

Date and Time: Saturday, May 4, 2024 2:18:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223508007

Documents (100)

1. IRAQ WAR: ASSASSINS WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR BELIEFS

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

2. Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 7 rebels, 1 soldier, military says

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

3. VOA NEWS: FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBER TARGETS SRI LANKA 'S ARMY CHIEF

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

4. Three sailors missing, one injured in foiled rebel attack on Sri Lankan navy

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

5. Three Sri Lankan sailors missing, one injured during rebel attack at sea

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

6. Sri Lankan peace talks always in peaceful, exotic venue

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

7._Timeline on Sri Lanka 2007

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

8. Separatist rebels clash with Sri Lankan navy in sea battle that threatens truce

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

9. Lanka's shadow war threatens ceasefire pact

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

10. Obituary: SP Thamilselvan: Chief negotiator and international face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

11. Aid staff die in Sri Lanka 's crossfire

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

12. Civilian areas hit by artillery in northeast Sri Lanka, 3 killed, 11 wounded

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

13. Sri Lanka rejects Norway deal with Tigers, battle for water resumes

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

14. Sri Lanka resumes battle for water, French struggle to find killers

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

15. Bomb in bus kills 16 in eastern Sri Lanka

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

16. STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES BACKGROUND NOTE ON SRI LANKA

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

17. Sri lankan rebels say detained policemen should go through Tigers court

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

18. Civilians hurt in rebel attack in northern Sri Lanka

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

19. Lanka burning... again?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

20. Police in Sri Lanka arrest 3 suspected female rebels at hospital

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

21. Rebels blamed for MP's assassination



Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

22. Amazons of Sri Lanka 's long war

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

23. Pro-Tiger group stages protest in northern Sri Lankan town

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

24. Outlawing Tigers good first step

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

25. Tamil 'cleansing' halted

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

26. Aid agencies stymied by war in Sri Lanka

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

27. 5 people killed in northern Sri Lanka

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

28. SRI LANKA: CEASEFIRE HAS NOT IMPROVED LIFE FOR MANY

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

29. The White Tigress of Suburbia

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

30. STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES BACKGROUND NOTE ON SRI LANKA

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

31. SRI LANKA: 200,000 DISPLACED, SECURITY WORSENING IN GOVERNMENT-SEPARATIST

FIGHTING

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

32. How one Sri Lanka city stays above the ethnic fray

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

33. 'Everything has been destroyed'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

34. Sri Lanka minister survives assassination attempt

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

35. Convulsions in Colombo

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

36. Top Sri Lankan officer killed in suicide attack

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

37. ROUNDUP: Bomber kills one, herself near minister's Colombo office

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

38. Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: officials

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

39. Roundup: Escalation of violence hampers revival of Sri Lanka 's peace process

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

40. Series of battles kill 23 rebels, 1 soldier in volatile northern Sri Lanka: military

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

41. Japanese envoy keeps up talks to save Sri Lanka peace bid

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

42. Sri Lanka foes seek foreign help to avert war

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

43. SRI LANKA 'S FRAGILE PEACE PROCESS FACES ANOTHER BLOW

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

44. Norwegian envoy meets Sri Lankan rebels amid rising violence

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

45. SRI LANKA: ANNUAL DAY OF TIGER SUICIDE BOMBINGS PASSES QUIETLY

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

46. Tamil Rebels Bring Discipline to Disaster

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

47. Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

48._18 killed in Sri Lanka bomb blasts: officials

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

49. SRI LANKA: TWO REBEL GROUPS SPAR OVER WHO REPRESENTS TAMILS

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

50. Three Gandhi assassination accused still on death row

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

51. Suicide bombing kills senior Sri Lankan officer as army elite is targeted

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

52. 3rd Ld Explosion kills 16, injures 20 in Colombo

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

53. Sri Lankan govt condemns killing of Tamil party member

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

54. Sri Lanka seeks foreign pressure on Tigers

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

55. Bravo to pro-war monks

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

56. US urges Sri Lankan Tamil rebels to renounce terrorism

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

57. 3rd Ld Explosion kills 17, injures 39 in Colombo

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

58. Relief work goes smoothly in areas of Sri Lanka controlled by Tamil rebels

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

59. Tamil rebels bring military discipline to tsunami relief, underscoring their demand for independence

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

60. What drives suicide bombers?: Authors reveal chilling observations about the war on terror

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

61. JVP wants Norway out as mediator

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

62. Sri Lanka 's reclusive top Tamil Tiger leader to make annual speech

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

63. Tamils threaten suicide bombing

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

64. Tamil Tiger rebels warn that new violence could mar Sri Lanka 's peace

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

65. Timeline of the recent upsurge in violence in Sri Lanka

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

66. Refugees facing bleak future as Tigers hit back

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

67. Sri Lanka rebels seek Japan 's help to prevent 'doom'

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

68. ROUNDUP: At least 17 dead, over 43 injured in two blasts in Colombo

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

69. All for Tamils, nothing for Muslims?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

70. Suspected rebel landmine kills 64 in Sri Lanka, army shells Tigers

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

71. Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: police

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

72. Indian premier's assassins become cyber-savvy

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

73. 5th Ld, 7 killed, 33 injured in explosion in Sri Lankan capital

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

74. Sri Lanka: Urgent need for effective protection of civilians as conflict intensifies

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

75. Fierce fighting around Sri Lankan port reportedly kills 40 rebels, five soldiers

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

76. Fighting in Sri Lanka Worsens; 128 Dead

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

77. ROUNDUP: Top military Sri Lankan officer, 3 others killed by bomb

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

78. STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES BACKGROUND NOTE ON SRI LANKA

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News

79. 2 civilians killed in northern Sri Lanka blast

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

80. Sri Lankan troops kill 12 rebels

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

81. Muslims caught in midst of Sri Lanka chaos

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

82. Sri Lanka 's president says rebel bombs are fuelling ethnic backlash

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

83. Thousands flee from Sri Lanka offensive: rebels

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007



84. STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET ON SRI LANKA

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

85. Fealty to multiculturalism makes us reluctant to act decisively against agitators, says Rondi Adamson

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

86. <u>1ST LEAD</u>: 5 killed, 12 injured as female suicide bomber setsoff explosion in Colombo police station Eds:

Adds deaths and injuries

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

87. STATE DEPARTMENT ISSUES CONSULAR INFORMATION SHEET ON SRI LANKA

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

88. Two civilians killed in northern Sri Lanka blast

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

89. CONGRESS FLAYS KARUNA POEM



Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

90. Politician: Gandhi misled Tamil Tigers

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

91. Sri Lanka 's injured Army chief moves to military hospital

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

92. SRI LANKA: ACTIVISTS WANT RIGHTS ISSUES HIGHER UP IN TALKS

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

93. 3rd Ld Rebel suicide bomber kills 1, injures 2 in Sri Lankan capital

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

94. Sri Lanka on alert after weekend of battles with rebels

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE

Search Type: Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

95. Relations between Tigers and Government collapse as mistrust rules TSUNAMI: THE RECOVERY

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

96. Tamils in France demonstrate over Sri Lanka children massacre

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

97. Police crack down on Tamil lodges in Sri Lanka 's capital

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

98. SRI LANKA: STRONG INTERNATIONAL ROLE NEEDED IN INQUIRY ON AID WORKER KILLINGS

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

99. Sri Lanka 's dirty war sullies boutique hotel business

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

100. Sri Lanka rebels hit air base in 1st combined air, ground attack

News Publication Type: Newspapers,Newswires & Press Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: "Tamil Tigers" OR LTTE **Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers, Newswires & Press

Releases; Timeline: Jan 01, 2003 to Dec 31, 2007



IRAQ WAR: ASSASSINS WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR BELIEFS

Birmingham Post

March 31, 2003, Monday

Copyright 2003 Midland Independent Newspapers plc

Section: ROP; Pg. 5 **Length:** 444 words

Body

Although suicide terrorism dates back to at least as long ago as the 11th century and the Assassins of Persia, the modern history of such attacks began in Lebanon in 1983.

An operative of Islamic extremist group Hizbullah drove a truck-bomb into the US Embassy in Beirut in April 1983, killing 63 people and injuring 120.

Six months later the group carried out simultaneous suicide truck-bomb attacks on the US Marines headquarters and the French paratroopers' compound in the city, killing 242 Americans and 58 French soldiers.

Suicide attacks organised by the group dropped off when Israel pulled out of central Lebanon - although a suicide car-bomb attack on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 killed 29 people and wounded 250.

The lone suicide bomber, wearing a 'bodysuit' packed with explosives, became a chosen method of the *Tamil Tigers* in Sri Lanka and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Israel.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, have carried out more than 160 suicide attacks over the past 15 years as they fight for an independent Tamil state in north eastern Sri Lanka.

Using suicide attackers, they have managed to kill two heads of state - Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, and Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.

Jane's Intelligence Review estimates 30 per cent of the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>' suicide operations have been carried out by **women**.

<u>Women</u> are often used because they appear less suspicious and in conservative societies in the Middle East and South Asia there is a hesitation to body search <u>women</u>.

Women can also wear explosives beneath their clothes and appear pregnant.

Suicide terrorism arrived in Israel in 1993 and since then Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad have carried out numerous attacks.

Hamas and PIJ focused initial suicide attacks on military targets but soon shifted their attacks to civilians in central cities and crowded areas, realising the fear caused by the attacks has a great impact.

The second Palestinian intifada, which began in 2000, has featured numerous suicide attacks, many on busy markets, buses and bars packed with young people.

IRAQ WAR: ASSASSINS WILLING TO DIE FOR THEIR BELIEFS

Al Qaida used truck-bombs in simultaneous suicide attacks against the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998. The attacks killed 224 people.

A suicide attack on the USS Cole in Yemen in October 2000 blasted a 40 sq ft hole in the ship's hull, killing 17 sailors and injuring 39.

In the September 11 2001 terror attacks, Osama bin Laden's organisation again used operatives willing to die - hijacking passenger jets and flying them into the World Trade Centre in New York. The attack claimed nearly 3,000 lives.

Load-Date: March 31, 2003

End of Document



Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 7 rebels, 1 soldier, military says

Associated Press International

November 5, 2007 Monday 12:37 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 456 words

Byline: By RAVI NESSMAN, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Government troops attacked Tamil Tiger separatists along the front lines in northern Sri Lanka, killing seven rebels, while one soldier was killed in a separate mortar attack, the military said Monday.

The attacks came as the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> prepared Monday to bury their political leader, S.P. Tamilselvan, who was killed Friday in an airstrike on a rebel communications center. The killing was hailed by the government as a major victory in its more than two-decade-old war with the rebels.

The Sri Lankan government, which controls access to the rebels' de facto state, denied journalists permission to cover the funeral and the two-day procession of his body across rebel-held territory that preceded it.

Photographs posted on the pro-rebel Web site Sankathi.com showed the slain leader wrapped in the <u>Tamil Tigers'</u> red flag and laying in a glass-topped coffin carried by a group of uniformed men. A crush of people were gathered in the street. At one point, his coffin was placed on a table in a hall, while rebels covered it in flowers.

Sri Lankan officials said they did not know Tamilselvan was in the compound at the time of the airstrike, but added that he was a legitimate target.

"He was a terrorist, and there is no question about it," government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said.

Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake said such attacks would continue.

"Our security forces are targeting the hiding places and safehouses of terrorist leaders to deal a mortal blow to the Tigers," he was quoting as saying in the government-owned Daily News on Monday. "They will not stop the relentless pursuit of terrorists."

The government is open to negotiations with the rebels, but will not agree to a new cease-fire, he said.

In new fighting, troops destroyed a rebel bunker and killed three <u>female</u> insurgents Sunday in the Thampane area along the southern frontier of the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>' de facto state in northern Sri Lanka, the military said Monday.

Four more rebels were killed early Monday when the army launched a pre-emptive attack on rebels planning an ambush along the front lines north of their mini-state, the military said in a statement.

Fighting in northern Sri Lanka kills 7 rebels, 1 soldier, military says

No troops were wounded in those attacks, but a soldier was killed and another injured in a separate rebel mortar attack, it said.

There was no independent confirmation of the fighting and rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan was not immediately available for comment. Both sides routinely exaggerate their opponent's casualties, while downplaying their own.

The rebels have been fighting since 1983 to create an independent homeland for ethnic minority Tamils, following decades of discrimination by the majority Sinhalese-controlled governments. More than 70,000 people have died in the conflict.

Load-Date: November 6, 2007

End of Document



VOA NEWS: FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBER TARGETS SRI LANKA'S ARMY CHIEF

US Fed News

April 25, 2006 Tuesday 7:14 AM EST

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Length: 462 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

The Voice of America issued the following story:

Officials say a woman exploded a powerful bomb in front of a vehicle carrying military commander Sarath Fonseka into the heavily-guarded army headquarters in Colombo. The other people killed or wounded include members of the general's security detail and civilians.

Police say the bomber was disguised as a pregnant woman. She died on the spot. The general, who sustained serious injuries, has undergone emergency surgery.

The army accused the separatist Tamil Tiger movement of carrying out Tuesday's attack - the deadliest suicide bombing blamed on the rebels since they began a peace process with the government four years ago.

Ketesh Loganathan, the deputy head of the government department dealing with the peace process, says the bombing is a major setback to efforts to end the country's three-decade long ethnic conflict.

"Given the target in today's suicide attack, the army commander, many are tempted to say that this is actually an act of war," he said.

The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> have been blamed for scores of suicide attacks in the past, including one that killed the country's president in 1993. They were also accused of assassinating the country's foreign minister last year.

The latest bombing follows a wave of violence in the Tamil-dominated north and the east this month. At least 70 people, including soldiers and civilians have been killed in landmine attacks and ethnic riots. The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> have been blamed for the attacks targeting the military, while the rebels accuse paramilitaries supported by the government of killing their supporters.

Last week, the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> indefinitely postponed peace talks to be held this week after accusing the government of creating a "war-like" situation.

Loganathan says the government is committed to the four-year truce, but the rising violence could jeopardize the peace process.

"There is no question of the government going back to war. But at the same time, continuing actions of this nature will bring the ceasefire agreement under extreme strain," added Loganathan.

VOA NEWS: FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBER TARGETS SRI LANKA 'S ARMY CHIEF

The 2002 truce had raised hopes of ending the country's ethnic conflict, which was triggered by rebel demands for an autonomous homeland for the minority Tamil community. But peace talks have made little progress in the last three years, and the rebels have warned they could return to war if their demands remain unfulfilled.

Pasricha report - Download 292k: http://www.voanews.com/mediaassets/english/2006_04/Audio/rm/pasricha_srilanka_bomb_25apr06.rm

Listen to Pasricha report: http://www.voanews.com/english/figleaf/ramfilegenerate.cfm?filepath=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Evoanews%2Ecom%2Fmediaassets%2Fenglish%2F2006%5F04%2FAudio%2Frm%2Fpasricha%5Fsrilanka%5Fbomb%5F25apr06%2Erm

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Load-Date: April 27, 2006

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Three sailors missing, one injured in foiled rebel attack on Sri Lankan navy

AP Worldstream

December 22, 2005 Thursday

Copyright 2005 Associated Press

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 459 words

Byline: DILIP GANGULY; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels attacked two Sri Lankan navy boats off the northwestern coast Thursday, sinking one of them and leaving three sailors missing and one wounded, the navy said.

Meanwhile, suspected rebels hurled grenades at a military roadblock in the northern city of Jaffna Thursday, wounding a police sergeant and two *women* civilians.

The attacks come amid an upsurge in violence in Sri Lanka's north that threatens to plunge the country back into civil war after a truce halted the conflict three years ago.

On Thursday, the navy captured seven rebels during the attack on the two vessels, said Cmdr. Jayantha Perera, adding that one of the boats sank.

One seaman was wounded in the assault and three more went missing and were presumed captured by the separatist rebels, Perera said.

