pulverized. The final operation that the forces launched to rescue the hapless people whom the **LTTE** endeavoured to retain as their protective shield was indeed a challenging and sensitive one that needed careful planning and execution since it involved the lives of thousands of innocent civilians. So it is creditable that the objective has been accomplished with minimum danger to the lives of the people seeking freedom from Tiger clutches. The harrowing scenes of men, **women** and children in varying states health, extreme misery written on their faces trudging along for relief, were heartrending indeed. They have reportedly been living under tents put up by the **LTTE** in the Safe Zone, exposing themselves to environmental hazards and sans decent basic facilities. Described as the most outstanding among humanitarian operations launched anywhere in the world to rescue a group of people long held to ransom by a senseless gang of terrorists activated by a dream of creating a separate enclave on a communal basis, the operation was indeed a remarkable one. The flow of the multitude continues presenting another challenge to the authorities to provide them with food, clothing, shelter and protection from the possible suicide and other attacks that disgruntled terrorists would attempt through **LTTE** cadres suspected to have infiltrated into government controlled areas disguised as refugees. It is encouraging that the security forces who had equally suffered in conducting their operations in extremely inhospitable terrain, seem enthusiastically lending their hand in meeting the needs of the refugees. They are seen preparing food, providing medical treatment and constructing shelter for these people. This indeed is the most arduous but gratifying aspect of the humanitarian operation the security forces have undertaken. It is also commendable that the rest of the country's population have come forward to render whatever assistance they are capable of, in alleviating their suffering thus demonstrating the genuine concern and compassion they have for the sufferings of their fellow-beings. The price the country had to pay for the whole exercise of ridding the country of the menace of terrorism is undoubtedly heavy. But most people feel the accomplished task is worth the price paid. The country has suffered much from the curse of terrorism as well as from various measures taken by the authorities in combating it. The loss and suffering that people underwent while facing acts of terrorism were considerable. Equally extensive were the difficulties that the people had to undergo as a result of various measures successive governments adopted to combat the scourge

Humanitarian task needs wide support

over the years. Many civilians in the theatre of conflict lost their lives in the crossfire and lost their property and were displaced while those in the south had to curtail their movements and suffer restrictions to their other rights and freedoms as a result of security and protective measures that were necessarily adopted. So the sense of relief that people experience today as hopes of an era of peace emerge is considerable indeed. It is this feeling of relief and the compassion aroused in people for the suffering of refugees that have found expression in the prompt and eager response to the appeals made for providing assistance to the affected people. The international community also has volunteered substantial assistance - discarding the misgivings that some sections of it had - on this occasion, obviously convinced of the genuineness of the humanitarian task the country has undertaken. The completion of the task ahead would understandably be challenging. After meeting their immediate needs, the mass of people who had crossed over to safety has to be properly accommodated until such time as their normal lives and livelihoods are restored to them. This task obviously needs allocation of funds which have to be generated from the limited resources available to the government. While it is for the affluent sections of all communities to volunteer assistance in this task, political leaders, government leaders in particular, have to whittle down their expenditure and divert saved funds for this purpose. Their words of concern and compassion have to be converted into deeds. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

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End of Document

UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka

Associated Press Online

April 23, 2009 Thursday 6:34 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 671 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

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Doctors Without Borders warned that civilian casualties are rising in the zone where the military is trying to finish off a 25-year-old insurgency, while the government pleaded for humanitarian aid.

"I saw infants with dysentery, malnourished children and women, untended wounds, and people dressed in the ragged clothing they've been wearing for months," said Neil Buhne, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator, after returning from the northern town of Vauniya, where tens of thousands of people are kept in overcrowded government camps.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, speaking to reporters in Brussels, said he would immediately send in a team of humanitarian experts to monitor the situation and "try to do whatever we can to protect the civilian population."

The government says 104,862 civilians have escaped the conflict since Monday.

Some 170,000 to 180,000 civilians now live in the government camps, said Gordon Weiss, the U.N. spokesman in Colombo.

An additional 15,000 to 20,000 civilians remain trapped in the coastal strip measuring just five square miles (12 square kilometers) still controlled by the ethnic separatist Tamil Tigers. Reports on life there are limited because reporters are not allowed.

Weiss said no food has been delivered to the war zone since April 1.

"The conditions are absolutely awful. The people are living with a shortage of food and medicines and subjected to artillery and small-arms fire," he said.

The U.N. Security Council has asked the Tamil Tigers to lay down their arms and join talks to end the civil war.

The U.N. also urged the government to give international aid agencies access to those affected by the fighting. Since September, only the International Committee of the Red Cross has had access.

UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka

Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama said the government was working to grant more access to those who had left the war zone, but that will depend on the security situation.

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Only two ill-equipped, makeshift hospitals function in the war zone. Dr. Thangamuttu Sathyamurthi said his staff is struggling with a medicine shortage as wounded patients continue to flood in.

He said 15 people were killed Thursday when shells hit a Roman Catholic church for a second time in two days, wounding a priest whose leg had to be amputated.

Both the government and the rebels deny targeting civilians, but the U.N. estimates more than 4,500 have been killed in the past three months. The Red Cross has said it has evacuated 6,000 civilians with war injuries since January.

Doctors Without Borders said a rapidly growing number of badly wounded civilians have been arriving at a hospital near the war zone in the past few days.

"About three-quarters of the injured coming in now have suffered from blast injuries, and the rest are gunshot wounds and mine explosions," Dr. Paul McMaster said in an interview released by the Swiss-based aid group.

He said the 450-bed hospital now has more than 1,700 patients, many living on the floors, in the hallways and outside.

This week's exodus began when the military entered a previously declared "no fire" zone along the northeastern coast, breaking through a key rebel bunker on Monday and releasing a flow of fleeing people.

The government has ignored calls to stop the fighting so more civilians could leave, saying it is on the verge of crushing the insurgency.

The rebels have been fighting to create an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced decades of marginalization by governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese.

AP writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo and Constant Brand in Brussels contributed to this report.

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

Guardian Weekly: Books: Invisible history of the British empire

Guardian Weekly
August 7, 2009 Friday

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*The***GuardianWeekly**

Section: Pg. 39

Length: 669 words

Byline: Alfred Hickling

Body

Brixton Beach

by Roma Tearne

HarperPress 409pp pounds 14.99

On 19 May this year the president of Sri Lanka declared the defeat of the **Tamil Tigers**, apparently bringing to an end 26 years of civil conflict. The duration, as well as the complex ethnic divisions, caused the Sri Lankan civil war to go unreported for long periods of time. As Roma Tearne observes: "the war had become a worn-out habit on the island . . . the brutality of which was hardly noticed in the west. Other wars, more important ones in larger, richer countries, hit the headlines."

Tearne came to England at the age of 10, when her Tamil father and Sinhalese mother settled in south London in 1964. Since then she has pursued a dual career as a visual artist who has exhibited at the Royal Academy, and as a novelist whose recurrent themes are the devastating impact of the war on domestic lives and the redemptive power of art.

Her debut novel, *Mosquito*, featured an exiled Sri Lankan writer returning to the country and falling in love with a 17-year-old artist. Of all Tearne's work, this was the book that most directly engaged with the violence of the civil war, particularly the **Tamil Tigers'** deployment of **female** suicide bombers.

Bone China, which followed, was a semi-autobiographical family saga spanning the 1960s in which a Sri Lankan girl finds her feet in Swinging London and discovers a rare talent as a composer. Once again, the central character of Brixton Beach, Alice Fonseka, is an artist - a sculptor who works with found objects - though this time Tearne brings the story up to date, as the novel begins with a vividly realised account of the aftermath of the 7 July bombings of 2005.

The opening scene plunges straight into the horror and confusion of a British doctor, Simon Swann, as he runs towards the carnage on the Edgware Road. Tearne establishes a potent sense of the atrocity through sharp, sensory fragments, incorporating flashes of "acid green jackets", "a bracelet on a blackened arm" and the all-pervasive smell of "sweat and rubber and explosives".

Guardian Weekly: Books: Invisible history of the British empire

As Dr Swann performs his duty, he is frantically worried about the whereabouts of a woman who lives in a house known as Brixton Beach. To discover who this woman is, Tearne winds the narrative back 30 years to an idyllic Sri Lankan beach, where the young Alice is receiving her first cycling lesson from her beloved grandfather Bee, a renowned artist and printmaker.

At first, the war seems safely remote from Alice's blissful childhood. But intimations of the conflict begin to infiltrate; first when Alice is discriminated against at school for having a Tamil father; then when her mother loses her baby due to the wilful negligence of a Sinhalese doctor. The family head for Britain, where the Fonsekas' marriage crumbles as Alice's father joins a sect that supports the Tigers, and her mother slips into dementia, crafting cardboard coffins and dressing a collection of dolls in her dead baby's clothes.

As with the heroines of Tearne's previous two novels, the therapeutic power of art enables Alice to survive. She names her house Brixton Beach and is mentored by a young art teacher who encourages her to develop the driftwood creations which provide a symbolic link to her lost home.

Tearne instinctively thinks in terms of texture and colour. Her prose is illuminated by a painterly sensitivity to light. Alice inherits her talent from Bee, who is slaughtered in reprisal for harbouring Tamil refugees. "Words were not his thing; explanations were best done with brushes. The colour of a place, the angle of the light, a tree, these spoke volumes."

In Bone China, Tearne observed that "a mantle of despair was settling like fine dust on the island". It remains to be seen if the pall of civil war has finally lifted, or whether Sri Lanka is experiencing another of its many false dawns. Whatever happens, Tearne has preserved the emotional impact of this sad historical chapter in three remarkable novels dedicated to "the invisible story of the British empire".

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UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka

Associated Press International

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Body

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The government says 104,862 civilians have escaped the conflict since Monday.

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UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka

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He said the 450-bed hospital now has more than 1,700 patients, many living on the floors, in the hallways and outside.

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The government has ignored calls to stop the fighting so more civilians could leave, saying it is on the verge of crushing the insurgency.

The rebels have been fighting to create an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils, who have faced decades of marginalization by governments controlled by ethnic Sinhalese.

Associated Press writers Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo and Constant Brand in Brussels contributed to this report.

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UN sending expert team to Sri Lanka

The Associated Press

April 23, 2009 Thursday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 671 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

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Load-Date: April 24, 2009

THE RESURGENCE OF MADHU

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

August 22, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1348 words

Dateline: Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka, Aug. 22 -- Those who brought Christianity to Sri Lanka in the sixteenth century planted the devotion to 'Our Lady' in the Kingdom of Jaffna which consisted of the northern peninsula along with some neighbouring islets. The first news the people of this kingdom had of Christianity was from the new converts of the 'fishery coast of India.' About the year 1544 the fame of the preaching and miracles of St. Francis Xavier made the residents of Mannar send a request for him to visit them in Mannar. However, as St Francis was busy in Travancore, he sent them a priest who bore his name to serve them. After the priest's visit, over 600 men, women and children embraced the Christian faith.

The massacre of the new converts as recorded in history was carried out on the orders of Sankili the Tamil king of Jaffna. In 1583 the number of Christians is said to have been about

43 600, with 26 churches serving them. One of these churches was situated in Mantai, a village on the mainland and about six miles away from Mannar. This church was the original home of the statue of 'Our Lady of Madhu' also called 'Our Lady of Good Health.'

The conquest of the island by the Dutch opened an era of cruel persecution against the Catholics and the faithfuls of Manlal were forced to consider seriously the desirability of removing the statue of Our Lady of Mantai to a haven of safety. In the year 1670 these concerned people migrated with the statue of Our Lady of Mantai into the Kandyan territory, where they hoped to save the statue from profanation and persecution. The little company which wandered in the thick forest of the Wannu in constant fear of the enemy ultimately reached a hamlet by the side of an ancient lake on the royal Rameswaram route, where there was a customs house belonging to the Kandyan king. The hamlet was called Maruthamadhu. About the same time there was another instance of migration towards Madhu to avoid persecution by the Dutch invaders of the island and about 700 Catholics crossed over to Pooneryn and sought refuge in the Wannu. Having wandered for days in anxiety they also reached Maruthainadhu. Among the newly arrived Catholics from Jaffna was a daughter of a Portuguese Captain named Helena. The first little church dedicated to Our Lady of Madhu was built by Helena.

Around this time the devotion to our Lady of Madhu grew and became known as a protection against stings of venomous serpents which were in abundance in the area. It is said that the sand gathered from the church land taken to other parts of the country by visitors had healing powers. This was recognized by the Vatican in 1924 resulting in a papal envoy crowning the statue. Later, it was gazetted as a pilgrim shrine by the Sri Lankan government. The annual feast was celebrated until 1983 but there was a lull since then during the war. However the feast was celebrated again in 2002 and continued till 2005.

Removal of the

THE RESURGENCE OF MADHU

statue during the war

The more recent ordeal began during heavy fighting between the army and the LTTE in April 3, 2008 when the sacred statue was removed from the shrine and taken to a church in Thevanpiti which was an LTTE controlled village. The bishop of Mannar Rev Rayappu Joseph was blamed for giving into the rebels but he denied those charges. The army at that time said they were willing to support the church to bring the statue to the bishop's palace but the church said there was no way of communicating with the area commanders due to heavy fighting. In the meantime heavy fighting erupted close to the shrine. Security forces claimed that there were LTTE cadres within the premises of the buildings near the shrine. Though it was denied by the church the bishop requested the LTTE cadres who were present in the vicinity to leave the place. The LTTE complied with the bishop's request paving the way for the army to take over.

It was reported that certain young priests wanted to take the statue to the rebel held area and the bishop had to give his consent. It was likely that these priests born and bred in the Tiger territories could have been exposed to a certain ideology only and not exposed to other ideologies as they did not get an opportunity to move about and even visit the South during the war. In this situation it is possible that the priests were influenced by the LTTE. However, some priests who have been close to the LTTE had the objective of reforming them. One incident which confirmed this situation is the killing of Fr. Karunanandan who made an effort to show the LTTE that the Sinhalese from the South were not angry with the Tamils. He was killed a few days after he organized a small ceremony to hand over relief material to the war affected people which were brought by a Catholic prayer group from the South.

The statue was taken back to bishop's palace on July 21, 2008 and was taken back to the shrine a few days later. Though the government was keen to hold a feast last year the circumstance did not allow and a mass was held instead.

Feast in 2009

This year's feast was special as the church held control of the premises for the first time while the Madhu village was under control of the government-thanks to the security forces. In this situation it was no surprise that over 500,000 people flocked to pay their respect to 'Our Lady of Madhu' this year. The majority of them were happy about the outcome as they expressed positive sentiments when the Daily Mirror team spoke to them. However, some said they missed several things they had enjoyed in the past in relation to Madhu.

Edwin Camillus from Kochchikade who claimed he had come for the 11th time thanked the government for liberating the shrine from the Tigers. "We are not supporters of the government but we thank the President for this wonderful thing he has done," Edwin said. He said he was happy to see the roads being repaired and the facilities which were provided for them during the feast.

P S Bonous said he too was happy to come with the family but expressed his dissatisfaction with the water supply. "We did not get enough water and I think the authorities could have done better in that aspect," he said. However he said he was happy with the government's development programmes but pointed out that it could do even better.

Roshen Mendis who also went with her family told us that she too enjoyed the feast but said she missed some things. "Tamil women coming with colorful sarees and jewellery was a common sight those days but we did not see it this time," she said.

Sister Frieda, a nun from Mannar said things have changed since Madhu was liberated. "The church has been repaired and looking nice and it is good to see that the war is over," she said. However she was hopeful that those devotees in the camps will be able to join them. This was confirmed by the Archbishop of Colombo Rev Malcolm Ranjith and Bishop of Jaffna Thomas Soundaranayagam during their sermon at the festive mass.

Another aspect missing was the train service up to Mannar as in the old days. This service was only up to Medawachiya and buses operated to transport pilgrims from Medawachiya to Madhu. Also the post office which existed on the sanctuary where devotees used to post the greeting cards which they purchased from the stalls has not begun to function again.

THE RESURGENCE OF MADHU

After the conflict, the bishop has decided not to permit any one carrying arms inside the shrine. This requirement extends even to army personnel who are expected to obtain passes to visit the shrine.

The most important achievement is that the feast was held and many people had visited Madhu from all over the country. Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith was of the opinion that if the people of Madhu village had participated at the functions it would have been complete. However since the resettlement of displaced people from the area and reconstruction work is yet in progress perhaps more locals would be attending the feast next year. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: August 22, 2009

End of Document

International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualties

The Guardian - Final Edition

May 11, 2009 Monday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 19

Length: 745 words

Byline: Gethin Chamberlain, New Delhi

Body

Hundreds of civilians were killed when the Sri Lankan army launched a concerted assault on an area it had just designated as a safe zone, a doctor working inside the so-called no-fire zone in the north of the country told the Guardian yesterday. He claimed at least 378 people were killed and 1,212 injured in a series of attacks on Saturday night, which included shelling from positions held by government forces.

If true, that would make it the bloodiest day since the government launched its campaign to destroy the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) at the start of the year. The death toll is likely to rise because the figure from the medical staff only includes bodies brought to the hospital.