About 10 rebel boats surrounded the naval craft and started firing on it at Talaimannar, 250 kilometers (155 miles) northwest of Colombo, Perera said.

"We put up resistance and fired in self defense," he said.

He gave no information about how the rebels were captured.

The government on Thursday condemned the attack on the naval crafts, calling it a "very, very serious violation of the cease-fire agreement."

Cabinet minister Nimal Siripala de Silva told a news conference that the government will ask the international community, particularly Norway, Japan, the European Union and the United States - strong backers of Sri Lanka's peace process - to pressure the *Tamil Tigers* to end the violence.

The attack was the first on the Sri Lankan navy since an upsurge in guerrilla violence began earlier this month.

Since Dec. 4, at least 20 government soldiers have died and many more injured in attacks blamed on the <u>Tamil</u> <u>Tigers</u>, heavily straining a 2002 Norway-brokered cease-fire between the government and the insurgents.

Three sailors missing, one injured in foiled rebel attack on Sri Lankan navy

Meanwhile, the rebels sent a letter to peace broker Norway accusing the Sri Lankan military of harassing civilians, citing a recent attack on a protest by university students and teachers.

"At this critical juncture ... the international community has a moral obligation to prevail upon the government to pull back its forces into the barracks and bring about normalcy," the Tigers' political wing chief S.P Thamilselvan said in the letter to Hans Brattskar, Norway's ambassador to Colombo, according to the pro-rebel TamilNet Web site.

Thamilselvan, in his letter, did not comment on attacks blamed on the rebels.

Norwegian officials could not be contacted immediately for comment.

The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> began fighting in 1983 for a separate homeland in the country's north and east for the minority Tamils, claiming discrimination at the hands of the majority Sinhalese. The ethnic conflict killed some 65,000 people.

On the Web:

Pro-Tiger Web site: www.tamilnet.com

Load-Date: December 22, 2005

End of Document



Three Sri Lankan sailors missing, one injured during rebel attack at sea

The Associated Press

December 22, 2005, Thursday, BC cycle

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Section: International News

Length: 454 words

Byline: By DILIP GANGULY, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Separatist rebels attacked two Sri Lankan navy boats off the northwestern coast Thursday and destroyed on vessel, officials said, in an escalation of violence that is threatening to return the island nation to civil war after a nearly four-vear truce.

The navy said one sailor was wounded and three others were missing and presumed captured. It said seven rebels were captured, but offered no details.

There was no confirmation from the Tamil Tiger movement of the navy's report of the first clash at sea during the surge of violent incidents in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, suspected rebels hurled grenades at a military roadblock in the northern city of Jaffna, wounding a police sergeant and two **women** civilians.

Violence has worsened since last month's election of Sri Lanka's new president, Mahinda Rajapakse, who campaigned on a promise to take a tough line in negotiations with the rebels.

The rebels' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, warned after the election that the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> would intensify their struggle if the ethnic minority's grievances were not addressed.

The rebels began fighting in 1983 for a separate homeland in the north and east for ethnic Tamils, who claim discrimination at the hands of the Sinhalese majority. The conflict killed some 65,000 people before Norway mediated a truce in February 2002.

Since Dec. 4, at least 20 government soldiers have been killed and many more wounded in attacks blamed on the *Tamil Tigers*.

Navy Cmdr. Jayantha Perera said about 10 rebel boats surrounded and then fired on two naval vessels Thursday near Talaimannar, 155 miles northwest of the capital, Colombo.

"We put up resistance and fired in self defense," he said.

He said one navy boat sank and a seaman was wounded. Three more sailors were unaccounted for after the firefight and were believed captured by the rebels, Perera said. He said seven rebels were captured by sailors on the surviving navy boat.

Three Sri Lankan sailors missing, one injured during rebel attack at sea

The government condemned the attack as a "very, very serious violation of the cease-fire agreement."

Cabinet minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said the government would ask the international community, particularly Norway, Japan, the European Union and the United States to pressure the rebels to end violence.

Meanwhile, a pro-rebel Internet site said the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> sent a letter to Norway's ambassador accusing the Sri Lankan military of harassing civilians, citing a recent attack on a protest by university students and teachers.

"The international community has a moral obligation to prevail upon the government to pull back its forces into the barracks and bring about normalcy," the chief of the Tigers' political wing, S.P Thamilselvan, said in the letter.

Norwegian officials could not be contacted for comment.

Load-Date: December 23, 2005

End of Document



Sri Lankan peace talks always in peaceful, exotic venue

Associated Press International March 20, 2003 Thursday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 474 words

Byline: BETH DUFF-BROWN; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: HAKONE, Japan

Body

An exotic Thai resort, the Berlin Wall, the winter wonderland of Norway, and now the pristine foothills of Mount Fuji.

It seems the Sri Lankan government and <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, in their determination to end the bloody 19-year civil war, have chosen some of the world's most vivid venues for their peace negotiations.

"We want to have a beautiful and congenial environment," said Anton Balasingham, chief negotiator for the <u>Tamil</u> <u>Tigers</u>, not so long ago one of the world's most uncongenial rebel groups, recruiting children and using <u>women</u> as suicide bombers in their demand for a Tamil homeland.

That was then. This is now. Some 65,000 deaths later, both sides are weary and broke. They insist the yearlong cease-fire must stay on track, and surroundings have a role in successful talks.

"Sometimes the environment has an impact on the minds of the people," Balasingham said on the sidelines of the latest round of talks in Hakone, a sleepy seaside town where one can soak in hot springs while taking in Mount Fuji. A noisy venue, he said, isn't conducive to peace.

"We want beautiful things to look at, and beautiful girls to see," said the 64-year-old rebel negotiator, addressing that last comment to an Indian woman journalist.

And why not? They're not footing the bill.

The government delegation's receipts are paid by the Peace Secretariat, the government body handling the peace process, which functions with donations from Norway, Netherlands, Sweden and the United States. Norway picks up the tab for travel by the Tamil Tiger delegation.

The host countries are charged with providing the venue, transportation and security.

Still, there are serious reasons why the talks always seem to be held in pretty places. Balasingham, who lives in London with his Australian-born wife, Adele, suffers from kidney and heart disease, as well as diabetes and needs to be near top-grade medical care.

He can't get that in the neighboring countries of South Asia, where medical facilities are, at best, merely adequate.

Sri Lankan peace talks always in peaceful, exotic venue

Security is an issue in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, where many of the suicide attacks have been waged and the Tigers have bitter enemies. And other countries, such as the United States, Britain and India, still ban the Liberation Tigers of Tamileelam, so the Norwegian mediators must look for other neutral venues.

India, despite being home to the world's largest population of Tamils, who share centuries of cultural ties with the Tamils of Sri Lanka, regards the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> as terrorists and is still unwilling to forgive them for the 1991 suicide bomb assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Indian government has charged Tamil guerrilla leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, with murder for allegedly plotting Gandhi's demise.

No matter. Balasingham said the Japanese have provided him with an Indian cook, who makes "nice curries."

Load-Date: March 21, 2003

End of Document



Timeline on Sri Lanka 2007

Indo-Asian News Service

December 31, 2007 Monday 1:09 PM EST

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Length: 849 words

Byline: Report from Indo-Asian News Service brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Dec. 31 -- The following were the key dates in Sri Lanka in 2007:

Jan 4: Army Chief Lt.Gen. Sarath Fonseka vows to take the north from the LTTE following capture of the east.

Jan 10-14: Hundreds of Tamils arrested from Colombo and suburbs.

Jan 12: Food supplies from India help bring down prices in Jaffna.

Feb 4: More than 300 Tamils arrested in and around Colombo.

Feb 9: Dissident ministers Mangala Samaraweera, Sripathy Sooriarachchy and Anura Bandaranaike sacked for charging that the Rajapaksa government is run by his brothers and that he entered into a SLRs.700 million deal with the *LTTE* prior to the November 2005 presidential election.

Feb 27: The envoys of the US and Italy hurt when the <u>LTTE</u> fires mortars at Batticaloa airport as their chopper lands.

March 6: Sri Lanka police chief admits that large numbers of armed forces personnel were arrested for extorting money through the abduction of Tamils and Muslims in and around Colombo.

March 8: 40,000 Tamils displaced in Batticaloa following military operations.

March 16: Tamil traders in Colombo's main wholesale market shut down in protest against extortion and abductions.

March 25: Two light <u>LTTE</u> aircraft (Czech made Zlin Z-143) raid the Katunayake airbase adjacent to the Colombo's international airport at night and return to their base in the Wanni.

April 3: President Mahinda Rajapaksa proposes Panchayati Raj and not devolution of power to provinces as the ideal solution for the ethnic question. Tamils disappointed.

April 24: <u>LTTE</u> stages air attack on the Palaly airbase in Jaffna district. The bombs fall on a nearby army camp and cause casualties.

April 28: As Sri Lankans watch the Cricket World Cup finals on TV, the <u>LTTE</u> attacks oil storage facilities near Colombo.

Timeline on Sri Lanka 2007

- May 3: Colombo international airport shut at night following <u>LTTE</u> air raid on the adjacent Katunayake airbase March 25 and the raid on the oil tanks.
- May 24: <u>LTTE</u> attacks naval base at Delft Island in the northwest.
- May 31: Indian National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan says Sri Lanka should not buy arms from China and Pakistan but should come to India for its defence needs.
- May 31: Tamils from 68 lodges in Colombo evicted on 24 hours notice.
- June 1: Two Tamil Red Cross workers abducted in Colombo and later killed.
- June 4: India to rebuild Kankesanthurai harbour in Jaffna and conduct "coordinated patrolling" of the Palk Strait and not "joint patrolling" with the Sri Lankan Navy as reported in the media.
- June 7: 500 Tamils expelled from Colombo.
- June 19: Government blocks Tamilnet, a pro-LTTE website and source of news on the troubled northeast.
- June 27: 300 Tamils arrested in Welikade area of Colombo.
- July 5: <u>LTTE</u> announces that between July 5, 1987 and July 5, 2007, 322 Black Tigers or suicide cadres had sacrificed their lives.
- July 14: Sri Lankan armed forces say that they would fittingly celebrate the capture of Toppigala in Batticaloa district, the last stronghold of the *LTTE* in the east.
- Aug 2: Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) ministers resign complaining of insulting behaviour on the part of the president's brother Basil Rajapaksa. They later return.
- Aug 20: Batticaloa pro-LTTE MP S. Jayananthamoorthy's brother shot dead allegedly by Karuna's group.
- Sep 24: <u>LTTE</u> says that any future talks will have to be on the basis of the recognition of the Tamil sovereignty.
- Oct 2: UN Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak begins talks with Sri Lankan Human Rights Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe. He later says that the level of torture is great in Sri Lanka.
- Oct 10: UN Commissioner for Human Rights Louse Arbour calls for a field office of the UN rights commission in Sri Lanka as the domestic human rights monitoring is not independent and reliable.
- Oct 21: LTTE stages ground and air attack on Anuradhapura airbase causing damage of \$40 million.
- Nov 2: LTTE political wing leader S.P. Tamiselvan killed in Sri Lankan air raid.
- Nov 7: Government sends away LTTE breakway leader Karuna to Britain on forged diplomatic passport.
- Nov 8: US gives radars and dinghies to Colombo to fight LTTE.
- Nov 27: Air force bombs Voice of Tigers radio station killing 11 people, mostly staff.
- Nov 27: In his annual Heroes Day oration, <u>LTTE</u> chief Prabhakaran complains of bias against the Tamils on the part of the international community and asks the Tamils to continue to fight for an independent Tamil Eelam.
- Nov 28: A *female* suicide bomber tries to kill Tamil minister Douglas Devananda. A secretary dies in the blast but Devananda escapes.
- Nov 28: Parcel bomb in Nugegoda shopping complex kills 20 civilians including children.

Timeline on Sri Lanka 2007

Dec 1: 2,000 Tamils arrested in Colombo and environs but released on court orders.

Dec 5: Blast kills 16 bus passengers at Kabathigollawa in north central Sri Lanka.

Dec 16: "The Nation" weekly reports that Prabhakaran was injured in an air raid on Nov 28.

Dec 19: The government says that Prabhakaran was injured in an air raid on Nov 26.

Dec 22: LTTE denies that Prabhakaran was injured.

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Load-Date: December 31, 2007

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Separatist rebels clash with Sri Lankan navy in sea battle that threatens truce

The Associated Press

December 22, 2005, Thursday, BC cycle

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Section: International News

Length: 508 words

Byline: By DILIP GANGULY, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Separatist rebels clashed with the Sri Lankan navy off the country's northwestern coast Thursday and destroyed one navy vessel, Sri Lankan officials said, in an escalation of violence that threatens to return the nation to civil war.

The navy said one sailor was wounded and three were missing after 10 rebel boats attacked two navy craft. But the Tamil Tiger rebel movement said Friday that the three sailors had drowned, and blamed the Sri Lankan navy for starting the firefight.

"The Sri Lankan navy intercepted the (rebel) fleet and started firing," the group wrote in a letter to the Norwegian-led international team monitoring the island nation's 2002 cease-fire. A copy of the letter was made available by the rebels to The Associated Press.

"Our members had to return fire for self-protection," the letter said. It added that all three missing sailors had drowned.

There was no immediate comment from the government on the rebels' letter, but the state-run Daily News carried a government statement Friday saying patience was running out and that the rebel action was considered "a hostile act."

Meanwhile, suspected rebels hurled grenades at a military roadblock in the northern city of Jaffna, wounding a police sergeant and two *female* civilians.

Violence has worsened since last month's election of Sri Lanka's new president, Mahinda Rajapakse, who campaigned on a promise to take a tough line in negotiations with the rebels.

The rebels' leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, warned after the election that the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> would intensify their struggle if the ethnic minority's grievances were not addressed.

The rebels began fighting in 1983 for a separate homeland in the north and east for ethnic Tamils, who claim discrimination at the hands of the Sinhalese majority. The conflict killed some 65,000 people before Norway mediated a truce in February 2002.

Separatist rebels clash with Sri Lankan navy in sea battle that threatens truce

Since Dec. 4, at least 20 government soldiers have been killed and many more wounded in attacks blamed on the *Tamil Tigers*.

In the attack Thursday, Navy Cmdr. Jayantha Perera said about 10 rebel boats surrounded and then fired on two naval vessels near Talaimannar, 155 miles northwest of the capital, Colombo.

"We put up resistance and fired in self defense," he said.

He said seven rebels were captured by sailors on the surviving navy boat.

The government condemned the attack as a "very, very serious violation of the cease-fire agreement."

Cabinet minister Nimal Siripala de Silva said the government would ask the international community to pressure the rebels to end violence.

Meanwhile, a pro-rebel Internet site said the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> sent a letter to Norway's ambassador accusing the Sri Lankan military of harassing civilians, citing a recent attack on a protest by university students and teachers.

"The international community has a moral obligation to prevail upon the government to pull back its forces into the barracks and bring about normalcy," the chief of the Tigers' political wing, S.P Thamilselvan, said in the letter.

Norwegian officials could not be contacted for comment.

Load-Date: December 23, 2005



Lanka's shadow war threatens ceasefire pact

Hindustan Times

May 2, 2005 Monday 5:50 PM EST

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Length: 2075 words

Byline: PK Balachandran Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, May 2 -- The "war of attrition" between the mainstream <u>LTTE</u> and the breakaway Karuna group, which has been going on since Karuna revolted in March 2004, is now a "shadow war" between the <u>LTTE</u> and the Sri Lankan Government, posing a serious threat to the February 2002 ceasefire agreement and the peace process which has been on since then.

The <u>LTTE</u> constantly accuses the Government of using remnants of the Karuna group and other "Tamil paramilitaries" or auxiliaries of the Sri Lankan army, to launch covert attacks on it. But the Government keeps denying the charge vehemently. President Chandrika Kumaratunga denies that there is any Tamil paramilitary force working with the army.

The <u>LTTE</u>'s reasoning is that the Karuna group, now a rag tag outfit after it was crushed in a swift military action in April 2004, cannot survive without the support of the Sri Lankan state and the armed forces. But the Government says that there is indeed a Karuna group, which is popular in the eastern districts of Batticaloa and Amparai. If the <u>LTTE</u> keeps denying this, it is because it wants to divert the attention of the world from a bad split within its ranks, the Government says.

Anti-*LTTE* human rights groups like the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) say that the Tigers use the term "paramilitary" to brand those political opponents they kill as "traitors" to the Tamil cause, and thus "legitimize" the killings in the eyes of the Tamil people.

Even in the case of the abduction and brutal murder of top Tamil scribe, D Sivaram, in Colombo last week, the <u>LTTE</u> keeps accusing the Sri Lankan army of doing the deed even as the Government and the armed forces keep denying it.

The <u>LTTE</u> website Nitharsanam reported on Friday, that Iniyabharathi, one of the top commanders of the Karuna group, was among Sivaram's abductors, and that he was the one who called out to Sivaram. On Sunday, the website reported that the police had arrested Iniyabharathi in Amparai and produced him in a local court.

Nitharsanam (which according to the rights body, UTHR-J, is close to the <u>LTTE</u>'s intelligence chief, Pottu Amman), then went on to say that given the nexus between the Karuna group and the state, the arrest of Iniyabharathi could well be a police ploy to show in court that he was not in Colombo at the time of the abduction and killing.

It is, therefore, clear that the <u>LTTE</u> sees the Karuna group, not as an independent group, but as being part and parcel of the Sri Lankan Establishment, one of the Tamil paramilitary groups working as "agents" of the Establishment in its "machinations" against the <u>LTTE</u>.

With the Prabhakaran-Karuna war becoming Prabhakaran-Sri Lankan state war, at least in the eyes of the <u>LTTE</u>, the consequences could be dreadful. The ceasefire is already under a serious threat.

LTTE's reaction to Sivaram'skilling

The <u>LTTE</u>'s reaction to Sivaram's killing is indicative of its mindset at present. Seen against the continuous dilly-dallying by the Government on the issue of setting up a Joint Mechanism for post-tsunami reconstruction in the Tamil-speaking North Eastern Province, the killing of Sivaram, who the <u>LTTE</u> saw as a Tamil nationalist par excellence, assumed special importance.

The <u>LTTE</u> Supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, praised Sivaram as an outstanding propagandist for the Tamil cause in the international and diplomatic arena. "Positioning himself in the Sinhala stronghold, Sivaram forthrightly told the outer world about the injustices and atrocities perpetrated by the Sinhala ruling elite on the Tamil nation. Above all, he relentlessly worked to keep the Tamil people politically vigilant," Prabhakaran said while conferring the title Maamanithar or Great Man on him.

The <u>LTTE</u>, as an organization, went a step further in its reaction, and said: "He (Sivaram) went the extra mile to reiterate that the Tamil leadership should be watchful of the peace trap and pointed out the deficiency of the Tamil media in not articulating the Tamil cause and exposing Colombo's duplicity."

Blow to LTTE's media arm

The death of Sivaram is clearly a severe blow to the propaganda machinery or the unofficial media arm of the **LTTE** and the Tamil cause espoused by it. The **LTTE** recognizes this, as its official reaction and Prabhakaran's statement show.

Sivaram's commentaries on political and military matters were respected the world over by Sri Lanka watchers as the condolence message of Teresita Schaffer, former US Ambassador in Sri Lanka, and now a member of a prestigious Washington think tank, would show. He ran the hugely popular Tamilnet website to perfection. He had access to a cross-section of people and groups, which helped him in information gathering and analyses.

It is felt in some knowledgeable quarters that it is the Prabhakaran-Karuna war on the information plane, in cyber space particularly, that had led to the killing of Sivaram. The websites run by Karuna's men had been no match to Tamilnet in technical, information and other journalistic content. It would be worthwhile watching the impact of Sivaram's exit on the performance of Tamilnet in the months to come.

Sivaram had, in the recent past, been writing on the "ill-effects" of the peace process on the 30 year-old struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam. In an article in the popular Tamil daily Virakesari recently, he had warned that the Tamils were being lulled into inactivity by hopes of peace and that this would sooner or later adversely affect the fighting spirit of the *LTTE* itself.

He pointed out that this had happened in recent history to other liberation movements. He wanted the Tamil media to keep dinning into the minds of its readers that the Sinhala majority would never render justice to the Tamil minority and that there was no alternative to the armed struggle.

More recently, Sivaram had been critical of the "We'll maintain the ceasefire mantra" chanted by some of the spokesmen of the <u>LTTE</u> in their meetings with foreign dignitaries in the past few months.

Sivaram also criticized the Tamils' faith in the opposition United National Party (UNP), saying that it was unfounded because it was the UNP regime which started weaving an "International Safety Net" for Sri Lanka with a strong military component to give it muscle.

Prabhakaran's mind

It was said that Sivaram represented Prabhakaran's line of thinking, as Prabhakaran, unlike some of his lieutenants who were exposed to the influences of the outside world, was a chronic skeptic as far as the Sri Lankan Government, the Sinhala polity, and outside forces were concerned.

It is this skepticism and fear of the enemy, which are making the <u>LTTE</u> led by Prabhakaran, go relentlessly after Karuna, and other anti-<u>LTTE</u> (or para-military) groups. The <u>LTTE</u> is killing members and supporters of rival groups and political opponents to safeguard itself, and serve as a warning to potential collaborators.

Every now and then, the Sri Lankan media reports "unidentified gunmen" pumping bullets into an (usually) unarmed "paramilitary" man or a Karuna collaborator in Batticaloa and adjoining districts. The Karuna group also takes on <u>LTTE</u> cadres, but to a much lesser extent, indicating its weaker hold on Batticaloa. But at times, it has killed high profile <u>LTTE</u> leaders like the district political commissars, Lt Col E Kousalyan and Lt Col Senathi, and wounded the <u>Women</u> wing leader, Kuveni. Each time such a high profile <u>LTTE</u> leader was attacked, the <u>LTTE</u> had intensified its killing spree.

The Sri Lankan army is subjected to relentless propaganda about its "collaboration" with the <u>LTTE</u>'s Tamil enemies and rivals, and its "insincerity" in regard to the peace process and the maintenance of the ceasefire.

The anti-army and anti-state feeling that all this is expected to create, would help the <u>LTTE</u> in case the ceasefire is really broken and full-scale war breaks out. As part of its covert war against the Sri Lankan security forces, the <u>LTTE</u> is believed to have abducted a top police anti-terror sleuth, Inspector T Jeyeratnam, from Colombo recently. It is believed that Jeyaratnam's abduction may be avenged.

Lanka takes counter measures

The Sri Lankan state is not keeping quite either. While the Sri Lankan Government, as such, is playing it cool, because it is responsible to the international community, important parts of the Government, and key sections of the South Sri Lankan Sinhala polity, are carrying on a relentless anti-*LTTE* propaganda.

There is opposition to every move to find common ground with the <u>LTTE</u> to begin the peace talks broken in April 2003. The United Peoples' Freedom Alliance (UPFA) Government will fall if it begins talks with the <u>LTTE</u> on the setting up of a Joint Mechanism for post-tsunami reconstruction in the North East Province. And there is no question of the Government's surviving if it agrees to begin peace talks on the basis of the <u>LTTE</u>s controversial October 30, 2003 proposal for an Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) for the North East. Contributing to the stalemate, the Government itself has not bothered to come up with an alternative proposal for an interim administration.

While keeping its political powder dry, the Government is beefing up its military strength to meet any challenge from the <u>LTTE</u>. The Sri Lankan army has reportedly asked for nearly 100 battle tanks. The Sri Lankan navy, which has to play a major role in preventing the <u>LTTE</u> from smuggling in weapons from overseas, had recently acquired an American coast guard vessel, which according to Navy Commander, Vice Admn. Daya Sandagiri, would increase the navy's power by 75 per cent.

On May 1, 2005, The Sunday Times reported that the Navy was mulling the prospect of acquiring, at a cost of 10 million sterling pounds, a Logistic Landing Ship (LLS) from the UK which is capable of carrying an enormous number of Main Battle Tanks, vehicles and 20 ft containers. The paper further said that the Navy was interested in getting two Russian-built missile frigates from Serbia, each costing \$25US million. There is also a proposal to buy from Uruguay, three Vigilante Class Fast Patrol Boats.

Indian factor

Though the proposed Defense Cooperation Agreement between Sri Lanka and India, and the Indian offer to rebuild the Palaly airbase in Jaffna are in cold storage for a variety of reasons, cooperation between the Sri Lankan and Indian navies is being strengthened.

Lanka's shadow war threatens ceasefire pact

In this context, significance is attached to last week's visit of the Indian Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, to the eastern naval base in Trincomalee. Speaking there, Saran said that Trincomalee had "provided an important setting for the close interaction between the navies of the two countries."

While the <u>LTTE</u> is undoubtedly worried about US military involvement in Sri Lanka (following 9/11), its fear of a possible Indian involvement has increased in recent times. This is not just because of increasing defense cooperation between Sri Lanka and India, but because of the new found military and political alliance between the Karuna group and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF).

Because the ENDLF has an office in Chennai and some of its leaders are resident in India, it is alleged in the pro-<u>LTTE</u> media, that India is backing Karuna. In an article just before his death, Sivaram had highlighted the "Indian angle" in the island's internecine shadow war.

The Indians completely deny that they have anything to do with ENDLF or Karuna, for that matter. Simply because some ENDLF leaders are in India it cannot be concluded that India is supporting that organization, they say. Making an allegation of this sort is as unwarranted as saying that because the <u>LTTE</u>'s chief negotiator Anton Balasingham lives in London, the UK is supporting the *LTTE*, Indian sources say.

Asked point blank if India was backing Karuna, the Norwegian Peace Envoy, Erik Solheim, told the Foreign Correspondents Association in Colombo recently, that India was not supporting Karuna. India was fully backing the peace process, he added.

While it is not clear if the <u>LTTE</u>, as such, shares the Tamil media's allegations about an Indian involvement, dragging India into the Sri Lankan imbroglio is bound to complicate matters, exacerbate tension and endanger the peace process. (PK Balachandran is Special Correspondent for Hindustan Times in Sri Lanka)

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Obituary: SP Thamilselvan: Chief negotiator and international face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

The Guardian - Final Edition November 5, 2007 Monday

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Section: GUARDIAN OBITUARIES PAGES; Pg. 34

Length: 976 words **Byline:** Tom Farrell

Body

He was the smiling, conciliatory face of one of the world's deadliest insurgent organisations, an apparently tame Tamil Tiger who had swapped the movement's distinctive jungle fatigues and vial of cyanide for a suit and spectacles. For the four years that the Norwegian-brokered ceasefire agreement (CFA) held, Suppiah Paramu Thamilselvan, who has been killed aged 40, was the international face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*), the guerrilla army that seeks to establish an independent state called "Eelam" in the north of Sri Lanka.

But the director of the <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing had risen through its ranks first and foremost as a fighter. His death in a government air raid on the <u>LTTE</u>'s de facto "capital" of Killinochchi deprives the movement of its chief negotiator. There seems little reason now to believe the slide into all-out civil war that began in early 2006 will be curtailed.

Thamilselvan was born in Chavakacheri, a town in a northern area dominated by Tamils, the Hindu minority who account for about 18% of Sri Lanka's 19 million population. Industrious Tamils had won favour under the British, but this generated resentment among the Buddhist Sinhalese majority, especially as Tamil economic and political hegemony seemed to endure after independence in 1948.

Having trained as a barber in his teens, Thamilselvan joined the <u>LTTE</u> soon after the riots of July 1983. The funerals of 13 soldiers, killed that month in a Tiger ambush in the northern city of Jaffna, escalated into attacks on Tamils all across the island, their ferocity radicalising Tamil youth.

Thamilselvan was one of many young Tamils who fled to Tamil Nadu in India, where militant training camps had been established. Adopting the alias Dinesh, he soon established himself as a ruthless frontline fighter. So trusted was Dinesh that the reclusive <u>LTTE</u> leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran enlisted him as a bodyguard. Ruling the Jaffna peninsula as a mini-state, the <u>LTTE</u> sidelined or simply exterminated other rebel groups through their superior discipline and ruthlessness.

There was, and remains, no better emblem of Tiger fanaticism than the cyanide capsule each member wears on a string necklace, to be consumed in the event of capture. In more recent years, when travelling abroad or receiving foreign diplomats, Thamilselvan was wont to leave his off.

By 1987, India's prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, fearful that Tamil nationalism could prove contagious, sought to enforce a peace accord by sending a 100,000 strong "peace-keeping" force to the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka. Refusing to hand over their weapons, the <u>LTTE</u> turned on their erstwhile patrons. Thamilselvan became a zonal commander in the Jaffna peninsula, leading attacks on Indian troops, who quickly found themselves in a quagmire.

Obituary: SP Thamilselvan: Chief negotiator and international face of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

In May 1991, a year after the Indians departed, the <u>LTTE</u> sent a <u>female</u> suicide bomber to detonate herself at an election rally near Madras, killing Gandhi and 16 bystanders.

Thamilselvan played a leading role in that year's battle to overrun the northern Elephant Pass base, an operation that marked the <u>LTTE</u>'s transition from guerrilla tactics to those of a conventional army. In October 1993, while fighting Sri Lankan forces near the northern town of Pooneryn, Thamilsel van sustained severe leg injuries that almost killed him and put an end to his career as a guerrilla. In more recent years, his cane became something of a personal trademark.

He also remained on side during a vicious internal purge of the <u>LTTE</u> that same year, when Prabhakaran had his former deputy and many colleagues tortured to death on suspicion of spying for India. Thamilselvan's older brother, also an <u>LTTE</u> cadre, fell foul of the leadership, was imprisoned, but later released.

In 1995 Thamilselvan and the rest of the <u>LTTE</u> fled from Jaffna, relocating to the northern Vanni area, where they still control a large swath of territory. As early as October 1994, he had welcomed peace delegations to Jaffna as head of the <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing.

After the signing of the CFA on February 22 2002, he attended peace talks in Thailand, Norway, Germany and Japan. He was also involved in the acrimonious disputes over the provision of foreign aid to coastal areas under **LTTE** control, following the December 26 2004 tsunami that killed 35,000 Sri Lankans.

Thamilselvan's 4x4 vehicle, its windows blacked out, would arrive in the compound of the <u>LTTE</u>'s peace secretariat building in Killinochchi, discharging a phalanx of rifle-toting bodyguards before he himself got out. When meeting foreigners, Thamilselvan relied on his interpreter Pancharatnam, a former postmaster known as "George". He would answer reporters' questions obligingly, but George would often cloak answers on such uncomfortable subjects as the <u>LTTE</u>'s use of child soldiers in turgid rhetoric.

Thamilselvan participated in talks held last February and again in October in Geneva. But they ultimately went nowhere, and since December 2005, over 5,000 Sri Lankans have been killed in renewed violence.

In July, I asked Thamilselvan if Tamils and Sinhalese could ever peacefully co-exist. "It was never the intention of the Tamil people even in the early 1950s even to ask for federalism. They only asked that we be allowed to co-exist but don't treat us as second-class citizens," he said. "No government in Colombo has the political will or courage to educate their constituents about providing a solution to the Tamil political crisis. We have to get our own independence."

He had already survived at least one government assassination attempt in 2001. Elevated to the posthumous rank of brigadier, the highest that the <u>LTTE</u> can confer, Thamilselvan is survived by his wife, a member of the <u>LTTE</u>'s <u>female</u> wing, a daughter aged eight and a son, four.