The assault started on the same day that the Sri Lankan government ordered the tens of thousands of civilians still trapped by the fighting to move into an area just 1.2 miles long and less than a mile wide to enable it to flush out the remaining rebels. The shrinking of the "safe zone" meant some families had to abandon bunkers they had dug in the sand.

According to a UN source, most of the people who were killed were inside the new "no-fire zone". The official said many were believed to have died in an air strike at about 5.30am yesterday.

Medical staff working in makeshift facilities inside the zone said the shelling began on Saturday evening. One doctor said shelling started at 5pm and continued until 9am yesterday. It appeared that the shells were fired from government positions in Mullaitivu, he said.

He said the dead included a man who worked as a nurse at the hospital and seven members of his family, who were killed when a shell hit the bunker where they were sheltering. "The shells were landing about 300 metres from the hospital," he said. "All the time, we have casualties coming in. We don't have time to think."

He said the dead were being buried in large pits each holding 30 or 40 bodies.

International: Hundreds dead in Sri Lanka attack, says doctor: Army denies onslaught on new civilian 'safe zone': Medical staff inside area swamped by casualty....

He ended the telephone interview without giving his name, saying he had to deal with an eight-year-old boy who had just been brought in and required immediate surgery on his wounds.

Another doctor, V Shanmugarajah, told the Associated Press that 1,122 people had been wounded in the artillery barrage. "We are doing the first aid and some surgeries as quickly as we can. We are doing what is possible. The situation is overwhelming; nothing is within our control," he said.

The pro-LTTE TamilNet website claimed about 2,000 people had died, while the government denied having anything to do with the shelling. The claims cannot be verified because independent journalists are barred from entering the area where the fighting is taking place.

The difficulties in reporting the situation in the north of the country were highlighted yesterday by the deportation of three members of a Channel 4 news team arrested in Trincomalee, south of the no-fire zone, on Saturday. The government accused them of fabricating a report that women were subjected to sexual abuse in the internment camps set up to hold civilians fleeing the fighting.

Lakshman Hulugalle, the head of the government security information centre, said the journalists had admitted they had "done something wrong".

Nick Paton Walsh, the channel's Asia correspondent, said the government claims were "complete rubbish".

The number of people trapped inside the "no-fire zone" is in dispute, with the government putting the figure at no more than 20,000, while a UN official said yesterday up to 100,000 might still be trapped.

The government has repeatedly denied using heavy weapons against civilians inside the zone. Last month, it said its forces would use only small arms in pursuit of the LTTE. However, reports from medical staff, supported by pictures and videos apparently showing explosions and large-scale casualties, contradict those claims. A report from Human Rights Watch on Saturday accused the government of hitting hospitals with air and artillery attacks.

The government says the attacks are the work of the LTTE, which it claims is firing on its own people to gain a propaganda advantage. It accuses the doctors of siding with the rebels.

Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara, the military spokesman, yesterday denied that there had been any shelling in the "no-fire zone". He said the military's radar had detected firing from rebel positions into the civilian areas and had intercepted radio conversations between LTTE cadres. "They said they were firing on the people to control them," he said.

Load-Date: May 13, 2009

Defeated Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Associated Press Online

May 24, 2009 Sunday 7:48 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 978 words

Byline: By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The defeated Tamil Tiger rebels confirmed Sunday that their supreme leader was killed in the group's final battle against Sri Lankan troops.

The almost mythic commander, Velupillai Prabhakaran, led a terror-driven Tamil insurrection in Sri Lanka for more than a quarter century. Last week the government declared it finally killed Prabhakaran and proclaimed victory against his **Tamil Tigers**, crushing the rebellion that the U.N. estimates cost between 80,000 to 100,000 lives.

But many Tamils didn't believe it.

For some die-hard followers, especially those living abroad, it hardly matters whether the legendary guerrilla is alive or dead, as long as there is a continuing story line of an independent Tamil state in part of this Sinhalese-dominated island.

Meanwhile, the government said it believes Prabhakaran's deputy and feared intelligence chief was also among the dead but his body has not been identified.

Sri Lanka's Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said in an interview with privately owned Derana TV on Sunday that soldiers have still not been able to identify the body of Pottu Amman, who along with Prabhakaran were wanted by India for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"There is no doubt that he's been killed," he said

The military earlier claimed to have identified the body of the spy chief. Rajapaksa did not explain the contradiction.

Gandhi was assassinated in 1991 by a **female** suicide bomber at an election rally.

Prabhakaran, who was 54, was a larger-than-life character who championed the dreams of the Sri Lanka's minority Tamils. He was seldom seen in public, yet his word was unquestioned. He governed by fiat over a de facto state in one-third of this Indian Ocean island.

Even many Tamils who abhorred the Tigers' suicide bombings and assassinations embraced him as their hope for dignity and equal rights in Sri Lanka.

Defeated Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Bloggers compared Prabhakaran to the Hidden Imam, who was born in the 9th century but who Shi'ite Muslims believe never died. Believers say the Hidden Imam will return one day to bring peace and justice to the world.

The Sri Lankan army says Prabhakaran was among the last to die in the civil war's final battle on Tuesday. His body was found in a thicket of mangroves along a shallow lagoon on the desolate northeastern coast.

Photographs of the familiar mustachioed face, a handkerchief covering the fatal head wound, were splashed on the front pages of Sri Lanka's national papers on Wednesday. Unpublished pictures show a sickle-shaped gash through the bone of his forehead. His dog tags number 001 and ID card were put on display for the cameras.

Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the rebels' international spokesman, confirmed in a statement Sunday that Prabhakaran "attained martyrdom fighting the military oppression of the Sri Lankan government." He died on May 17 in a bloody battle on the island's northeast coast.

Pathmanathan said the group had declared a week of mourning starting Monday for Prabhakaran and urged the Tamil people to "restrain from harmful acts to themselves or anyone else in this hour of extreme grief."

Army commander Gen. Sarath Fonseka said in an interview published Sunday that Prabhakaran's remains were quickly cremated. "His body was burnt in that area and the ashes were sent to the sea," he told the Sinhalese-language Rivira newspaper.

Before Sunday's announcement by the Tigers, many questioned the veracity of the military's claims about his death.

Kanagalingam Sivajilingam, an ethnic Tamil lawmaker, said the government's behavior was suspicious, and he doubted the corpse shown in the photographs and in television footage was indeed that of the founder and leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"I can't prove if he is among the living or dead ... But I have my doubts about this body," he told The Associated Press.

Why, he wondered, were independent journalists not allowed to see the body before it was burned and the ashes scattered. "Only a DNA test will be an effective proof," he said.

Feeding the disbelief were the previous erroneous reports of Prabhakaran's end. He was thought to have been killed in fighting in 1987 by Indian troops summoned to help stop the civil war. He was believed to have drowned in the 2004 tsunami, along with some 35,000 Sri Lankans. Then he was reported to have been hit during bombing last year.

News of Prabhakaran's death this time brought thousands of cheering people onto the streets of Colombo, and set off a frenzy of self-congratulatory festivities by the government.

But Tamil neighborhoods were silent. Several world capitals with large Tamil expatriate communities witnessed demonstrations of protest.

"Looking at the incidents, the reports appear false to me. It is very much possible that he is alive. I am saying this because he has escaped the jaws of death many times and because of his fighting spirit," said Baskaran Vinasithami, who lives in Switzerland.

On Friday, the TamilNet Web site, the main **LTTE** information outlet, said reports of Prabhakaran's death were "engineered rumors" spread by the government.

"Our beloved leader is alive," it quoted a man identified only as Arivazhakan, head of the Tigers' International Secretariat of Intelligence.

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In the interview, Fonseka gave more details of the final clash, in which the rebel chief and the last 100 of his men were trapped in an ever-tightening vise after nearly a year in retreat.

Fonseka warned that the spirit of Eelam, or a Tamil national home, may outlive Prabhakaran.

"What we did in this fight was to destroy the front-line killers, but we don't think that all Eelamists are destroyed," the army chief said.

"Everyone must remember that the war is still not over. As an army, as a government and as a people we must realize this. Otherwise all what we did will be a waste."

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo.

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

The Associated Press

May 24, 2009 Sunday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 978 words

Byline: By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

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Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo.

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UNP MP hits out at JHU, NFF statements

Daily Mirror (Sri Lanka)

May 14, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 668 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, May 14 -- The main Opposition UNP charged that those who carried out a malicious and false propaganda campaign during the 2004 general election that the UNP was attempting to sell Sigiriya and Sinharaja are now planning to sell gold statues of Buddha and women's jewellery to support the Government.

Kurunegala District UNP Parliamentarian Akila Viraj Kariyawasam told a news briefing yesterday that even the colonial rulers had not suggested to sell Buddha statues at temples or sell valuables of women to fatten the State coffers. Commenting on alleged statements of JHU leader, Parliamentarian Ven. Ellawala Medhananda Thera and NFF leader Parliamentarian Wimal Weerawansa that they would urge temple prelates and women to sell Buddha statuettes and jewellery if the Government finds it difficult to raise funds for the war effort, he said the Government is scraping the bottom of the State coffers for its day-to-day running due to its own follies. "Ven. Medhananda Thera must take the lead in this respect by selling the golden Buddha statuettes at his temple and Mr. Weerawansa by asking his wife to sell her jewellery," Mr. Kariyawasam said. "The Government has exhausted all its financial resources to maintain a large number of ministers. Billions of rupees of public funds are spent on their house rents, vehicles, security and other perks. There are six nation building ministers including the latest addition of Karuna Amman. So it is no surprise that the country is in a huge financial crisis," Mr. Kariyawasam said. Predicting an imminent economic catastrophe and sharp escalation of prices of all essential commodities he said the UNP forewarned the voter on the impending economic disaster, when canvassing for the Western Provincial Council elections which were concluded recently. The poor and lower middle class who represent the vast majority of the population find it extremely difficult to make ends meet under the ever rising CoL, he added. "They said those who voted for the UNP were the ones who eat grass. Before long the Government has made all those who voted for the UPFA the ones who had actually eaten grass," he said. All other countries have plans for the current global economic crisis except Sri Lanka. The Government has offended the international community instead by its acts and confrontational remarks. The west is the main buyer of Sri Lankan products. What would befall Sri Lanka if the EU and the US imposed trade embargoes against Sri Lanka? Mr. Kariyawasam asked. It was Ranil Wickremesinghe who urged the EU in 2008 not to impose any restrictions on Sri Lanka's garment exports and saved the country, he said. Responding to a question on the UNP's policy on the war, he said the party is fully supportive of the war against terrorism. It was the UNP who had suffered most from LTTE atrocities losing the cream of its leaders, he said. Pooh-poohing the suggestion that the UNP was belittling the Government's war efforts, Mr. Kariyawasam said the UNP prepared the ground work for the LTTE defeat. "It was the UNP under J.R. Jayawardene which brought the LTTE to its knees in 1987 and was on the verge of eliminating it when it was thwarted by India. The STF and the SF which are performing a big role in anti-terrorist operations were established by the UNP. The Ranil Wickremesinghe regime in 2002 was responsible in cornering the LTTE through an international safety net and paving the way for the split of the terrorist outfit that led Karuna and Pillayan to quit with 5,000 cadres. How can some one accuse the UNP that it is against the war?" he questioned. Commenting on the

UNP MP hits out at JHU, NFF statements

current European tour of the Opposition Leader, Mr. Kariyawasam said his leader was touring those countries on invitations. "We can't help it if the President or other leaders are not getting any invitations from these countries. They receive invitations only from countries like Iran or Libya," he said. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Mirror Sri Lanka.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

End of Document

NEWS DIGEST 0100

Canwest News Service

October 27, 2009 Tuesday 02:54 AM EST

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Length: 1041 words

Body

Lines long as Canadians swamp H1N1 clinics - (CNS-CXN-UPDATE2-FLU- VACCINE)

On Day 1 of the largest mass-vaccination program in history, thousands of at- risk Canadians waited patiently in long queues yesterday, to be among the first to receive the H1N1 shot.

Lines containing hundreds of people snaked through shopping malls, local arenas and community centres, as mothers and fathers pushing strollers, seniors, pregnant women, and other Canadians believed to be most at risk of serious flu complications lined up before clinics opened.

Most provinces are first vaccinating Canadians who are believed to be most at risk of developing flu-related complications, such as those with chronic medical conditions, children between the ages of six months and five years, pregnant woman and health-care workers. The general public is being asked to hold off on going for their shots until priority groups have received theirs.

Canada, meanwhile, is spending more than \$2 million to buy H1N1 vaccine from Australia, so that pregnant woman can get their recommended shot ``on a timely basis."

Boisterous climate-change protest hits the Hill - (CNS-UPDATE4-HOUSE-PROTEST)

Six people were arrested and released, and two were injured - one bleeding from his mouth - after more than 120 people were forcibly removed from the House of Commons yesterday after interrupting question period with a climate- change protest.

The demonstrators hollered at MPs and chanted slogans, urging legislators to pass Bill C-311, an NDP bill that would commit Canada to meeting aggressive targets to cut the greenhouse-gas emissions that cause climate change. The protesters said they were not affiliated with, or organized by, the NDP.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff were not in the House.

One of those arrested, Jeh Custer of Edmonton, was seen bleeding from the mouth after his head struck the concrete walls inside the House of Commons.

Protest organizers at the scene identified the six people arrested: Custer, affiliated with Sierra Club Prairies; Eriel Deranger of Fort Chipewyan, Alta., affiliated with the Rainforest Action Network; Chelsea Flook of Ottawa, Dave Vasey of Walkerton, Ont., Ian Brannigan of Ottawa, and Adam MacIsaac, who is from Prince Edward Island.

Coyotes to be sold to NHL - (CNS-UPDATE-COYOTES)

NEWS DIGEST 0100

The owner of the Phoenix Coyotes has agreed to sell the troubled franchise to the National Hockey League for an undisclosed price.

The decision was announced late yesterday following talks between lawyers for Jerry Moyes and the NHL.

Bill Daly, deputy commissioner of the league, said in a statement late Monday evening that the goal is for the NHL to stabilize the franchise and sell it to a new buyer who would keep the team in place.

The statement said that ``in Phoenix (yesterday), a tentative agreement was reached among the parties to amend the NHL's offer to purchase the Coyotes franchise out of bankruptcy, and a proposed order, mutually agreed to by the parties, will be filed with the court seeking approval of the NHL's amended bid, "

The sale will not be made official until it receives the approval from Judge Redfield T. Baum in an Arizona bankruptcy court, which has been overseeing the case for months.

Migrant ship rusty outside but tidy, well-provisioned inside - (CNS-MIGRANT- SHIP)

Despite its rusty exterior, the 100-metre coastal freighter that carried 76 Sri Lankan migrants to Canada was outfitted with an immaculate diesel engine, tidy living quarters and an ample supply of food.

New details about the ship emerged yesterday amid allegations that one passenger - 26-year-old Kartheepan Manickavasagar - is the subject of an Interpol notice for his role in a procurement ring that smuggled electronic equipment to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the separatist guerrillas known as the Tamil Tigers.

Canadian Navy Cmdr. Derek Moss, captain of HMCS Regina, didn't personally board the Ocean Lady when his frigate intercepted the vessel as it entered Canadian waters off the northwestern tip of Vancouver Island on Oct. 16, but was given a rundown of the ship's condition.

According to Moss, the interior was clean, the engine immaculate, and people on board were in the habit of removing their shoes and putting on slippers before entering their sleeping quarters.

Mom charged with murder devoted to autistic son, neighbour says - (CNS- UPDATE2-AUTISTIC-SON)

The Toronto-area mother charged with murdering her autistic teenager was distraught in the days before the death, because her husband was considering moving him to a care home, neighbours said yesterday.

Peter Varanelli, a longtime friend and neighbour of the Mississauga, Ont., family, said Boon Khor wanted to move his son to a specialized care facility, but the mother could not bear the idea.

Varnelli said ``her son was her life. Period. . . . Maybe she should have just accepted that he needed to go to an institution, but she just couldn't see it that way."

Fifteen-year-old Tony Khor was found dead in a Mississauga hotel on Sunday. He was a low-functioning autistic unable to speak, often making noises in an attempt to communicate. He was found dead after a call from a room alerted police to his whereabouts. Sources told Global News the boy had been strangled.

His mother, Seow Cheng Sin, appeared in a Brampton court yesterday to face a charge of first-degree murder. She is reportedly on suicide watch.

Blind Algerian finally free to leave church refuge - (CNS-BRF-SANCTUARY)

After three years, nine months and 22 days, Abdelkader Belaouni is finally free.

Immigration authorities have said the blind refugee claimant - who took sanctuary in a church in suburban Point St. Charles, Que., on Jan. 1, 2006 - can stay in Canada.

NEWS DIGEST 0100

Belaouni, who left his native Algeria for the United States in 1996, said ``there's nothing better than to be free." Facing possible deportation there, he claimed refugee status in Canada in 2003.

In 2004, immigration authorities rejected his claim of persecution in his war-torn homeland and ordered his deportation in 2006.

Refugee advocates and community groups held rallies and concerts demanding a humanitarian decision in his favour and created a portable mural and documentary to publicize the case.