Suppiah Paramu Thamilselvan, LTTE negotiator, born August 29 1967; died November 2 2007

Load-Date: November 5, 2007



Aid staff die in Sri Lanka's crossfire

The Australian (Australia)
August 8, 2006 Tuesday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 559 words

Byline: Correspondents in Colombo

Body

Reuters, AFP

SRI Lanka's army has rejected a <u>Tamil Tigers</u> ceasefire overture, vowing to push on with a military campaign to seize control of a waterway despite rebel warnings that continued attacks would be seen as a declaration of war.

Operation Watershed, in which soldiers are trying to lift a <u>Tamil Tigers</u> blockade of the Maavilaru waterway in the northeastern district of Trincomalee, came as a French aid agency sought those responsible for the deaths of 15 of its employees. The bodies of 11 menand four <u>women</u>, wearing Action Against Hunger T-shirts, were found facedown in their office on Sunday in the town of Muttur, close to heavy fighting between Tamil rebels and government forces.

The rebels have accused the security forces of killing the aid workers, who were all members of Sri Lanka's minority ethnic Tamil community.

The discovery of the aid workers came as a Nordic truce monitor hit out at the Sri Lankan Government for shelling Tamil rebels as they tried to reopen the bitterly contested waterway.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had offered to end a fortnight-long blockade of water to government land to defuse the heaviest fighting since a 2002 ceasefire.

The Tigers warned they might retaliate if the army offensive continued. They said Norwegian peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer, who is visiting their northern stronghold of Kilinochchi, had until he heads back to Colombo to revive a failed peace bid.

In other fighting yesterday, suspected <u>Tamil Tigers</u> ambushed and killed a top elite police commando with a Claymore mine in the ancient central hill capital of Kandy.

The slain aid workers had been helping families battered by the 2004 tsunami.

Action Against Hunger director-general Benoit Miribel said his organisation was stunned by the killings, which were unprecedented in the agency's 25-year history.

"We are trying to send a team to find out what is going on in this area," Mr Miribel said. "But soldiers have prevented us from entering the town, which remains completely sealed off."

Aid staff die in Sri Lanka 's crossfire

A military spokesman said there was no artillery fired yesterday morning in the east, but the "operation to secure the water supply is still on".

The Government says the Tigers must vacate the area around the blocked water sluice, land both sides claim is theirs under the truce.

"We consider this a declaration of war and strongly condemn the attitude of the Government," Tigers political wing leader SPThamilselvan said on Sunday. "We may have to take a defensive position if the shelling continues. It is not decided yet."

The Tigers had offered to openthe disputed sluice gate to allow water to farmers in government areas -- a key government demand -- and had also said they would withdraw to 2002 ceasefire lines.

As the head of the unarmed, Nordic-staffed ceasefire monitoring mission, retired Swedish major general Ulf Henricsson, headed for the sluice gate with a rebel leader to reopen it on Sunday, army artillery opened fire. "It seems some people want war rather than water," Major General Henricsson said.

More than 800 people had been killed so far this year, even before recent fighting in which the military says it killed more than 150 rebels.

Dozens of civilians are also said to have died in the most recent clashes.

The Tigers said 15 civilians were also killed in government shelling of rebel areas in the northeast on Sunday.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006



Civilian areas hit by artillery in northeast Sri Lanka, 3 killed, 11 wounded

Associated Press International

December 7, 2006 Thursday 11:27 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 526 words

Byline: By DILIP GANGULY, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A barrage of artillery the military said was fired by separatist <u>Tamil Tigers</u> hit a school and other civilian areas in northeast Sri Lanka on Thursday, killing three people and wounding 10 students and a teacher, officials said.

Military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe said <u>Tamil Tigers</u> fired artillery shells into government-held Kallaru on the border of Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts in the northeast hitting the school and wounding 10 mostly Muslim and Sinhalese students and one teacher.

Hours later, another shell hit the area, killing three civilians, he said, without elaborating.

Rebel spokesman Rasiah Ilanthirayan denied the Tigers had fired any artillery in the region, where the military has several small bases and both the government and the rebels hold neighboring pockets of territory.

The violence comes as the government reinvoked a strict counter-terrorism law, a move one Tamil lawmaker warned could strip all ethnic Tamils of their human rights.

"From now on there is no point of talking about human rights in Sri Lanka," said Nallathamby Sri Kantha, a Tamil member of Parliament.

The government's decision to reinvoke the Prevention of Terrorism Act followed a suspected suicide bombing by Tamil rebels that targeted the defense secretary last week. A renewal in fighting between <u>Tamil Tigers</u> and the government has killed more than 3,500 people this year.

The anti-terrorism law gives state security forces sweeping powers to detain anyone without a warrant for six months, raid any home and even demolish properties considered a threat to national security.

"Even a minor offense can be treated as an act of terrorism," Kantha said.

The new regulations prohibit all symbols relating to terrorism, and any contact with terrorist groups. Violators can be imprisoned for up to 20 years.

"These are very vague terms and our fear is that the state security will make use of them to suppress the Tamil voice." Kantha said.

Civilian areas hit by artillery in northeast Sri Lanka, 3 killed, 11 wounded

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam who say they are fighting on behalf of the country's 3.1 million ethnic Tamil minority are banned in the United States, Britain, Canada, the EU and India.

The Cabinet decided not to ban the Tigers during a meeting Wednesday after rebel supporters warned it would effectively scupper a peace process already derailed by the spike in violence.

TamilNet, a pro-rebel Web site, criticized the regulations.

"The Cabinet decision, viewed as a major breach of the CFA (cease-fire agreement), gives excessive powers of arrest and detention to the Sri Lankan armed forces," the Web site said, referring to a 2002 truce left in tatters by this year's violence.

"Thousands of Tamil men, <u>women</u> and children were indiscriminately arrested, tortured and detained for indefinite periods under the PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) until Colombo agreed to temporarily suspend the application of the act under the provisions of the CFA," TamilNet said.

The rebels have fought the government since 1983 to carve out a separate state for ethnic Tamils, citing discrimination by the majority Sinhalese. More than 65,000 people were killed before the cease-fire.

On the Net:

TamilNet: http://www.Tamilnet.com

Load-Date: December 8, 2006



Sri Lanka rejects Norway deal with Tigers, battle for water resumes

Agence France Presse -- English
August 6, 2006 Sunday 5:36 PM GMT

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Length: 651 words

Byline: Jason Gutierrez

Dateline: TRINCOMALEE, Sri Lanka, Aug 6 2006

Body

Sri Lanka Sunday rejected peace broker Norway's deal with Tamil Tiger rebels to lift a water blockade at the root of the latest bloodshed that has claimed over 425 lives by official count.

Troops began shelling suspected Tiger positions around Maavilaru in the northeastern district of Trincomalee where the guerrillas blocked a sluice gate depriving water to some 15,000 farming families downstream.

Sporadic firing was heard in the main town of Trincomalee while security forces virtually cut off access to the nearby town of Muttur where much of the fighting took place last week.

Aid workers had been prevented from accessing Muttur for several days, but some who managed to get into the town early Sunday discovered the corpses of 15 local employees of French aid agency Action Against Hunger (ACF).

The bodies of 11 men and four <u>women</u>, all ethnic Tamils and wearing ACF T-shirts, were found face down in their office, Jeevan Thiagarajah, the head of the main umbrella group for aid agencies in the country, said.

"We don't know how they died or even when it happened," Thiagarajah, from the Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies, told AFP.

Tiger rebels had Saturday accused the government of killing 15 aid workers after denying a government claim they had massacared around 100 Muslims.

ACF is one of the hundreds of aid agencies that set up operations in Sri Lanka after an Indian Ocean tsunami wiped out much the island's coastal infrastructure and killed an estimated 31,000 people in December 2004.

There was no immediate word from the government about what happened to the aid workers in Muttur after fighting intensified there last Wednesday.

In the capital Colombo, government spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said they were not involved in Norway's talks with the *Tamil Tigers* that led to the rebels announcing they would reopen the bitterly contested sluice gates.

Sri Lanka rejects Norway deal with Tigers, battle for water resumes

"Water should not be a negotiating tool," Rambukwella told AFP. "We don't want terrorists to come and open the waterway. They must simply allow irrigation engineers to do it, otherwise we will open it anyway."

He said Norway's peace envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer had not consulted Colombo in cutting a deal with the Tigers. "Hanssen-Bauer's discussions should have included us," said Rambukwella, who is also the Policy Planning minister.

The <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing leader S. P. Thamilselvan told Hanssen-Bauer that they would lift the water blockade, but warned of a return to full-scale war if the military launches new air strikes or artillery attacks against them.

The guerrillas were travelling to open the Maavilaru sluice gates as promised when they came under attack, Tiger spokesman S. Puleedevan told AFP from the rebel-held town of Kilinochchi.

"We had informed the Sri Lankan government and clearance was obtained," Puleedevan said. "But, as they approached the area, there was heavy shelling and they can't open the sluice gates. Even the monitors had a narrow shave."

Puleedevan said despite the provocation they were willing to consider opening the gates, but were now awaiting a response from Norway which had established urgent talks with Colombo over the latest crisis.

Heavy fighting has raged in the area since the military first carried out air strikes on July 26 and followed it with a ground offensive five days later.

"If the government carries out any more air strikes or artillery attacks, we told Norway that we were afraid we will consider it as full-scale war in the future," another Tiger spokesman Velayudan Dayanidi warned.

Diplomats close to the peace process said Hanssen-Bauer's meeting with the Tigers on Sunday morning was seen as a key breakthrough to end the bloodshed, but hopes were dashed with the government's rejection of the deal.

It has been the worst fighting in Sri Lanka since a truce was agreed in 2002. An estimated 60,000 people have been killed since the Tamil insurgency began around three decades ago.

Load-Date: August 7, 2006



Sri Lanka resumes battle for water, French struggle to find killers

Agence France Presse -- English August 7, 2006 Monday 6:33 AM GMT

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Length: 641 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, Aug 7 2006

Body

Sri Lankan troops tried Monday to seize control of a disputed waterway after rejecting a rebel deal, officials said, as shocked French aid workers struggled to recover the bodies of 15 colleagues killed in the area.

Soldiers pressed ahead with "Operation Watershed" to lift a Tamil Tiger blockade of the Maavilaru waterway in the northeastern district of Trincomalee, the government said in a statement.

Tiger rebels warned Sunday that any strikes against them would be regarded a "declaration of war" but Tiger spokesman S. Puleedevan said they were still in contact with a Norwegian envoy to resolve the issue peacefully.

A top police commando officer meanwhile was killed in a powerful land mine blast before dawn in the central district of Kandy, police said, They blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*).

The government slammed Nordic truce monitors who have been highly critical of Colombo's handling of the crisis and the use of military force to resolve the dispute over water.

The head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Ulf Henricsson was travelling with Tiger rebels to open the sluice gates on Sunday afternoon when the military fired a barrage of artillery, sending them scurrying for cover.

Henricsson said the Maavilaru dam had been just minutes away from being reopened, returning water supplies to some 15,000 farmer families downstream, when the bombardment started.

"No water. War instead of water. Not a good idea, not a good solution," Henricsson told the BBC in comments reported Monday. "... we could have waited some minutes more for the water so I think (the attack) was a bad idea."

The government said the monitors had ignored established procedures for travelling to "operational areas".

Fifteen aid workers of the French non-governmental agency, Action Against Hunger (ACF), were among at least 425 people killed in the government's battle to open the waterway since July 26.

Sri Lanka resumes battle for water, French struggle to find killers

The ACF head of mission in Sri Lanka, Eric Fort, said he was trying to get access to their offices in Muttur where the 15 local staff members, 11 men and four **women**, had been killed -- possibly over the weekend.

"Our last contact with Muttur was on Friday and after that we are unable to make any contact or even go there," Fort told AFP from Trincomalee where he has been seeking clearance from the authorities to move to Muttur.

There was no immediate word from the government about what happened to the ACF workers, but <u>Tamil Tigers</u> accused government forces of massacring them. Colombo charged that the Tigers had killed 100 civilians in Muttur.

The bodies of the aid workers, wearing T-shirts, were found face-down in their office on Sunday by a local relief agency which managed to slip into the area before it was completely sealed off to outsiders.

Benoit Miribel, the director general of ACF, said his organisation was stunned by the killings which were unprecedented in its 25-year history.

"We are trying to send a team to find out what is going on in this area," Miribel told AFP in Paris. "But soldiers have prevented us from entering the town which remains completely sealed off."

ACF is one of the hundreds of aid agencies that set up operations in Sri Lanka after an Indian Ocean tsunami wiped out much the island's coastal infrastructure and killed an estimated 31,000 people in December 2004.

Heavy fighting broke out in Muttur and the surrounding areas last week as the Tigers mounted pressure on the military to divert their attention from the mini-dam and sluice gates shut on July 20.

The fighting prevented aid agencies from getting into the Muttur area. However, the military said it had established full control over the Muslim-majority town over the weekend.

Reporters and photographers who tried to enter Muttur Sunday were turned away by security forces. Troops said the guerrillas had shelled the town on Sunday.

Load-Date: August 8, 2006



Bomb in bus kills 16 in eastern Sri Lanka

Associated Press International

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 682 words

Byline: By GAVIN RABINOWITZ, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A bomb ripped through a bus as it stopped at a military checkpoint in eastern Sri Lanka on Monday, killing at least 16 civilians and wounding 25 others, the military said, blaming separatist Tamil rebels.

The bomb, which tore through the bus, shattered windows and left a bloody trail of debris and flesh, raised the death toll from the last 24 hours of violence in this war-ravaged island to at least 36.

The blast is the latest escalation in a week of violence that has seen the rebels' first air raid, a naval battle, a suicide bombing and government airstrikes, as this tropical island edges toward a resumption of full-scale civil war.

The bus was near the town of Ampara, about 220 kilometers (130 miles) east of Colombo, when the bomb exploded, killing 16 people and wounding 25, said military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe.

Among the dead were 10 women and two children, he said, adding that all the dead were civilians.

"There is no doubt that this was an attack carried out by (the) <u>LTTE</u>, targeting civilians," he said, referring to the rebels by the acronym of their official name, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing.

The bus stopped at a military checkpoint and the bomb exploded as passengers started to get off to allow troops to search the vehicle, he said.

The explosion occurred in the middle of the bus and left a jagged hole in the roof, said Wasantha Chandrapala, a journalist who arrived at the scene shortly after the attack.

Inside, the wreckage was littered with tattered books, cloths and bags, all covered in blood and bits of flesh, he said.

Samarasinghe said it was too soon to tell if the blast was detonated by a suicide bomber.

Last week a Tamil rebel suicide bomber killed eight people when he drove an explosive-laden tractor into a military base in the east.

Bomb in bus kills 16 in eastern Sri Lanka

The rebels have generally targeted the military in recent years, including stepped up attacks on government forces at sea. Last week the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> launched their first-ever airstrike, bombing an air force base on the outskirts of the capital.

At the same time government forces have been assaulting Tamil positions in the east of the island, overrunning their bases and trying to wrest power in the region from the rebels who control vast swaths in the east and north, where they want to set up an independent homeland.

Ampara was the scene of bitter fighting between government forces and the rebels last month when the army captured several rebel strongholds.

Also Monday, the army said it killed at least 12 rebels fighters in a clash in the northwestern Mannar district late on Sunday.

The military was on high alert Monday, before the bombing, to deter retaliatory violence by majority Sinhalese after suspected Tamil rebels killed six ethnic Sinhalese laborers at an orphanage construction site.

Gunmen shot the laborers on Sunday in the eastern Batticaloa district, where they were building an orphanage, Samarasinghe said. He speculated that the rebels may have launched the attack to spur a violent backlash by Sinhalese.

In a separate incident in northern Vavuniya, suspected rebels fatally shot two Tamils, who were members of a Tamil political party opposed to the rebels, Samarasinghe said.

Rebel officials were not immediately available for comment.