Load-Date: October 28, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lankan civilians flee rebel-held areas for second day =

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

April 21, 2009 Tuesday 5:42 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 470 words

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts Sri Lankan civilians flee rebel-held areas for second day =

Colombo (dpa) - Civilians fled Tamil rebel-held areas in north-eastern Sri Lanka for a second-consecutive day Tuesday, military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

He said the exact number of civilians who arrived from the rebel-held areas in Puthumathalan, 390 kilometres north-east of Colombo were not known but people were continuing to arrive in military-controlled areas.

On Monday, a record 39,081 civilians fled the rebel-held area using land and sea routes, he said.

The military facilitated their escape by breaking through earthworks put up by the separatist rebels to prevent security forces from entering.

The civilians continued to come in from what the government said is the last remaining rebel-held territory in Sri Lanka as a government deadline for rebel leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and his cadres to surrender ends at noon (0630 GMT).

Nanayakkara said irrespective of the deadline, troops were continuing operations to rescue civilians and clear the area of the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) as soon as possible.

He said that according to available intelligence reports, Prabhakaran and his intelligence chief, Pottu Amman, were still in the area.

Rebels are now confined to less than 12 square kilometres on the coast of the Mullaitivu district, which includes the Putumathalan area, a government-demarcated safe zone, officials said.

Before Monday's mass exodus, about 68,000 civilians had fled the rebel-held areas since January and were placed in welfare centres before resettlement.

The government has described the operation to get the civilians

Sri Lankan civilians flee rebel-held areas for second day =

out of the rebel-held area as one of the biggest "hostage rescue operations" in the world because it accuses the rebels of preventing the civilians from fleeing.

It said three women suicide bombers on Monday blew themselves up in the Puthumathalan area, killing 17 civilians and injuring 200, while people trying to escape claimed they were fired upon by the rebels to prevent them from leaving.

The LTTE, however, has accused the government of firing on civilians in the safe zone and forcing them into government territory.

Independent verification of these claims were not possible because the government has blocked journalists from the war zone.

The military said it is in the last phase of a drive to crush the LTTE, which has been fighting for more than 25 years for a separate state for the Tamil ethnic minority in the northern and eastern parts of majority-Sinhalese Sri Lanka.

Government troops launched the operations to recapture rebel-held areas in August 2006, first recapturing all rebel territory in the east last year before concentrating their operations in the north.

Apr 2109 0542 GMT

Load-Date: April 22, 2009

End of Document

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Associated Press Online

May 24, 2009 Sunday 7:45 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 978 words

Byline: By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

The defeated Tamil Tiger rebels confirmed Sunday that their supreme leader was killed in the group's final battle against Sri Lankan troops.

The almost mythic commander, Velupillai Prabhakaran, led a terror-driven Tamil insurrection in Sri Lanka for more than a quarter century. Last week the government declared it finally killed Prabhakaran and proclaimed victory against his **Tamil Tigers**, crushing the rebellion that the U.N. estimates cost between 80,000 to 100,000 lives.

But many Tamils didn't believe it.

For some die-hard followers, especially those living abroad, it hardly matters whether the legendary guerrilla is alive or dead, as long as there is a continuing story line of an independent Tamil state in part of this Sinhalese-dominated island.

Meanwhile, the government said it believes Prabhakaran's deputy and feared intelligence chief was also among the dead but his body has not been identified.

Sri Lanka's Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa said in an interview with privately owned Derana TV on Sunday that soldiers have still not been able to identify the body of Pottu Amman, who along with Prabhakaran were wanted by India for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

"There is no doubt that he's been killed," he said

The military earlier claimed to have identified the body of the spy chief. Rajapaksa did not explain the contradiction.

Gandhi was assassinated in 1991 by a **female** suicide bomber at an election rally.

Prabhakaran, who was 54, was a larger-than-life character who championed the dreams of the Sri Lanka's minority Tamils. He was seldom seen in public, yet his word was unquestioned. He governed by fiat over a de facto state in one-third of this Indian Ocean island.

Even many Tamils who abhorred the Tigers' suicide bombings and assassinations embraced him as their hope for dignity and equal rights in Sri Lanka.

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

Bloggers compared Prabhakaran to the Hidden Imam, who was born in the 9th century but who Shi'ite Muslims believe never died. Believers say the Hidden Imam will return one day to bring peace and justice to the world.

The Sri Lankan army says Prabhakaran was among the last to die in the civil war's final battle on Tuesday. His body was found in a thicket of mangroves along a shallow lagoon on the desolate northeastern coast.

Photographs of the familiar mustachioed face, a handkerchief covering the fatal head wound, were splashed on the front pages of Sri Lanka's national papers on Wednesday. Unpublished pictures show a sickle-shaped gash through the bone of his forehead. His dog tags number 001 and ID card were put on display for the cameras.

Selvarasa Pathmanathan, the rebels' international spokesman, confirmed in a statement Sunday that Prabhakaran "attained martyrdom fighting the military oppression of the Sri Lankan government." He died on May 17 in a bloody battle on the island's northeast coast.

Pathmanathan said the group had declared a week of mourning starting Monday for Prabhakaran and urged the Tamil people to "restrain from harmful acts to themselves or anyone else in this hour of extreme grief."

Army commander Gen. Sarath Fonseka said in an interview published Sunday that Prabhakaran's remains were quickly cremated. "His body was burnt in that area and the ashes were sent to the sea," he told the Sinhalese-language Rivira newspaper.

Before Sunday's announcement by the Tigers, many questioned the veracity of the military's claims about his death.

Kanagalingam Sivajilingam, an ethnic Tamil lawmaker, said the government's behavior was suspicious, and he doubted the corpse shown in the photographs and in television footage was indeed that of the founder and leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

"I can't prove if he is among the living or dead ... But I have my doubts about this body," he told The Associated Press.

Why, he wondered, were independent journalists not allowed to see the body before it was burned and the ashes scattered. "Only a DNA test will be an effective proof," he said.

Feeding the disbelief were the previous erroneous reports of Prabhakaran's end. He was thought to have been killed in fighting in 1987 by Indian troops summoned to help stop the civil war. He was believed to have drowned in the 2004 tsunami, along with some 35,000 Sri Lankans. Then he was reported to have been hit during bombing last year.

News of Prabhakaran's death this time brought thousands of cheering people onto the streets of Colombo, and set off a frenzy of self-congratulatory festivities by the government.

But Tamil neighborhoods were silent. Several world capitals with large Tamil expatriate communities witnessed demonstrations of protest.

"Looking at the incidents, the reports appear false to me. It is very much possible that he is alive. I am saying this because he has escaped the jaws of death many times and because of his fighting spirit," said Baskaran Vinasithami, who lives in Switzerland.

On Friday, the TamilNet Web site, the main **LTTE** information outlet, said reports of Prabhakaran's death were "engineered rumors" spread by the government.

"Our beloved leader is alive," it quoted a man identified only as Arivazhakan, head of the Tigers' International Secretariat of Intelligence.

Tamil Tiger rebels confirm leader's death

In the interview, Fonseka gave more details of the final clash, in which the rebel chief and the last 100 of his men were trapped in an ever-tightening vise after nearly a year in retreat.

Fonseka warned that the spirit of Eelam, or a Tamil national home, may outlive Prabhakaran.

"What we did in this fight was to destroy the front-line killers, but we don't think that all Eelamists are destroyed," the army chief said.

"Everyone must remember that the war is still not over. As an army, as a government and as a people we must realize this. Otherwise all what we did will be a waste."

Associated Press writer Krishan Francis contributed to this report from Colombo.

Load-Date: May 25, 2009

End of Document

Bloody Sri Lanka; Both sides should be threatened with war crimes charges

Financial Times (London, England)

May 15, 2009 Friday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: LEADER; Pg. 8

Length: 423 words

Body

At last, the United Nations Security Council has spoken. It has seen what has been miserably apparent all year: that there is a bloodbath under way in the ever-diminishing territory held by rebel Tamils in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

True, the end-game in this long and vicious civil war has been clouded by the swirl of unverifiable reports and propaganda from both sides. Yet, as leaked UN satellite pictures as well as eyewitness accounts from the front attest, it is perfectly clear that innocent civilians, including women and a lot of children, are being killed in their hundreds, mostly by air strikes and shelling by the government.

The tiny spit of beach and jungle that is the last redoubt of the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE), once the most formidable irregular army in the world, is being pounded to bits, with upwards of 50,000 Tamil refugees in the middle. According to the UN, more than 6,400 civilians have been killed since the end of January, including hundreds last weekend.

That prompted Barack Obama to warn that "this humanitarian crisis could turn into a catastrophe". And on Wednesday, the Security Council finally called on the army to cease using heavy weapons, and the rebels to lay down their arms and let civilians in the area flee.

Yet this was a mere statement, and a feeble one at that, rather than a legally binding resolution. The UN should threaten both sides with prosecution for war crimes. Council members led by China - whose no-questions-asked funnelling of arms to the Sri Lankan government helped tip the balance in this 25-year old conflict - insist it is an internal matter posing no threat to regional or international stability. That is short-sighted sophistry.

To begin with, China's sudden eruption on this island in the Indian Ocean is part of its competition for regional influence with India.

Just as important, the government of Mahinda Rajapaksa rode to power on a wave of Sinhalese chauvinism, now fanned by the ugly triumphalism with which Colombo is contemplating the final liquidation of the Tigers. No one should mourn the passing of the ruthless and sanguinary LTTE. But the Tamil cause will reignite from the embers of this war unless the Sinhala majority shows magnanimity and gives the Tamils control of their own lives.

Mr Rajapaksa has only defeated the resourceful LTTE's conventional capability. Until Iraq, the Tigers were the world's most prolific suicide bombers. They will regroup - and expand offshore - with a vengeance that will match the government's vengefulness.

Bloody Sri Lanka Both sides should be threatened with war crimes charges

Load-Date: May 14, 2009

End of Document

Northern and Uva polls

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

June 27, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 903 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, June 27 -- Soon after achieving an unprecedented victory over terrorism, the Government proclaimed that it wanted to establish democracy and pluralism in all Northern areas, including the newly liberated ones. For nearly 30 years, the LTTE had stifled the democratic voices of the Northern masses, eliminating their elected representatives and quelling any form of dissent. Now that the LTTE has been eliminated from our soil, the people in the North are free again to taste democracy.

It is in this context that the Government should be lauded for initiating polls for two of the most important centres in the North - Vavuniya and Jaffna. The Vavuniya Urban Council and Jaffna Municipal Council elections will be held on August 8, according to the Polls Chief. This will mark the revival of democracy in the North, as it is the first time that polls are being held there after the LTTE's defeat. It is also the first Northern poll to be held sans the influence of the Tigers. All Governments have held polls in the North amidst various difficulties and LTTE manipulations. The results did not truly reflect the people's will as the LTTE intimidated elections officials and voters. On several occasions, the Tigers ensured that their proxies would be elected to Parliament and local bodies. Now there would be no such inhibitions for voters to elect their representatives. Some argue that the polls are being held in two places which have been under Government control in any case. What they should realize is that this only the first step in gradually expanding the electoral process to the entire North including Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu which were regained recently. First, the people have to be resettled there and all other facilities provided for their welfare, before elections can be held. This process is already underway, but it cannot be completed overnight as critics demand. Once these conditions are fulfilled, elections to all local bodies and to the Northern Provincial Council will follow in line with the Government's policy of rapid democratization of the North. The East was a good example - polls swiftly followed resettlement. Polls will give the Northern masses to sort out their welfare and development issues with people's representatives they can trust. The local bodies and the Provincial Council will have a major role to play in the Government's Northern Spring development program. Inputs of the people at grassroots level on the Northern Spring development drive could be channelled to the Central Government through the local bodies. It is also significant that almost all the major parties including the UPFA, UNP, TULF, and ITAK are contesting the polls, thus giving a wide choice to the voter. Many parties including EROS and TELO are contesting the election under the UPFA banner. Such enthusiasm among the political parties will hopefully translate into a better deal for the voters. The Northern Poll will get most of the attention, but one cannot forget the other poll slated for August 8. The Uva Provincial Council poll is no less significant, because it is the first poll to be held in the South after the defeat of terrorism. This verdict will more or less reflect the Southern public response to the liberation of the North by the Security Forces. There is hardly any doubt that the Uva residents would also endorse the Government's action to end the menace of terrorism. Apart from the North and the East, Uva remains one of the poorest provinces in the country. Development should be the number one priority for the Uva Provincial Council which will be elected in August. The Government has announced special development plans for the region and the Provincial Council will

Northern and Uva polls

have a pivotal role to play. It is heartening to note all political parties are nominating more women and youth for the three elections. Political parties contesting the Northern and Uva polls must also strive to maintain the highest standards during the polls campaign and on polls day itself. Violence has tainted many elections in Sri Lanka, though the last few provincial council elections saw fewer violations of electoral laws. Political parties must instruct their candidates and supporters to behave in a disciplined manner, respecting their opponents and voters. A peaceful atmosphere is essential for voters to exercise their franchise properly. It is also important for political parties to cooperate fully with the Security Forces and the Police to maintain security arrangements and law and order. We also hope that the parties would take environmental concerns into consideration during the campaign. The electorate can live without an excess of posters, polythene decorations and noisy megaphones. The political parties can perhaps be given more time on the electronic media to offset any propaganda losses that may result from limiting posters, handbills and decorations. The very nature of our electoral process based on the flawed Proportional Representation system, leads to violence and excessive propaganda. The authorities should move swiftly to introduce the planned electoral reforms, so that polls such as the ones slated for August 8 would be even more indicative of the people's aspirations. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: June 27, 2009

End of Document

Sri Lanka bringing refugees home

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

November 7, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A21

Length: 267 words

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Dateline: GENEVA

Body

About a third of those displaced during the conflict between the Sri Lanka government and the *Tamil Tigers* have returned home over the past three months, the UN refugee agency said Friday.

"Some 90,000 internally displaced people have returned to their villages in Sri Lanka's north and east over the past three months, under the ongoing return plan of the Sri Lankan government," said Andrej Mahecic, spokesman for the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

These include 39,000 people who have headed home in the past two weeks "as part of the government's efforts to accelerate the process," he added. In addition, 16,500 people, including the elderly, pregnant *women* and people with disabilities, have been released from camps and are now staying with host families.

Some 274,000 people were displaced during the conflict. About 163,000 people still remain in camps where "conditions are deteriorating," said Mahecic.

Since the state-run camps are tightly guarded and international observers and aid agencies have not been given free access, Colombo has come under international pressure to quickly allow the displaced to go home. The Sri Lankan government said it would allow resettlement once minefields were cleared and the refugees had been screened for rebel Tamil Tiger fighters.

In a bid to "accelerate" the mine-clearing process, Mahecic said the UNHCR is providing five demining machines. "Humanitarian demining and the removal of unexploded ordnance are prerequisites for delivery of humanitarian assistance, early recovery and development in conflict affected areas," he said.

Load-Date: November 7, 2009

DISPLACED SRI LANKANS TRAPPED BETWEEN MILITARY AND IMPENDING MONSOON

States News Service

October 8, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 714 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK, NY

Body

The following information was released by Amnesty International USA:

A quarter of a million Sri Lankans now being held in de facto detention camps are facing a humanitarian disaster as monsoon rains threaten to flood camps, said Amnesty International on Thursday.

Months after the government of Sri Lanka set up camps in Vavuniya District in the north-east of the country following the end of the conflict there, the authorities are still failing to deliver basic services.

Camps remain overcrowded and lack basic sanitation facilities and heavy rains in September saw rivers of water cascading through tents with camp residents wading through overflowing sewage.

"People living in these camps are desperate to leave. The government must ensure that the displaced are treated with dignity. They have a right to protection and must be consulted on whether they wish to return to their homes or resettle," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty International's Sri Lanka expert, who is in contact with relatives of people inside the camp.

"The provision of protection, assistance and return is not an act of charity but a basic right," said Yolanda Foster.

A recent escapee from Chettikulam camp told Amnesty International how some women had to give birth in front of strangers without privacy.

"Medical staff are only available in the camps 9 to 5," the escapee said. "People start queuing for medical assistance from early morning... how can you expect a lady who is pregnant to stand in a queue for hours? If the war has ended why doesn't the government let these people out?"

Amnesty International has also received reports that the military is blocking release attempts by the civilian administration.

Since the war ended in May 2009, thousands of people detained in camps have been subjected to 'screening' processes by the security forces.

While screening processes need to be followed to ensure that people are not members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) they should follow proper procedures and not be used as an excuse for collective punishment.

DISPLACED SRI LANKANS TRAPPED BETWEEN MILITARY AND IMPENDING MONSOON

There are separate detention facilities for approximately 10,000 ex-LTTE combatants.

The government has widely publicised recent releases from the camps yet Amnesty International has received reports that many are simply transfers to other camps where the displaced may be subjected to rescreening by local authorities.

Amnesty International has previously raised concerns about the lack of independent monitoring and lack of accountability for the screening process.

The Sri Lankan government must involve the displaced in plans for return or resettlement. It should also facilitate the assistance of independent humanitarian organisations.

"Freedom of movement is now critical. The international community and the government of Sri Lanka can no longer ignore the voices of camp detainees to be allowed to leave," said Yolanda Foster.

Background

According to government figures, the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) displaced over 409,000 people. At least 280,000 are displaced from areas previously under LTTE control. A dramatic influx of people fleeing the fighting and crossing to government controlled areas took place from March 2009.