Sri Lanka's ethnic war started when Sinhalese mobs targeted Tamils after 13 Sinhalese soldiers were killed by the Tamils in the north in 1983 in a single major attack against the military.

The rebels have fought the government since then to create an independent homeland for the country's 3.1 million Tamil minority after decades of discrimination by the Sinhalese-dominated state.

The Norwegian-brokered cease-fire signed in 2002 that ended more than two decades of fighting remains intact in name only after violence resumed in late 2005. More than 4,000 people have died since then, though both sides still claim to abide by the agreement.

At least 65,000 people were killed before the cease-fire.

Associated Press Writer Bharatha Mallawarachi in Colombo contributed to this report.

Load-Date: April 2, 2007



US Fed News

May 1, 2007 Tuesday 4:20 AM EST

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Length: 6496 words **Byline:** US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research Electronic Affairs Publication Office issued the following Background Note:

PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 65,610 sq. km. (25,332 sq. mi.); about the size of West Virginia.

Cities: Capital-Colombo (pop. est. 1.3 million-urban area). Sri Jayewardenepura-Kotte is the officially designated capital and is the site of Parliament, but it is currently only an administrative center. Other cities-Kandy (150,000), Galle (110,000), Jaffna (100,000).

Terrain: Coastal plains in the northern third of country; hills and mountains in south-central Sri Lanka rise to more than 2,133 meters (7,000 ft.).

Climate: Tropical. Rainy seasons-light in northeast, fall and winter, with average rainfall of 50 in.; heavy in southwest, summer and fall, with average rainfall of 200 in.

PEOPLE

Nationality: Noun and adjective-Sri Lankan(s).

Population: 19.8 million.

Annual growth rate: 1.1%.

Ethnic groups (2002): Sinhalese (74%), Tamils (18%), Muslims (7%), others (1%).

Religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity.

Languages: Sinhala and Tamil (official), English.

Education: Years compulsory-to age 14. Primary school attendance-96.5%. Literacy-91%.

Health: Infant mortality rate-14/1,000. Life expectancy-72 yrs. (male); 77 yrs. (female).

Work force: 8.1 million.

GOVERNMENT

Type: Republic.

Independence: February 4, 1948.

Constitution: August 31, 1978.

Suffrage: Universal over 18.

Branches: Executive-president, chief of state and head of government, elected for a 6-year term. Legislative-unicameral 225-member Parliament. Judicial-Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, subordinate courts.

Administrative subdivisions: Nine provinces and 25 administrative districts.

Political parties: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Jathika Hela Urumaya, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Tamil National Alliance, United National Party, several small Tamil and Muslim parties, and others.

ECONOMY (2006)

GDP: \$25.8 billion.

Annual growth rate: 7.4%.

Natural resources: Limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, and phosphate.

Agriculture (16.8% of GDP): Major products-rice, tea, rubber, coconut, and spices.

Services (56.2% of GDP): Major types-tourism, wholesale and retail trade, transport, telecom, financial services.

Industry (27% of GDP): Major types-garments and leather goods, rubber products, food processing, chemicals, refined petroleum, gems and jewelry, non-metallic mineral-based products, and construction.

Trade: Exports-\$6.8 billion: garments, tea, rubber products, jewelry and gems, refined petroleum, and coconuts. Major markets-U.S. (\$2.1 billion), U.K., India Imports-\$10.2 billion. Major suppliers-India, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Iran, Malaysia, Japan, UK, UAE, Belgium, Indonesia, South Korea, U.S. (\$236 million).

PEOPLE

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is an island in the Indian Ocean about 28 kilometers (18 mi.) off the southeastern coast of India with a population of about 19 million. Density is highest in the southwest where Colombo, the country's main port and industrial center, is located. The net population growth is about 1.3%. Sri Lanka is ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse.

Sinhalese make up 74% of the population and are concentrated in the densely populated southwest. Ceylon Tamils, citizens whose South Indian ancestors have lived on the island for centuries, total about 12% and live predominantly in the north and east.

Indian Tamils, a distinct ethnic group, represent about 5% of the population. The British brought them to Sri Lanka in the 19th century as tea and rubber plantation workers, and they remain concentrated in the "tea country" of south-central Sri Lanka. In accordance with a 1964 agreement with India, Sri Lanka granted citizenship to 230,000 "stateless" Indian Tamils in 1988. Under the pact, India granted citizenship to the remainder, some 200,000 of

whom now live in India. Another 75,000 Indian Tamils, who themselves or whose parents once applied for Indian citizenship, now wish to remain in Sri Lanka. The government has stated these Tamils will not be forced to return to India, although they are not technically citizens of Sri Lanka. In October of 2003, an act of Parliament granted citizenship to several thousand of these "tea estate" Tamils.

Other minorities include Muslims (both Moors and Malays), at about 7% of the population; Burghers, who are descendants of European colonists, principally from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (U.K.); and aboriginal Veddahs. Most Sinhalese are Buddhist; most Tamils are Hindu. The majority of Sri Lanka's Muslims practice Sunni Islam. Sizable minorities of both Sinhalese and Tamils are Christians, most of whom are Roman Catholic. The 1978 constitution, while assuring freedom of religion, grants primacy to Buddhism.

Sinhala, an Indo-European language, is the native tongue of the Sinhalese. Tamils and most Muslims speak Tamil, part of the South Indian Dravidian linguistic group. Use of English has declined since independence, but it continues to be spoken by many in the middle and upper middle classes, particularly in Colombo. The government is seeking to reverse the decline in the use of English, mainly for economic but also for political reasons. Both Sinhala and Tamil are official languages.

HISTORY

The actual origins of the Sinhalese are shrouded in myth. Most believe they came to Sri Lanka from northern India during the 6th century BC. Buddhism arrived from the subcontinent 300 years later and spread rapidly. Buddhism and a sophisticated system of irrigation became the pillars of classical Sinhalese civilization (200 BC-1200 AD) that flourished in the north-central part of the island. Invasions from southern India, combined with internecine strife, pushed Sinhalese kingdoms southward.

The island's contact with the outside world began early. Roman sailors called the island Taprobane. Arab traders knew it as "Serendip," the root of the word "serendipity." Beginning in 1505, Portuguese traders, in search of cinnamon and other spices, seized the island's coastal areas and spread Catholicism. The Dutch supplanted the Portuguese in 1658. Although the British ejected the Dutch in 1796, Dutch law remains an important part of Sri Lankan jurisprudence. In 1815, the British defeated the king of Kandy, last of the native rulers, and created the Crown Colony of Ceylon. They established a plantation economy based on tea, rubber, and coconuts. In 1931, the British granted Ceylon limited self-rule and a universal franchise. Ceylon became independent on February 4, 1948.

Post-Independence Politics

Sri Lankan politics since independence have been strongly democratic. Two major parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), have generally alternated rule.

The UNP ruled first from 1948-56 under three Prime Ministers-D.S. Senanayake, his son Dudley, and Sir John Kotelawala. The SLFP ruled from 1956-65, with a short hiatus in 1960, first under S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and then, after his assassination in 1959, under his widow, Sirimavo, the world's first *female* chief executive in modern times. Dudley Senanayake and the UNP returned to power in 1965.

In 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike again assumed the premiership. A year later, an insurrection by followers of the Maoist "Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna" (JVP, or "People's Liberation Front") broke out. The SLFP government suppressed the revolt and declared a state of emergency that lasted 6 years.

In 1972, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government introduced a new constitution, which changed the country's name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, declared it a republic, made protection of Buddhism a constitutional principle, and created a weak president appointed by the prime minister. Its economic policies during this period were highly socialist and included the nationalization of large tea and rubber plantations and other private industries.

The UNP, under J.R. Jayewardene, returned to power in 1977. The Jayewardene government opened the economy and, in 1978, introduced a new constitution based on the French model, a key element of which was the

creation of a strong executive presidency. J.R. Jayewardene was elected President by Parliament in 1978 and by nationwide election in 1982. In 1982, a national referendum extended the life of Parliament another 6 years.

The UNP's Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prime Minister in the Jayewardene government, narrowly defeated Mrs. Bandaranaike (SLFP) in the 1988 presidential elections. The UNP also won an absolute majority in the 1989 parliamentary elections. Mr. Premadasa was assassinated on May 1, 1993 by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam ("LTTE" or "Tigers"), and was replaced by then-Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, who appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe Prime Minister.

The SLFP, the main party in the People's Alliance (PA) coalition, returned to power in 1994 for the first time in 17 years. The PA won a plurality in the August 1994 parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government with Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Kumaratunga later won the November 1994 presidential elections and appointed her mother (former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike) to replace her as Prime Minister. President Kumaratunga won re-election to another 6-year term in December 1999. In August 2000, Mrs. Bandaranaike resigned as Prime Minister for health reasons, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka was appointed to take her place. In December 2001, the UNP assumed power, led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe. Chandrika Kumaratunga remained as President. In November of 2003, President Kumaratunga suddenly took control of three key ministries, triggering a serious cohabitation crisis. In January 2004, the SLFP and the JVP formed a political grouping known as the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). In February, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. In these elections, which took place in April 2004, the UPFA received 45% of the vote, with the UNP receiving 37% of the vote. While it did not win enough seats to command a majority in Parliament, the UPFA was able to form a government and appoint a cabinet headed by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Presidential elections were held in November 2005. Mahinda Rajapaksa became President, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayake became Prime Minister.

Communal Crisis

Historical divisions continue to have an impact on Sri Lankan society and politics. From independence, the Tamil minority has been uneasy with the country's unitary form of government and apprehensive that the Sinhalese majority would abuse Tamil rights. Those fears were reinforced when S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike triumphed in the 1956 elections after appealing to Sinhalese nationalism. His declaration that Sinhala was the country's official language-an act felt by Tamils to be a denigration of their own tongue-was the first in a series of steps over the following decades that appeared discriminatory to Tamils. Tamils also protested government educational policies and agriculture programs that encouraged Sinhalese farmers from the south to move to newly irrigated lands in the east. The decades following 1956 saw intermittent outbreaks of communal violence and growing radicalization among Tamil groups. By the mid-1970s Tamil politicians were moving from support for federalism to a demand for a separate Tamil state-"Tamil Eelam"-in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, areas of traditional Tamil settlement. In the 1977 elections, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) won all the seats in Tamil areas on a platform of separatism. Other groups-particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers)-sought an independent state by force.

In 1983, the death of 13 Sinhalese soldiers at the hands of the <u>LTTE</u> unleashed the largest outburst of communal violence in the country's history. Hundreds of Tamils were killed in Colombo and elsewhere, tens of thousands were left homeless, and more than 100,000 fled to south India. The north and east became the scene of bloodshed as security forces attempted to suppress the <u>LTTE</u> and other militant groups. Terrorist incidents occurred in Colombo and other cities. Each side in the conflict accused the other of violating human rights. The conflict assumed an international dimension when the Sri Lankan Government accused India of supporting the Tamil insurgents.

In October 1997, the U.S. Government designated the <u>LTTE</u> as a foreign terrorist organization under provisions of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and has maintained this designation since then, most recently redesignating the group in October of 2003.

By mid-1987, India intervened in the conflict by air-dropping supplies to prevent what it felt was harsh treatment and starvation of the Tamil population in the Jaffna Peninsula caused by an economic blockade by Colombo. Under a July 29, 1987, accord (the Indo-Lanka Accord) signed by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene, the Sri Lankan Government made a number of concessions to Tamil demands, which included devolution of power to the provinces, merger-subject to later referendum-of the northern and eastern provinces, and official status for the Tamil language. India agreed to establish order in the north and east with an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) and to cease assisting Tamil insurgents. Militant groups, although initially reluctant, agreed to surrender their arms to the IPKF.

Within weeks, however, the <u>LTTE</u> declared its intent to continue its armed struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam and refused to disarm. The IPKF found itself engaged in a bloody police action against the <u>LTTE</u>. Further complicating the return to peace was a burgeoning Sinhalese insurgency in the south. The JVP, relatively quiescent since the 1971 insurrection, began to reassert itself in 1987. Capitalizing on opposition to the Indo-Lankan Accord in the Sinhalese community, the JVP launched an intimidation campaign against supporters of the accord. Numerous UNP and other government supporters were assassinated. The government, relieved of its security burden by the IPKF in the north and east, intensified its efforts in the south. The JVP was crushed but at a high cost in human lives.

From April 1989 through June 1990, the government engaged in direct communications with the <u>LTTE</u> leadership. In the meantime, fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the IPKF escalated in the north. India withdrew the last of its forces from Sri Lanka in early 1990, and fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the government resumed. Both the <u>LTTE</u> and government forces committed serious human rights violations. In January 1995, the Sri Lankan Government and the <u>LTTE</u> agreed to a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step in a government-initiated plan for peace negotiations. After 3 months, however, the <u>LTTE</u> unilaterally resumed hostilities. The government then adopted a policy of military engagement with the Tigers, with government forces liberating Jaffna from <u>LTTE</u> control by mid-1996 and moving against <u>LTTE</u> positions in the northern part of the country called the Vanni. An <u>LTTE</u> counteroffensive begun in October 1999 reversed most government gains and by May 2000 threatened government forces in Jaffna. Heavy fighting continued into 2001.

Peace Process

In December 2001, with the election of a new UNP government, the <u>LTTE</u> and government declared unilateral cease-fires. In February 2002, the Government (GSL) and <u>LTTE</u> signed a ceasefire agreement sponsored by peace process facilitator Norway. Peace talks began in Norway in December 2002. The Tigers dropped out of talks in February 2003, however, claiming they were being marginalized. In July 2004, the first suicide bomb since 2001 struck Colombo.

In March 2004, Eastern Tiger commander Karuna broke with the <u>LTTE</u>, going underground with his supporters. In March 2006, the Karuna faction registered a political party, the Tamil People's Liberation Tigers. The main <u>LTTE</u> and the Karuna faction have targeted each other in low-level attacks since that time.

Over 30,000 Sri Lankans died in the December 2004 tsunami, and hundreds of thousands of others fled their homes. In June 2005, the GSL and <u>LTTE</u> reached an agreement to share \$3 billion in international tsunami aid. However, the agreement was challenged in court and was never implemented. In August 2005, the <u>LTTE</u> assassinated Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil. Parliament passed a state of emergency regulation that has been renewed every month since then.

During the November 2005 presidential election, the <u>LTTE</u> enforced a voting boycott in areas under its control. As a result, perceived hard-liner Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Mahinda Rajapaksa won by a narrow margin. Low-level violence between the <u>LTTE</u> and security forces escalated. In December 2005, pro-<u>LTTE</u> Tamil National Alliance MP Joseph Pararajasingham was assassinated within a GSL high security zone in the eastern town of Batticaloa.

In February 2006, exactly four years after the ceasefire agreement was signed, the GSL and <u>LTTE</u> renewed their commitment to the agreement at talks in Geneva. There was a lull in violence until April, when an explosion rocked

a Sinhalese market in Trincomalee, followed by limited Sinhalese backlash against Tamils. Several days later, an <u>LTTE</u> suicide bomber attacked the main army compound in Colombo, killing eight soldiers and seriously wounding Army Commander General Fonseka. The government retaliated with air strikes on Tiger targets. In June, an <u>LTTE</u> suicide bomber succeeded in killing Army third-in-command General Kulatunga in a suburb of Colombo.

The European Union banned the <u>LTTE</u> as a terrorist organization on May 30, 2006. In June 2006, GSL and <u>LTTE</u> delegations flew to Oslo to discuss the future of the Scandinavian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The Tigers refused to sit for talks with the GSL and instead demanded the SLMM remove any monitors from EUmember nations.

Heavy fighting in August 2006, the worst since the 2002 ceasefire, killed hundreds of people and caused tens of thousands to flee their homes when the Tamil Tiger rebels clashed with government forces in the north and east. In September 2006, the government carried out the first major seizure of enemy territory by either side since the 2002 ceasefire when it drove Tamil Tiger rebels from the entrance of the strategic Trincomalee harbor.

In October 2006, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked a Navy bus convoy at a transit point in Habarana, killing 90 sailors, and a few days later, attacked the Sri Lankan Navy Headquarters in Galle, a major tourist destination in the far south. Peace talks in Geneva at the end of October ended with no progress. The <u>LTTE</u> attempted to assassinate the Defense Secretary by bombing his motorcade in December 2006, but he escaped unharmed.

Government troops took control of the <u>LTTE</u>'s eastern stronghold of Vakarai in January 2007, resulting in thousands more internally displaced persons. In March 2007, the government claimed to have cleared the <u>LTTE</u> from the eastern coast. Later that month, the Tamil Tiger rebels launched their first-ever air attack, which targeted the Katunayake Air Force base adjacent to Bandaranaike International Airport. Despite the fighting, both sides still claim to adhere to the ceasefire.

GOVERNMENT

Under the 1978 constitution, the president of the republic, directly elected for a 6-year term, is chief of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. Responsible to Parliament for the exercise of duties under the constitution and laws, the president may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of Parliament with the concurrence of the Supreme Court.

The president appoints and heads a cabinet of ministers responsible to Parliament. The president's deputy is the prime minister, who leads the ruling party in Parliament. A parliamentary no-confidence vote requires dissolution of the cabinet and the appointment of a new one by the president.

Parliament is a unicameral 225-member legislature elected by universal suffrage and proportional representation to a 6-year term. The president may summon, suspend, or end a legislative session and dissolve Parliament. Parliament reserves the power to make all laws.

The 1978 constitution clearly envisaged a system where the president and the prime minister were from the same party. Following the December 2001 parliamentary elections, the president and the prime minister were from different parties. This led to serious cohabitation strains. In November 2003, for example, President Kumaratunga suddenly took over three key ministries (Defense, Interior, and Mass Communications), precipitating a serious cohabitation crisis between the two sides. In February of 2004, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. The UPFA, while receiving enough seats in Parliament to form a minority government, fell short of the 113 seats necessary for a majority in Parliament. Mahinda Rajapaksa of the SLFP became Prime Minister and former Prime Minister and UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Leader of the Opposition. Presidential elections were held in November 2005. Mahinda Rajapaksa became President, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayake became Prime Minister.

Sri Lanka's judiciary consists of a Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, and a number of subordinate courts. Sri Lanka's legal system reflects diverse cultural influences. Criminal law is fundamentally British. Basic civil law is Roman-Dutch. Laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and inheritance are communal.

Under the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987-and the resulting 13th amendment to the constitution-the Government of Sri Lanka agreed to devolve significant authority to the provinces. Provincial councils are directly elected for 5-year terms. The leader of the council majority serves as the province's chief minister; a provincial governor is appointed by the president. The councils possess limited powers in education, health, rural development, social services, agriculture, security, and local taxation. Many of these powers are shared or subject to central government oversight. Predating the accord are municipal, urban, and rural councils with limited powers.

Principal Government Officials

President-Mahinda Rajapaksa

Prime Minister-Ratnasiri Wickramanayake

Ambassador to the United States-Bernard Goonetilleke

Ambassador to the United Nations-Prasad Kariyawasam

Sri Lanka maintains an embassy in the United States at 2148 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-4834025).

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Sri Lanka's two major political parties-the UNP and the SLFP-embrace democratic values, international nonalignment, and encouragement of Sinhalese culture. Past differences between the two on foreign and economic policy have narrowed. The SLFP, however, envisions a broader role for the state in general.

Sri Lanka has a multi-party democracy that enjoys considerable stability despite relatively high levels of political violence. <u>LTTE</u> violence is largely confined to the north and eastern provinces, which are 6 to 8 hours by road from the capital. Before the advent of the peace process, <u>LTTE</u>-perpetrated terrorist bombings directed against politicians and civilian targets were common in Colombo, Kandy, and elsewhere in the country. <u>LTTE</u> terrorist activities have generally been aimed at destabilizing Sri Lanka politically, economically, and socially. <u>LTTE</u> attacks on key political figures include the attempted assassination of Secretary of Defense Gothabaya Rajapaksa in December 2006, the assassination of Army General Kulatunga in June 2006, the attempted assassination of Army Commander General Fonseka in April 2006, the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 2005, the killing of the Industrial Development Minister by suicide bombing in June 2000, and the December 1999 attempted assassination of President Kumaratunga. Economic targets included the airport in July 2001, the Colombo World Trade Center in October 1997, and the central bank in January 1996. In January 1998, the <u>LTTE</u> detonated a truck bomb in Kandy, damaging the Temple of the Tooth relic, the holiest Buddhist shrine in the country.

ECONOMY

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle income developing nation with a gross domestic product of about \$25.8 billion. This translates into a per capita income of \$1,355. Sri Lanka's 91% literacy rate in local languages, and life expectancy of 72 years rank well above those of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. English language ability is relatively high but has declined significantly since the 1970s.

Sri Lanka's income inequality is severe, with striking differences between rural and urban areas. About a quarter of the country's population of 19.8 million remains impoverished. Civil conflict, falling agricultural labor productivity, lack of income-earning opportunities for the rural population, and poor infrastructure outside the Western Province are impediments to poverty reduction.

In 1978, Sri Lanka shifted away from a socialist orientation and opened its economy to foreign investment. But the pace of reform has been uneven. A period of aggressive economic reform under the UNP-led government that ruled from 2002 to 2004 was followed by a more statist approach under former President Chandrika Kumaratunga and current President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Despite a brutal civil war since 1983, economic growth has averaged around 4.5%. In 2001, however, GDP growth was negative 1.4%-the only contraction since independence. Growth recovered to 4.0% in 2002. Following the 2002 ceasefire and subsequent economic reforms, the economy grew more rapidly, recording growth rates of 6.0% in 2003 and 5.4% in 2004. The December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami killed 32,000 people, displaced 443,000, and caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage. The tsunami's overall economic impact was less severe than originally feared, with the economy growing by 6% in 2005 as the damage was offset by the reconstruction effort. The economic situation in Sri Lanka in 2006 was stable, despite a resumption of hostilities between the government and the *LTTE* and escalating oil prices. GDP growth in 2006 was a strong 7.4%.

President Rajapaksa's broad economic strategy was outlined in his election manifesto "Mahinda Chintana" (Mahinda's Thoughts), which now guides government economic policy. Mahinda Chintana policies focus on poverty alleviation and steering investment to disadvantaged areas; developing the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector; promotion of agriculture; and expanding the already enormous civil service. The Rajapaksa Government rejects the privatization of state enterprises, including "strategic" enterprises such as state-owned banks, airports, and electrical utilities. Instead, it plans to retain ownership and management of these enterprises and make them profitable.

The future of Sri Lanka's economic health primarily depends on political stability, return to peace, and continued policy reforms-particularly in the area of fiscal discipline and budget management. Rising oil costs have contributed to Sri Lanka's high public debt load (93% of GDP in 2006). Sri Lanka needs economic growth rates of 7-8% and investment levels of about 30% of GDP for a sustainable reduction in unemployment and poverty. In the past 10 years, investment levels have averaged around 25% of GDP.

Sri Lanka depends on a continued strong global economy for investment and for expansion of its export base. The government plans an ambitious infrastructure development program to boost growth. It hopes to diversify export products and destinations to make use of the Indo-Lanka and Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreements, GSP+ treatment by the European Union and other regional and bilateral preferential trading agreements.

As in previous years, the service sector was the largest component of GDP at 56.2%. In 2006, the service sector continued its strong expansion, fueled primarily by strong growth in telecom, trading, and financial services. Public administration and defense expenditures increased in 2006 due to resumption of hostilities, expansion of public sector employment, and the expenses associated with maintaining a 104-minister cabinet. There also is a growing information technology sector, especially information technology training and software development. The tourism sector suffered heavily in 2005 following the tsunami and is once again facing difficulties due to the current volatile security situation.

Industry accounts for 27% of GDP. The textile, apparel, and leather products sector is the largest, accounting for 39% of total industrial output. The second-largest industrial sector, at 22% of total manufacturing output, is food, beverages, and tobacco. The third-largest industrial sector is chemical, petroleum, rubber, and plastic products. The construction sector accounted for 7.2% of GDP in 2006. Mining and quarrying accounts of 1.9% of GDP.

Agriculture has lost its relative importance to the Sri Lankan economy in recent decades. It employs 33% of the working population, but accounted for only 16.8% of GDP in 2006. Rice, the staple cereal, is cultivated extensively. The plantation sector consists of tea, rubber, and coconut; in recent years, the tea crop has made significant contributions to export earnings.

Trade and Foreign Assistance

Sri Lanka's exports (mainly apparel, tea, rubber, gems and jewelry) were \$6.8 billion and imports (mainly oil, textiles, food, and machinery) were \$10.2 billion in 2006. The resulting large trade deficit was financed primarily by foreign assistance and by remittances from Sri Lankan expatriate workers. Sri Lanka must diversify its exports beyond garments and tea. Garment exports face increased competition following the 2005 expiration of the worldwide Multifiber Arrangement. The tea industry is challenged by a shortage of plantation labor and by growing competition.

Exports to the United States, Sri Lanka's most important market, were \$2.1 billion in 2006, or 29% of total exports. For many years, the United States has been Sri Lanka's biggest market for garments, taking almost 60% of total garment exports. India is Sri Lanka's largest supplier, accounting for 21% of imports valued at \$2.1 billion in 2006. The United States exported approximately \$236 million to Sri Lanka in 2006 consisting primarily of textiles and specialized fabrics, tobacco, newsprint, food and beverages, chemicals, synthetic rubber-primary, electrical apparatus, telecommunications equipment, computers and accessories, and industrial supplies.

Sri Lanka is highly dependent on foreign assistance, with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Japan, and other donors disbursing loans totaling \$912 million in 2006. Foreign grants amounted to \$301 million in 2006. While implementation of aid projects has been spotty over the years, the government is trying to improve this record by streamlining tender processes and increasing project management skills.

Labor

The unemployment rate has declined in recent years and was placed at 6.5% in 2006. The rate of unemployment among <u>women</u> and high school and college graduates, however, has been proportionally higher than the rate for less-educated workers. The government has embarked on educational reforms it hopes will lead to better preparation of students and better matches between graduates and jobs.

More than 20% of the 7.5 million-strong work force is unionized, but union membership is declining. There are more than 1,650 registered trade unions, many of which have 50 or fewer members, and 19 federations. Many unions have political affiliations. The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and Lanka Jathika estate workers union are the two largest unions, representing workers in plantation sector. The president of the CWC also is Minister of Youth Empowerment and Socio Economic Development. Other strong and influential trade unions include the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Sri Lanka Nidhahas Sevaka Sangamaya, Jathika Sevaka Sangayama, Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Ceylon Bank Employees Union, Union of Post and Telecommunication Officers, Conference of Public Sector Independent Trade Unions, and the JVP-aligned Inter-Company Trade Union.

Public sector trade unions have recently resisted Government moves to restructure the state-owned electrical utility board and the petroleum company. Private sector workers are also agitating for a "living wage" significantly higher than the current minimum wage.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Sri Lanka traditionally follows a nonaligned foreign policy but has been seeking closer relations with the United States since December 2001. It participates in multilateral diplomacy, particularly at the United Nations, where it seeks to promote sovereignty, independence, and development in the developing world. Sri Lanka was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It also is a member of the Commonwealth, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, and the Colombo Plan. Sri Lanka continues its active participation in the NAM, while also stressing the importance it places on regionalism by playing a strong role in SAARC.

U.S.-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

The United States enjoys cordial relations with Sri Lanka that are based, in large part, on shared democratic traditions. U.S. policy toward Sri Lanka is characterized by respect for its independence, sovereignty, and moderate nonaligned foreign policy; support for the country's unity, territorial integrity, and democratic institutions; and encouragement of its social and economic development. The United States is a strong supporter of ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka and the peace process that began in December 2001.

U.S. assistance has totaled more than \$1.63 billion since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it has contributed to Sri Lanka's economic growth with projects designed to reduce unemployment, improve housing, develop the Colombo Stock Exchange, modernize the judicial system, and improve competitiveness. At the June 2003 Tokyo Donors' Conference on Sri Lanka, the United States pledged \$54 million, including \$40.4 million of USAID funding.

In addition, the International Broadcast Bureau (IBB)-formerly Voice of America (VOA)-operates a radio-transmitting station in Sri Lanka. The U.S. Armed Forces maintain a limited military-to-military relationship with the Sri Lanka defense establishment. By February 2005, the U.S. had contributed \$67 million to Sri Lankan relief following the tsunami disaster of December 26, 2004.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador-Robert O. Blake

Deputy Chief of Mission-James R. Moore

Head of Political Section-Michael DeTar

Head of Economic/Commercial Section-Robert Gabor

Management Officer-Maria Brewer

Consular Officer-Philip Cargile

Defense Attaché-Lt. Col. James Oxley

Director, USAID-Rebecca Cohn

Public Affairs Officer-Terry White

IBB Station Manager-George Miller, Acting

The U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-249-8500, fax: 94-11-243-7345). U.S. Agency for International Development offices are located at the American Center, 44 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-249-8000; fax: 94-11-247-2850/247-2860). Public Affairs offices also are located at the American Center (tel: 94-11-249-8100, fax: 94-11-244-9070).

IBB offices are located near Chilaw, 75 kms north of Colombo (94-32-225-5931 to 34/fax: 94-32-225-5822).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and residing abroad through Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings. Consular Information Sheets exist for all countries and include information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. Public Announcements are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at http://www.travel.state.gov, where the current Worldwide Caution, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings can be found. Consular Affairs Publications, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at http://www.travel.state.gov. For additional information on international travel, see http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml.

The Department of State encourages all U.S citizens who traveling or residing abroad to register via the State Department's travel registration website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight, Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled "Health Information for International Travel" (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

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Load-Date: May 14, 2007



Sri lankan rebels say detained policemen should go through Tigers court

Xinhua General News Service

September 12, 2005 Monday 11:00 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 213 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) rebels Monday informed the cease-fire monitors that three detained policemen in their custody will have to go through the <u>LTTE</u>s court procedures, the local website Lankapage said.

Informed sources revealed that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) head personally contacted <u>LTTE</u> political head S.P. Thamilselvan to secure the policemen's release.

The <u>LTTE</u> political leader informed the SLMM chief that the SLMM is free to meet the detained policemen in Kilinochchi. The cease- fire monitors in Kilinochchi are planning to do so.

Three policemen attached to the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) were detained for allegedly entering in the Arippu area of Mannar district held by the *LTTE* last Friday.

The policemen were held by the Tigers when they ventured into an area under rebel control to investigate into a complaint of child abuse.

Two <u>female</u> officers, two Catholic priests and a civilian who had accompanied the three policemen were later released by the Tigers.

The government has reported the incident to the Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission established to ensure the government and the <u>LTTE</u> carry out a cease-fire agreement signed in 2002 between the two parties.

Load-Date: September 13, 2005



Civilians hurt in rebel attack in northern Sri Lanka

Indo-Asian News Service
July 21, 2007 Saturday 3:09 PM EST

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Length: 243 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, July 21 -- Two civilians were injured when Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) rebels fired mortars at a village in northern Sri Lanka, defence officials said Saturday.

Both casualties in the mortar attack, which happened Friday evening in the Ethavatunuwewa village of the northern Vavuniya district, were *women* aged 58 and 28, police said.

The rebels have been continuously firing mortars at the village during the last two months.

Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said they would no longer accept dead bodies of the <u>LTTE</u> from the Army to be handed over to the <u>LTTE</u> in the eastern Batticaloa district.