The displaced people, including at least 50,000 children, are being accommodated in 41 camps spread over four districts. The majority of the displaced are in Vavuniya District where Manik Farm is the biggest camp.

When United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited some of the camps in May, he said: "I have travelled around the world and visited similar places, but this is by far the most appalling scene I have seen."

While some progress had been made on providing basic needs, much still needs to be done on the right to health, food, water, family reunion and access to relatives.

Amnesty International has also called on the government of Sri Lanka to end restrictions on liberty and freedom of movement; ensure that camps are of a truly civilian nature and administered by civilian authorities, rather than under military supervisions; and give immediate and full access to national and international organizations and observers, including aid agencies, in order to monitor the situation and provide a safeguard against human rights violations.

Load-Date: October 10, 2009

Displaced Sri Lankans Trapped Between the Military and the Impending Monsoon

Targeted News Service

October 8, 2009 Thursday 6:02 AM EST

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Length: 726 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Amnesty International issued the following news release:

A quarter of a million Sri Lankans now being held in de facto detention camps are facing a humanitarian disaster as monsoon rains threaten to flood camps, said Amnesty International on Thursday.

Months after the government of Sri Lanka set up camps in Vavuniya District in the north-east of the country following the end of the conflict there, the authorities are still failing to deliver basic services.

Camps remain overcrowded and lack basic sanitation facilities and heavy rains in September saw rivers of water cascading through tents with camp residents wading through overflowing sewage.

"People living in these camps are desperate to leave. The government must ensure that the displaced are treated with dignity. They have a right to protection and must be consulted on whether they wish to return to their homes or resettle," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty International's Sri Lanka expert, who is in contact with relatives of people inside the camp

"The provision of protection, assistance and return is not an act of charity but a basic right," said Yolanda Foster.

A recent escapee from Chettikulam camp told Amnesty International how some women had to give birth in front of strangers without privacy.

"Medical staff are only available in the camps 9 to 5," the escapee said. "People start queuing for medical assistance from early morning... how can you expect a lady who is pregnant to stand in a queue for hours? If the war has ended why doesn't the government let these people out?"

Amnesty International has also received reports that the military is blocking release attempts by the civilian administration.

Since the war ended in May 2009, thousands of people detained in camps have been subjected to 'screening' processes by the security forces.

While screening processes need to be followed to ensure that people are not members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) they should follow proper procedures and not be used as an excuse for collective punishment.

Displaced Sri Lankans Trapped Between the Military and the Impending Monsoon

There are separate detention facilities for approximately 10,000 ex-LTTE combatants.

The government has widely publicised recent releases from the camps yet Amnesty International has received reports that many are simply transfers to other camps where the displaced may be subjected to rescreening by local authorities.

Amnesty International has previously raised concerns about the lack of independent monitoring and lack of accountability for the screening process.

The Sri Lankan government must involve the displaced in plans for return or resettlement. It should also facilitate the assistance of independent humanitarian organisations.

Take Action"Freedom of movement is now critical. The international community and the government of Sri Lanka can no longer ignore the voices of camp detainees to be allowed to leave," said Yolanda Foster.

Background

According to government figures, the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) displaced over 409,000 people. At least 280,000 are displaced from areas previously under LTTE control. A dramatic influx of people fleeing the fighting and crossing to government controlled areas took place from March 2009.

The displaced people, including at least 50,000 children, are being accommodated in 41 camps spread over four districts. The majority of the displaced are in Vavuniya District where Manik Farm is the biggest camp.

When United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited some of the camps in May, he said: "I have travelled around the world and visited similar places, but this is by far the most appalling scene I have seen."

While some progress had been made on providing basic needs, much still needs to be done on the right to health, food, water, family reunion and access to relatives.

Amnesty International has also called on the government of Sri Lanka to end restrictions on liberty and freedom of movement; ensure that camps are of a truly civilian nature and administered by civilian authorities, rather than under military supervisions; and give immediate and full access to national and international organizations and observers, including aid agencies, in order to monitor the situation and provide a safeguard against human rights violations.

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Load-Date: October 9, 2009

SRI LANKA: DISPLACED NOW TRAPPED BETWEEN MILITARY AND IMPENDING MONSOON

States News Service

October 7, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 States News Service

Length: 709 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK, NY

Body

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A quarter of a million Sri Lankans now being held in de facto detention camps are facing a humanitarian disaster as monsoon rains threaten to flood camps, said Amnesty International today.

Months after the government of Sri Lanka set up camps in Vavuniya District in the north-east of the country following the end of the conflict there, the authorities are still failing to deliver basic services.

Camps remain overcrowded and lack basic sanitation facilities and heavy rains in September saw rivers of water cascading through tents with camp residents wading through overflowing sewage.

People living in these camps are desperate to leave. The government must ensure that the displaced are treated with dignity. They have a right to protection and must be consulted on whether they wish to return to their homes or resettle," said Yolanda Foster, Amnesty International's Sri Lanka expert, who is in contact with relatives of people inside the camp.

The provision of protection, assistance and return is not an act of charity but a basic right, said Yolanda Foster.

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Medical staff are only available in the camps 9 to 5, the escapee said, people start queuing for medical assistance from early morning...how can you expect a lady who is pregnant to stand in a queue for hours. If the war has ended why doesn't the government let these people out?

Amnesty International has also received reports that the military is blocking release attempts by the civilian administration.

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While screening processes need to be followed to ensure that people are not members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) they should follow proper procedures and not be used as an excuse for collective punishment.

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Amnesty has previously raised concerns about the lack of independent monitoring and lack of accountability for the screening process.

The Sri Lankan government must involve the displaced themselves in plans for return or resettlement and facilitate the assistance of independent humanitarian organisations in this regard.

Freedom of movement is now critical. The international community and the government of Sri Lanka can no longer ignore the voices of camp detainees to be allowed to leave, Said Yolanda Foster.

Background

According to government figures, the fighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (**LTTE**) displaced over 409,000 people. At least 280,000 are displaced from areas previously under **LTTE** control. A dramatic influx of people fleeing the fighting and crossing to government controlled areas took place from March 2009.

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Amnesty International has also called on the government of Sri Lanka to end restrictions on liberty and freedom of movement; ensure that camps are of a truly civilian nature and administered by civilian authorities, rather than under military supervisions; and give immediate and full access to national and international organizations and observers, including aid agencies, in order to monitor the situation and provide a safeguard against human rights violations.

Load-Date: October 10, 2009

SRI LANKA Gun wounds spark warning Camps struggle to handle casualties

The Advertiser (Australia)

April 25, 2009 Saturday

1 - State Edition

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Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 42

Length: 260 words

Byline: KRISHAN FRANCIS, COLOMBO

Body

THE more than 100,000 civilians pouring out of Sri Lanka's war zone have included people with untreated blast, mine and gunshot wounds - prompting the U.N. chief to order an expert team to assess the ``rapidly deteriorating situation."

Doctors Without Borders warned yesterday that civilian casualties are rising in the zone where the military is trying to finish off a 25-year-old insurgency, while the Government pleaded for humanitarian aid.

``I saw infants with dysentery, malnourished children and women, untended wounds and people dressed in the ragged clothing they've been wearing for months,"

said Neil Buhne, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator, after returning from the northern town of Vauniya, where tens of thousands of people are kept in overcrowded government camps.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, speaking to reporters in Brussels, said he would immediately send in a team of humanitarian experts to monitor the situation and ``try to do whatever we can to protect the civilian population".

At least 6432 civilians were killed in the intense fighting over the past three months and 13,946 wounded, according to a private U.N. document.

The Government says 104,862 civilians have escaped the conflict since Monday.

Some 170,000 to 180,000 civilians now live in government camps, said Gordon Weiss, the U.N. spokesman in Colombo.

An extra 15,000 to 20,000 civilians remain trapped in the coastal strip measuring just 12 sq km still controlled by the ethnic separatist Tamil Tigers.

Only two ill-equipped, makeshift hospitals function in the war zone.

Load-Date: April 24, 2009

SRI LANKA Gun wounds spark warning Camps struggle to handle casualties struggle to casualties

End of Document

AFP Asia-Pacific news summary

Agence France Presse -- English

April 24, 2009 Friday 9:19 AM GMT

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Length: 287 words

Dateline: HONG KONG, April 24 2009

Body

AFP Asia-Pacific news summary for Friday:

Pakistan-unrest-northwest

PESHAWAR, Pakistan: Taliban fighters were to quit a Pakistan district where the government deployed extra forces under US pressure to stop hardliners advancing closer to the capital, officials said.

SriLanka-unrest

KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka: The leader of Sri Lanka's ***Tamil Tigers*** is trapped in a small strip of jungle in the northeast and intends to make a final stand with his surviving forces, an army commander said.