Davide Vignati, the ICRC spokesman, said Saturday "We could no longer find direct <u>LTTE</u> interlocutors in Batticaloa. As a result, we refused to accept three **LTTE** bodies from the Army yesterday (Friday)."

Vignati, however, added: "We will continue to assist both parties on request in the districts of Vauniya and Mannar (in the north)."

The government announced July 11 that the entire Eastern Province had been rid of the <u>LTTE</u> with the capture of Thoppigala jungles in the Batticaloa district.

Since last week, the clashes between the two sides have shifted to the north with some 13 combatants from both sides dying in a pre-dawn clash Friday.

Over 5000 people have died in the escalation of armed conflict since the end of 2005.

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Load-Date: July 21, 2007



Lanka burning... again?

Hindustan Times

April 26, 2006 Wednesday 1:41 PM EST

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Length: 411 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, April 26 -- Is Sri Lanka heading back to war? The question hangs heavy over the island nation in the wake of the suicide bomb attack on the Sri Lankan army headquarters in Colombo, which killed several people and seriously injured army chief Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka. It isn't surprising that the <u>LTTE</u> has not claimed responsibility for the attack, as it never owns up to its acts of terrorism.

Nevertheless, the latest outrage has the <u>LTTE</u>s hallmark written all over. For only it could have carried out an operation like this, using precise intelligence regarding the movements of the army chief, and a highly motivated <u>female</u> suicide bomber to penetrate such a heavily-guarded nerve centre in the capital. The Sri Lankan government's retaliatory air and naval strikes on Tamil bases in the north-east of the country - the first official military action since a ceasefire was signed in 2002 - suggests there is every possibility of open hostilities breaking out. Although the ceasefire still holds formally, escalating violence in the north and east of the country has left over a 100 people dead in the last three weeks.

<u>LTTE</u> cadres under Prabhakaran are obviously upset with the strong mandate that President Rajapakse won in the local polls and the increased assertion of their breakaway faction, led by Karuna, in the east, which threatens to hamper the <u>LTTE</u>'s activities across the world. The scathing Human Rights Watch report on the <u>LTTE</u>'s record of child recruitment would have added to its frustration. The Sri Lankan security forces are in no position to defeat the <u>LTTE</u> militarily. But that shouldn't prevent Colombo from devising other ways to combat these terrorist acts. The government could, for instance, choke the flow of funds to the **LTTE**'s war chest.

Apart from the contributions made by the Tamil diaspora, the <u>LTTE</u> depends a lot on the earnings from its commercial shipping fleet and the narcotics trade in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. The government could also make appropriate political gestures to Sri Lankan Tamils so that the <u>LTTE</u> would find new recruits hard to come by. Having said that, it's in India's interests too to play a more proactive role in its backyard by offering Colombo any assistance that'd help end the strife. After all, no one doubts that resolving Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict also involves addressing related Indian concerns.

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Load-Date: April 28, 2006



Police in Sri Lanka arrest 3 suspected female rebels at hospital

Associated Press International

September 1, 2006 Friday 2:12 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 344 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lankan police said Friday they have arrested three young <u>women</u> who were injured in a military airstrike on a camp the government says was used by Tamil Tiger rebels as weapons-training base, but the rebels said was a school.

The three age 18, 19 and 20 were brought from northern Mullaitivu to a hospital in central Sri Lanka on Aug. 18, Inspector General of Police Chandra Fernando said.

Two of the girls are still receiving treatment at Kandy General Hospital for serious neurological injuries, while the third has been released and is in police custody, he said.

The girls were being held for questioning under Sri Lanka's anti-terrorism law, which allows detention for up to 90 days, Fernando said.

The bombing has been bitterly disputed, with the rebels and the United Nations Children's Fund saying dozens of schoolchildren attending a first aid course were killed.

The government insists the building was used by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to train its recruits, and that those killed, regardless of age, were Tiger fighters.

Fernando said the three young <u>women</u> all claimed that they were taken by a member of the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> to a camp deep within rebel territory for first aid training.

However, when they reached the camp, they were forced to undergo weapons training, he said, citing their police statements.

The International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed that the three had been transferred to the Kandy General Hospital because of a lack of adequate facilities in the north, and were currently under arrest.

A medical official who answered the phone at the hospital said two of the girls were in the neurological ward, but declined to be more specific about their injuries.

The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> do not usually allow their members to receive treatment in government hospitals, even though the government has offered to treat them on a "humanitarian" basis.

Police in Sri Lanka arrest 3 suspected female rebels at hospital

The last Tiger known to have been treated in a government hospital was rebel spokesman Daya Master, who spent several days in a hospital in the capital in July last year for a heart ailment.

Load-Date: September 2, 2006



Rebels blamed for MP's assassination

The Australian

August 16, 2005 Tuesday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2005 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 350 words

Body

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, in a rare broadside against Tamil Tiger rebels, says there is evidence linking the guerillas to the assassination of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Mr Kadirgamar was gunned down on Friday night at his home in the capital, Colombo. He was a vocal critic of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and played a key role in the group's proscription as a terrorist organisation in several countries, including the US.

AP

"Initial indications of the investigations seem to reveal responsibility of the LTT in the brutal murder," Ms Kumaratunga said in a nationwide TV broadcast on Sunday night.

Mr Kadirgamar, 73, was shot in the head and chest on Friday night as he emerged from the swimming pool at his home. He died in hospital an hour later.

The Oxford-educated foreign minister, an ethnic Tamil, was aveteran campaigner against the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> and is believed to have been instrumental in having the organisation banned in the US in 1997.

"Mr Kadirgamar was an idealist. Long before September 11 and the London bombings; long before terrorism became anathema to the Western world, he spoke out against terrorism in Sri Lanka and abroad," Ms Kumaratunga said.

"He was instrumental in having the LTT recognised internationally for what they are -- an armed terrorist group."

Ms Kumaratunga had in recent years softened her line on the rebels, favouring a negotiated settlement for Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. The rebels have denied killing Mr Kadirgamar.

Last year a suspected <u>female</u> Tiger suicide bomber failed in an attempt to kill Douglas Devananda, a Tamil cabinet minister who bitterly opposed the rebels. Ms Kumaratunga also escaped a Tamil Tiger suicide attack in 1999, in which she lost an eye.

Sri Lanka's Government and Tamil Tiger rebels are observing a Norway-arranged truce that halted 19 years of bloodshed.

Peace talks broke down in 2003, but widespread violence has been avoided. About 65,000 people were killed in the conflict before the truce.

The **Tamil Tigers** have been fighting since 1983 for a separate state for their ethnic minority.

Rebels blamed for MP's assassination

Load-Date: August 15, 2005



Amazons of Sri Lanka's long war

Hindustan Times

June 25, 2006 Sunday 12:35 PM EST

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Length: 456 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, June 25 -- While there seems to be some doubt in the highest circles in the Indian Army about the suitability of <u>women</u> for the armed forces, Sri Lankan fighting units, whether of the government or the rebel *LTTE*, have no doubts about the utility of *women*.

Both the Sri Lankan armed forces and the <u>LTTE</u> have been recruiting <u>women</u> in large numbers since the mid-1980s, and have had no reasons to complain.

According to Iqbal Athas, Sri Lanka correspondent for Jane's Defense Weekly, there could be about 5,000 **women**, including 500 officers, in Sri Lanka's army of over 100,000 personnel. The **LTTE** has a much larger proportion of **women**. By one estimate, they are about 3,000 out of a total of 11,000.

Both the government forces and the <u>LTTE</u> use <u>women</u> in conflict situations in forward areas, but their use in actual combat is very much more in the <u>LTTE</u> than in the government forces. It was sheer necessity which forced the government and the <u>LTTE</u> to begin recruiting <u>women</u> in the 1980s and the new trend was set by the <u>LTTE</u>. In her book <u>Women</u> Fighters of Liberation Tigers (1993), Adele Ann Balasingham says that two factors made young Tamil <u>women</u> opt for a tough military career: The first was the danger they, as <u>women</u>, were exposed to in an ongoing war in which they were confronted by "alien" armed forces like the Sinhala-dominated Sri Lankan Army, and later, the still more alien Indian Army.

The second was the intense social oppression Sri Lankan Tamil <u>women</u> had been subjected to traditionally. <u>Women</u> were itching to break the shackles of tradition and they saw in the <u>LTTE</u> leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, a revolutionary who would not only liberate the Tamils but rid Tamil society of the bane of caste and gender hierarchies and the rural-urban divide. It was Prabhakaran who had mooted the idea of a <u>women</u>'s fighting unit in the armed struggle and he trained a unit in India in 1984. As he put it in his message on International <u>Women</u>'s Day in 1996, he saw <u>women</u>'s liberation as being an essential component of his fight for the liberation of the Tamils.

At first, Prabhakaran used <u>women</u> mostly in support services. But the war against the Indian Peace Keeping Force, which began in October 1987, brought about a sea change in his thinking. "The Indian invasion was a watershed. The Indian Army was brutal and male chauvinist. The rapes and molestations made a bitter impact," wrote Balasingham in an article in 1990 entitled Freedom Birds of Tamil Eelam. Give their superior social and penetrating skills, <u>women</u> have been sent on deep penetration missions, especially suicide attacks. By 2002, over 100 of the suicide bombers were <u>women</u>.

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Amazons of Sri Lanka 's long war

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Load-Date: June 27, 2006



Pro-Tiger group stages protest in northern Sri Lankan town

Xinhua General News Service March 2, 2005 Wednesday 8:00 AM EST

Copyright 2005 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 260 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A pro-Tamil Tiger group protest brought parts of the northern Jaffna town to a standstill Wednesday, local residents said.

An organization named the Civil Organizations Collective had organized the protest to urge the Sri Lankan government to expedite the resumption of peace talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*).

It also aimed at highlighting the shortcomings in the government's tsunami relief co-ordination effort and protesting the murders of the *LTTE*'s political rebels.

The military however said the crowd participation was less than satisfactory in the demonstration.

Transport was reduced to a trickle and businesses remained shut in some parts of the northern Jaffna peninsula, sources said.

The protesters had got even the school children to take part in some areas.

The protest came a day after Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga appointed a two-member probe committee to look into attacks against Tamil Tiger rebels in the eastern province.

LTTE eastern political wing leader E. Kousalyan was murdered early last month and the rebels blamed the murder on a paramilitary group working with the government troops.

On Monday this week, the <u>LTTE</u>'s eastern <u>women</u>'s wing political leader was grievously hurt in an ambush carried out by an unknown group.

The government has denied the existence of any paramilitary group and denied responsibility for the killings.

Peace talks between the <u>LTTE</u> and the government brokered by Norway have been put on hold since April 2003.

Load-Date: March 3, 2005



Outlawing Tigers good first step

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

April 12, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: FORUM; Pg. A12

Length: 706 words

Byline: The StarPhoenix

Body

Against the backdrop of landmine blasts that shattered a ceasefire in Sri Lanka, claimed the lives of 17 military personnel and civilians in recent days, and jeopardized peace talks set for Geneva this month, Canada finally did the right thing by proscribing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as a terrorist group.

"Listing under the Criminal Code is a clear statement that anyone supporting the <u>LTTE</u> is not welcome in Canada, and if they do support the terrorist activities of the <u>LTTE</u>, they can be subject to criminal prosecution," Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day announced.

With the move, Canada joins Britain and the United States among countries that refuse to tolerate the Tigers, whose murderous battle to carve out an independent homeland in the tiny island nation has seen the assassination or near-killings of political leaders in India and Sri Lanka, and the creation of thousands of victims through indiscriminate bombings, suicide attacks and the forced conscription of children.

The decisive act by the Stephen Harper government is in stark contrast to the foot-dragging of the previous Liberal administrations of both Paul Martin and Jean Chretien, who'd been requested three times by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to outlaw the Tigers as a terrorist organization with "significant support in Canada."

The Liberals demurred over acting on the latest CSIS warning a year ago by saying they didn't want to interfere with the Norwegian-brokered peace process between the Tigers and the government of Sri Lanka. Yet the disgusting reality is that Martin and other senior Liberals ignored CSIS advisories and attended fundraising events put on by front-organizations for the <u>LTTE</u> because they didn't want to alienate the 250,000-strong Tamil community in Canada whose support was invaluable to electoral success in cities such as Toronto.

But as a recent report by Human Rights Watch points out, the \$1 million to \$2 million raised annually by the <u>LTTE</u> in Canada to support a civil war in Sri Lanka that's claimed 60,000 lives in the past couple of decades, often has involved the most unsavoury and illegal of tactics against Canadians of Tamil origin, including threats, extortion and intimidation.

Among the most odious of these was a door-too-door "war tax" drive that began in late 2005 among Tamils in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada -- this when the Liberals were touting a hands-off policy to facilitate the peace process -- to finance a "final war" by the *LTTE* for independence.

Outlawing Tigers good first step

The crackdown by western nations on international money transfers by questionable groups in the wake of the 2001 al-Qaida attacks on the U.S. probably has a huge bearing on convincing <u>LTTE</u> leaders to start the process of peace negotiations.

Day's move to outlaw support for the Tigers similarly can act to hasten the peace process if <u>LTTE</u> leaders believe that the cash flow that's the oxygen that keeps their war-fires burning will soon be shut off.

It's on this issue, however, that the Harper government's seemingly decisive move comes up short. While Day's ban applies to the <u>LTTE</u> and its various wings, including the Air and Sea Tigers, the Tiger Organization Security Intelligence Service and the <u>Women</u>'s Combat Force of Liberation Tigers, the list excludes various non-profit companies and organizations that are suspected fronts for the terrorist group.

It should be hoped that the government merely is taking a first-things-first approach in cutting off direct funding to the <u>LTTE</u>, and then leaving it to CSIS to delve into the activities of the suspected front-groups to ascertain whether their activities, too, need to be curtailed.

Many of the Tamils who've relocated to Canada merely want to build peaceful and happy lives for themselves and their families, and forget the insanity and strife that required those in Tiger-controlled areas to "donate" a child per family to serve as <u>LTTE</u> soldiers. Whether it's <u>LTTE</u> operatives directly who try to put the squeeze on them for cash, or whether it's done through a "charity" that's a front for the Tigers, doesn't matter.

It's intolerable in a democratic Canada, and the government needs to put a quick end to it happening here. This week's move by Day is an excellent start.

Graphic

Photo: (Stockwell Day)

Load-Date: April 12, 2006



Tamil 'cleansing' halted

Weekend Australian

June 9, 2007 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 16

Length: 371 words

Byline: Bruce Loudon, South Asia correspondent

Body

Additional reporting: AFP

SRI Lanka's Supreme Court last night ordered an immediate halt to the eviction of minority ethnic Tamils from the capital, Colombo, a day after hundreds were expelled at gunpoint, a court official said.

The Supreme Court said it would hear on June 22 a case prompted by a claim yesterday by a political activist that the evictions were a violation of human rights.

Earlier, human rights groups accused Sri Lanka of ethnic cleansing after government officials arrested hundreds of Tamils in Colombo and forced them back to their homeland, in the country's east and north.

Officials said the crackdown was for security reasons, aimed at suspected Tamil Tiger insurgents who had infiltrated the city, where about 5000 Tamils live in workers' hostels and lodges.

Defence ministry spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella said the moves followed two recent landmine blasts in Colombo.

"Experience in the past 10 years shows that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>) use the lodges (hotels and hostels) in the city to plan terrorist strikes," he said.

A government statement said 376 people, 85 of them **women**, had been picked up after being found to have no valid reason to be in the city.

But human rights workers said all those who were picked up were minority Tamils, most of whom had travelled to the capital from the northeast to seek work or apply for visas that would enable them to seek jobs abroad.

"This is a very serious violation of human rights," said Dharmalingam Sithadthan, a Tamil political leader. "It is OK for the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> to indulge in this sort of ethnic cleansing because they have no moral responsibility, but a government can't behave like this."

Civil Monitoring Committee chairman Sirithunga Jayasuriya said: "This is likeethnic cleansing and we strongly condemn it."