NKorea-US-military-media

SEOUL: North Korea said two detained ***female*** US journalists will stand trial for unspecified crimes, a move seen by analysts as pressuring Washington to open direct dialogue.

Thailand-politics-protest

BANGKOK: Thai Premier Abhisit Vejjajiva lifted a state of emergency imposed in Bangkok after violent protests, but said troops would remain deployed amid opposition plans to take to the streets again.

China-Japan-diplomacy-WWII

BEIJING: China confirmed that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso would visit Beijing next week, amid a diplomatic spat over his offering to a controversial war shrine.

NKorea-Russia-SKorea-nuclear

SEOUL: North Korea has told Russia's visiting foreign minister that it has no further use for international nuclear disarmament talks, the communist state's official media reported.

India-vote-Kashmir

AFP Asia-Pacific news summary

SRINAGAR, India: Police in Indian Kashmir placed the troubled region's separatist leaders under house arrest to prevent them addressing rallies aimed at shoring up support for an election boycott.

Health-Asia-Singapore-medicine-surgery-transplant

SINGAPORE: A 58-year-old Singaporean pastor is recovering well after undergoing Asia's first simultaneous heart and liver transplant, his medical team said.

afp

Load-Date: April 25, 2009

End of Document

Countering terrorism and healing wounds

Daily News (Sri Lanka)

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Body

Sri Lanka, Sept. 30 -- Statement by Disaster Management and Human Rights MP, at the 60th Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Geneva, Switzerland on Monday.

The Government's objectives with regard to IDPs can be encapsulated in the following terms as expressed by the Prime Minister in his address to the UN General Assembly in New York on September 26. He said: "With the defeat of the LTTE in May this year, nearly 290,000 civilians in the Vanni were liberated from the decades - long hold of the LTTE. One of our highest priorities thereafter has been to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of these displaced civilians, and to ensure their long-term safe, voluntary and dignified return to their homes.

The welfare of our people in temporary transit sites must keep up with standards that meet our own high expectations as well as accepted international norms. This task has been facilitated by the assistance we receive from UN , international and local civil society partners and donors."

The Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, Professor Walter Kalin was in Sri Lanka for a three-day visit which concluded over the weekend. He was able to observe, at first hand, the conditions in the welfare villages and the preparations for accelerated resettlement in Mannar District including de-mining and restoration of vital infrastructure that will sustain and stabilize resettlement and return.

Professor K?lin is one international partner of Sri Lanka who has forged a constructive relationship with the country based on open dialogue and frank acknowledgement of the positives as well as the shortcomings that need to be remedied.

We welcome such engagement and the sharing of best practice by international experts so that we, as a Government, can develop and fine-tune our responses to challenges that we are called upon to face. We have taken serious note of the concerns expressed by Professor K?lin and other friends and partners relating to the conditions in the camps, the issues surrounding freedom of movement and other prote

With the defeat of terrorism, the Government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa is doing its utmost to reconstruct the foundations of a peaceful, democratic social order throughout the territory of the Sri Lankan nation. Reconciliation and development form an integral part of this exercise. Key to the success of the overall initiative is the treatment and eventual resettlement and return of IDPs who are among the worst affected by the conflict.

As the Disaster Management Minister, I view the return to normal life of these persons as critical in terms of prevention and mitigation of potential future conflict. Terrorism and civil strife are among the worst man-made disasters.

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This is why we place such great emphasis on a comprehensive plan to redevelop infrastructure in war affected areas and ensure that these areas are safe and secure prior to resettling persons. We are aware that there are trained and formerly active members of the LTTE among the IDPs.

Those who have identified themselves and have given themselves up are being housed in special rehabilitation centres and a separate office was created - that of the Commissioner-General for Rehabilitation - to cater to their rehabilitation.

The Ministry has taken the initiative to put together an all encompassing policy framework which will take a broad view of social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants. Action plans are being developed by national stakeholders and will be formally adopted later this week to actualize this policy framework. We have worked closely with ILO and UNDP in this initiative.

These ex-combatants too will have the opportunity to become full and productive partners in building the new Sri Lanka envisioned by President Rajapaksa.

There are still some persons among the IDPs who have not disclosed their former affiliation with the LTTE. These persons pose a risk not only to the IDPs with whom they are intermingled but, if released, can cause destabilization and chaos amongst civilians elsewhere in the country. It is for this reason that we have been very careful about releases and permitting full freedom of movement.

The Government has a responsibility to guarantee the human rights of the entirety of the Sri Lankan population - not only the rights of the IDPs. Allowing LTTE cadres, masquerading as ordinary displaced civilians, freedom of movement could pose a grave threat to people in the rest of the country. The global community knows only too well the atrocities committed by the LTTE against civilian populations.

Given the sizeable stores of arms, ammunition and explosives being recovered on a daily basis in the former theatre of conflict and outside that area, the ability of the remnants of the LTTE to carry out indiscriminate acts of terrorism must not be underestimated. This does not mean that attempts to characterize the welfare centres and relief villages as "internment camps" are in any way justified.

Limited freedom of movement has been permitted and with the completion of screening, registration and profiling of IDPs, greater freedom of movement would be gradually ensured.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, we have released certain categories of persons and plans are under way to invite more persons among the general public to come forward and take care of IDPs. Indeed, advertisements have been placed in national newspapers, especially Tamil Language newspapers, inviting suitable persons to apply to host IDPs. The first round resulted in nearly 2,000 applications which are being processed and more notifications, including within the welfare centres and relief villages, will follow.

More than 23,000 persons have been released for return and resettlement in Jaffna, Ampara, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Mannar Districts. A further 9,000 persons belonging to special categories have been handed over to persons or institutions that will care for them.

These include orphaned children, members of the clergy and their family members, persons over 60 years of age, university students, public servants and their families, pregnant women and disabled persons. We have undertaken to return or resettle the bulk of the IDPs by January 31, commensurating with the 180 day program for resettlement.

The authorities in charge of maintaining the camps have also put in place a system of day-passes whereby IDPs who need to attend to specific wants, ranging from attending a family wedding to visiting their bank in a nearby town, can leave the camps for a limited period of time.

Furthermore, "go and see visits" are being organized for the rest of the IDPs to ensure that eventual return and resettlement is voluntary and based on an informed choice. This is not typical of the treatment of persons in so-called internment camps.

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The return and resettlement program can only be completed when demining can be completed and we expect to be able to report on major advances in this area during the coming weeks.

The acquisition of 10 new flailing machines, using Government funds will enable us to clear much more ground and obtain necessary certification from the United Nations concerned.

According to the initial survey carried out by the Information Management System on Mine Action, it is estimated that nearly 1.5 million landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contaminate an area of 402 sq km. Since the beginning of January 2009, de-mining of 25 small administrative divisions has been completed. According to the National Steering Committee on Mine Action, de-mining in 15 divisions in Musali, Manthai West and the Rice bowl area of Mannar covering 80 sqkm have commenced and clearance is on-going. De-mining of the Rice bowl area is expected to be complete by Mid-October to enable further resettlement.

In the District Vavuniya, 35 divisions have already been cleared and are ready for the resettlement of IDPs. De-mining activities in another 10 divisions is ongoing.

In Jaffna, de-mining in 14 divisions has been completed with de-mining activities in a further 19 divisions ongoing. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily News Sri Lanka. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Search operation in Sri Lanka after rebels kill eight civilians =

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DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts Search operation in Sri Lanka after rebels kill eight civilians =
Colombo

The Sri Lankan army, backed by police commandos, mounted a search operation in the south of the country Monday after eight civilians were massacred by suspected Tamil rebels overnight, a military spokesman said.

Rebels stormed the village of Mahagodaya in the Buttala area, 340 kilometres south-east of Colombo, Sunday night and opened fire at the residents, he said.

A one-and-a-half-year-old toddler, an 11-year-old boy and three women were among those killed.

Small groups of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels are known to be operating in the south-eastern part of the country and have been carrying out sporadic attacks on villagers as well as security guards in the area.

However, the military said there are no large camps or substantive numbers of rebels in the area.

The attack came as President Mahinda Rajapaksa ordered troops to halt fighting in the northern part of the country for the Sri Lankan New Year observed Monday and Tuesday by the minority Hindu Tamils and the majority Sinhala Buddhists, allowing civilians to flee the conflict zone.

Rajapaksa has called on the rebels to allow civilians to leave the last rebel-held area of less 20 square kilometers, which has been surrounded by the military.

At least 50,000 civilians have been trapped in the area, with the military claiming that the rebels are preventing them from leaving.

The military says they are about to crush the LTTE, who have been

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fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the northern and eastern parts of the country for decades.

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