Tamil 'cleansing' halted

The Sri Lankan media watchdog Free Media Movement also condemned the action, saying: "With little or no warning, hundreds of Tamil civilians were evicted, herded and bused back to the embattled regions of the northeast of Sri Lanka."

The Tigers and Sri Lanka signed a truce brokered by Norway in 2002 but that began to unravel in December 2005, and since then at least 5000 civilians and fighters have been killed on both sides.

Load-Date: June 8, 2007



Aid agencies stymied by war in Sri Lanka

The International Herald Tribune
August 18, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1381 words

Byline: Shimali Senanayake and Somini Sengupta

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Nineteen months after the tsunami brought Sri Lanka an unprecedented rush of charity from abroad, international aid agencies find themselves hemmed in not only by surging violence in a long-running civil war but also by suspicion, hostility and, on occasion, deadly attacks.

The massacre of 17 employees of an international humanitarian agency this month in the eastern town of Muttur was the worst attack against aid workers worldwide since the bombing of the United Nations offices in Baghdad in August 2003, in which 22 people died.

The massacre sounded the alarm on the safety of aid workers in this country, amid what had been the fiercest fighting since the 2002 cease-fire. But it also was a reminder of the steady troubles they had faced in recent months.

Aid workers say they have been increasingly stymied in their ability to reach areas hardest hit by the conflict, whether in territory held by the government or by the rebels. They complain of delays in obtaining visas. For a while earlier this year, they said, vital reconstruction materials could not be transported across government-rebel lines.

This year in Ampara, an eastern district, Sri Lankan <u>women</u> working for foreign aid groups were singled out and warned to quit by people supposedly part of a rebel front group; some did.

In May, a driver for the Norwegian Refugee Council was found dead 150 paces from a military checkpoint in northern Vavuniya; his body was found riddled with 10 bullets. His killing remains unsolved.

A week later, grenades were lobbed at the project offices of three international aid agencies in Muttur; one employee of Nonviolent Peaceforce, a conflict-resolution group, was wounded.

This month, a Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission vehicle was pelted with stones as it tried to advance to Muttur, to look into the condition of civilians displaced by the fighting.

The murder of the 17 employees of Action Contre la Faim, or Action Against Hunger, and the Sri Lankan military's refusal to grant independent investigators immediate access to the crime scene, drew unusually pointed criticism from the head of the monitoring mission, Ulf Henricsson, a retired Swedish general.

Aid agencies stymied by war in Sri Lanka

"It's very unwise of the government to stop us from entering these areas and monitoring," Henricsson said. "To stop us is to prevent an inquiry, and why do that if you have nothing to hide?"

The government denied permission for his monitors to go there, Henricsson said, on the ground that fighting is actively under way between Sri Lankan forces and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, or <u>LTTE</u>.

Eric Fort, the aid agency's head of mission for Sri Lanka, said 15 of his colleagues, all Sri Lankans, had been found shot in the head in their Muttur office.

Two others appeared to have been shot in the back; their bodies were found in the agency's compound, near a car, as if they had been trying to flee. They had lost radio contact with the group's headquarters in Colombo two days before their bodies were found.

Fort said the government turned down his repeated requests to go to Muttur to inquire after his missing colleagues, citing clashes in the area.

The government has promised an investigation into the killings, aided by forensic pathologists from Australia, but has ruled out any involvement of the United Nations or the International Committee of the Red Cross, as Action Against Hunger had requested.

"We can't have people from outside trying to do things under our laws," Mahinda Samarasinghe, the minister of disaster management and human rights, said.

The United States called Thursday for an immediate halt to the hostilities. A U.S. aide delivered this message to President Mahinda Rajapakse during a hastily scheduled meeting.

The European Union issued a statement calling for an end to the violence.

In an interview, Samarasinghe said his government welcomed international relief workers but was compelled to restrict their movement for their own safety. "We can't have any number of aid workers running around in conflict areas." he said.

Even as military clashes have displaced tens of thousands in the north and east, aid agencies cannot reach many areas where civilians are believed to be in greatest need, according to a Western diplomat in Colombo.

The threats to humanitarian workers come as Sri Lanka plunges into familiar bloodshed. This week, a roadside bomb exploded as the convoy of the Pakistani ambassador was passing through downtown Colombo; four Sri Lankan soldiers and three civilians were killed.

The 2002 cease-fire had brought a halt to decades of war between the rebels, who are ethnic Tamils, and the Sri Lankan government, dominated by ethnic Sinhalese.

The aftermath of the tsunami of Dec. 26, 2004, brought hopes of reconciliation in the face of shared tragedy. But by late last year, after a deal to share tsunami aid fell apart and a new government was elected to office with the help of ethnic Sinhalese hard-liners, the cease-fire began to tatter.

A series of high-profile assassinations and tit-for-tat attacks followed, bringing the death toll to 800 in the first seven months of this year.

Late last month, what began as a fight over control of an irrigation channel in the east degenerated into what now looks like full-scale war. Some of the worst fighting raged in and around Muttur as government and Tamil Tiger troops battled for control.

Fighting spread to the north as well, as <u>Tamil Tigers</u> sought to reclaim the strategic and symbolically important Jaffna Peninsula. At least 50,000 Sri Lankans have been displaced in the past three weeks of fighting, according to the United Nations refugee agency, which says no reliable estimates can be made because of lack of access.

Aid agencies stymied by war in Sri Lanka

Casualty numbers are hard to establish, because each side gives wildly different estimates after each clash.

In one, the government accused the LTTE of having slain 100 Muslims who were fleeing the fighting. The International Committee of the Red Cross confirmed two dead in the area Wednesday.

In another, the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed a former orphanage in rebel territory where teenage girls were undergoing first aid training this week. At least 19 girls were killed, according to truce monitors.

"It was a LTTE training camp; this was firmly established before the bombing," said Keheliya Rambukwella, the Sri Lankan military spokesman. "The question of age of the cadre really doesn't arise."

The Monitoring Mission and the United Nations children's agency said they found no evidence of rebel installations there.

In the relapse of war, Tamils who do not side with the rebels have faced singular brutality. On Aug. 8, an anti-rebel Tamil politician, S. Sivadasan, was targeted by a roadside bomb that killed two civilians and a security officer.

And last Saturday, the deputy chief of the government peace secretariat, Ketheshwaran Loganathan, was slain near his home in a suburb of Colombo. His killing came a year after the slaying of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. Those two men were among the most prominent Tamils in the Sri Lankan government.

Tsunami reconstruction in the north and east has long since stopped. Now, aid groups cannot reach families displaced by the latest fighting. "This is the biggest threat in aid operations since the cease-fire," Henricsson said.

Hostility toward foreign aid groups began within a few months after the tsunami. From the government itself came strong criticism against some relief agencies, which it accused of not fulfilling promises. Aid workers, for their part, privately complained about government bureaucracy.

Entrenched ethnic tensions made matters complicated for aid workers, with Sinhalese blaming some agencies for preferring to work in Tamil areas. Nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, say they find it increasingly difficult to gain entry into areas of greatest need.

"There's a distinct difference in the last six months," said one aid worker. "We are seeing a conscious and concentrated effort to make sure there are no international NGOs operating in any areas where there are military operations.

"There are two explanations. The benevolent one is that the government doesn't want NGO workers in the line of fire. The malevolent one would be they don't want eyes and ears."

Somini Sengupta reported from New Delhi.

Load-Date: August 27, 2006



5 people killed in northern Sri Lanka

Xinhua General News Service
August 20, 2007 Monday 9:30 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Military

Length: 248 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least five people, including four paratroopers, were killed Monday afternoon in an attack blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in northern Sri Lanka, defense officials said.

Among the killed were three <u>female</u> home guards and one male home guard as Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) rebels attacked a road check point at Periyakulam in the northern Vavuniya district at around 1:30 p.m. local time (0800 GMT), officials said.

A bus driver caught in the LTTE attack was also killed.

A group of heavily armed <u>LTTE</u> rebels had come in a jeep and they threw a hand grenade at the check point before opening fire, said the officials.

In another clash on Sunday night in Vavuniya's Omanthai area, a soldier and seven rebel members were killed, officials said.

Meanwhile, officials said a rebel hospital was discovered Sunday night by troops on a search operation in Eastern Province's Thoppigala jungles.

Thoppigala, the last bastion of the <u>LTTE</u> in the east, was captured by government troops in mid-July.

Clashes between the rebels and the troops have now largely shifted to Northern Province with the whole Eastern Province being controlled by the government.

More than 5000 people have died in the upsurge of violences since the end of 2005.

The <u>LTTE</u> has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority.

Load-Date: August 21, 2007



SRI LANKA: CEASEFIRE HAS NOT IMPROVED LIFE FOR MANY

IPS-Inter Press Service October 23, 2003, Thursday

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Length: 1063 words

Byline: By Amantha Perera **Dateline:** COLOMBO, Oct. 23

Body

The 20-month-old ceasefire between Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) and the government, the longest in Sri Lanka's history, has delivered a mixed bag of blessings to people, especially those who live in conflict-affected areas.

The absence of war has no doubt created a better living environment and increased chances for a negotiated settlement, but community leaders activists say it has yet to go further and translate into changed quality of life for many.

"The bulk of the people in the north and east have regained security of life," observed Muttukrishna Sarvananthan, an economist with the Colombo-based International Centre for Ethnic Studies who has researched the economy of the war-affected areas.

Several multilateral donor agencies and aid organisations have also started projects in the north and east or revived pre-ceasefire projects.

For instance, the World Bank has two major projects in the north-east, the North-east Irrigated Agriculture Project and the North-east Emergency Reconstruction Project with combined funds of \$ 23 million.

The Manila-based Asian Development Bank is funding the North-east Community Restoration and Development Project to the tune of \$ 25 million. The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) is assisting in the rehabilitation of schools while the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are involved in demining efforts.

The opening of the A9 highway, the main road that links the war-ravaged North with the South, supplemented by the lifting of the economic embargo during the truce, has greatly increased the movement of goods as well as persons.

"The lifting of the economic embargo in January 2002 has paved the way for the civilians to fulfill their pent-up demand for consumer goods, including consumer durables," Sarvananthan said. The embargo had limited the transportation of goods like fertilisers and batteries.

However, donor agencies and other observers have warned that the war-affected areas still lack not only infrastructure but basic sanitation, health and education facilities.

SRI LANKA: CEASEFIRE HAS NOT IMPROVED LIFE FOR MANY

"There is much more room for reconstruction in the North. The important part of Memoranda of Understanding (between the <u>LTTE</u> and government) was to bring about normalcy to the north-east. We expected an immediate influx of refugees and that the resettlement would go on smoothly, but to our dismay this has not happened," the Catholic bishop of Jaffna, Thomas Samudranayagum, was quoted as telling the Colombo-based English weekly 'The Sunday Leader'.

Figures from the United Nations Children's Fund show that 2.5 million people live in the conflict-affected areas and that some one million are children under the age of 18.

Some 800,000 people have been displaced by the 20-year conflict, which has resulted in over 60,000 deaths. Of the displaced, UNICEF estimates that one third are children. Over 183,000 internally displaced persons returned to their places of origin in 2002.

Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie, who visited Sri Lanka's war zones in April with the sponsorship of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, details the plight of children and <u>women</u> as the biggest casualty of the war in her journal.

"UNICEF estimates that in the <u>LTTE</u>-controlled areas of the north, one third of school-aged children have dropped out or have never attended school," the U.N. agency says in a document titled 'The Big Picture'.

The World Food Programme estimates that 20 to 25 percent of school-aged children in the north-east "suffer from acute malnutrition". In September, it launched a school-feeding programme targeting 33,000 children.

The continued recruitment of children by the <u>LTTE</u> has also been a constant concern despite the ceasefire. In early October, UNICEF opened a rehabilitation centre to prepare child soldiers released by the <u>LTTE</u> to civilian life.

But at the opening ceremony itself, Ted Chaiban, UNICEF representative in Sri Lanka, spoke of continuing recruitment. "There are still cases of recruitment and it has to be understood that if the reintegration of child soldiers is to be successful, then the new recruitment of children has to stop."

The *LTTE*'s political head, S. P. Tamilselvan, blames the allegations of child recruitment on biased media reports.

Others point out that despite the absence of open conflict, the lives of civilians in <u>LTTE</u>- controlled areas continue to be restricted due to landmines and the Tiger rebels' de facto tax system.

In a recent study, Sarvananthan said that the <u>LTTE</u> was not only taxing civilians but buying farm and fish products below market prices and thereafter selling them at higher prices.

"Arbitrary and extralegal taxes imposed by the <u>LTTE</u> have become further entrenched and widespread," he said in the study about Sri Lanka's economic freedom.

Even donor agencies trying to work with <u>LTTE</u>-backed organisations have come under criticism. UNICEF and the World Bank have been hit for their working relationships with Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, which critics call an **LTTE** front.

The **LTTE**'s suspension of its participation in the peace talks since April has also restricted rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts due "overall political uncertainty," according to Sarvananthan.

Despite donors' pledge of \$ 4.5 billion spread through three years at a meeting in Tokyo in June, no official agency has been tasked with the development of the north-east.

The <u>LTTE</u> has refrained from supporting a subcommittee, which consists of government and <u>LTTE</u> representatives, that is tasked with development work, arguing that Colombo uses a lethargic approach.

It has stuck to its proposal for an interim administration in the north-east that has greater powers, laying this down as a prerequisite to resuming talks.

SRI LANKA: CEASEFIRE HAS NOT IMPROVED LIFE FOR MANY

"It was felt that that an interim administrative arrangement alone could deliver the dividends of peace to the civilians," Tamilselvan said during a meeting with Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen in Norway last week.

But the grant of greater powers to an <u>LTTE</u>-controlled administration would put the Colombo government under severe pressure.

The two sides have been wrangling over the setting up of the interim administration in the last six months. "I would not be surprised if the situation leads to the resumption of war once again," Samudranayagum warned, voicing a fear shared by many Sri Lankans.

Load-Date: October 24, 2003



Sunday Express
September 16, 2007 Sunday
U.K. 1st Edition

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Section: FEATURES; 48

Length: 1477 words

Byline: DANNY BUCKLAND

Body

She looks like any other middle-class, middle-aged woman on the streets of suburban London but to the rebel *Tamil Tigers*, Adele Balasingham is the freedom fighter they know as 'Aunty'.

DANNY BUCKLAND tells the extraordinary story of her double life

ON A TRANQUIL suburban street, a smartly dressed 57-year-old woman raises no more than a passing glance.

Her clothes are a model of restrained elegance: white blouse, brown jacket, black trousers and sensible flat shoes. It is a wardrobe of conformity.

She looks a trademark product of the affluent district on the south-western fringes of London where the dinnerparty talk is house values, the struggle to get reliable cleaners and the rising price of private education.

She is a picture of respectability but there is another picture that suggests Adele Balasingham could be equally at home in a very different environment, one where cyanide capsules and guerrilla warfare are commonplace.

Dressed in jungle fatigues, this is Adele the freedom fighter, a woman with a burning zeal to build a future for a feared separatist movement shunned by the world.

To the people of New Malden she is the polite Mrs Balasingham. To the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> in Sri Lanka she is "Aunty", a figure who has devoted a large part of her life to winning them recognition and securing peace on the island. She was anointed as the "White Tamil" and has admitted carrying weapons during the turmoil.

Far from the jungles of northern Sri Lanka, the dispute over the GBP 2million revamping of New Malden's high street and the dismay over the former police station being turned into a pub are issues that may unite a community, maybe even cause outrage, but are unlikely to cause carnage.

Adele's mind is probably occupied by memories of more lethal affairs concerning the Tigers, the organisation that pioneered modern suicide bombing and waged a bitter campaign to claim an independent homeland in north-eastern Sri Lanka.

Carrying nothing more threatening than a black handbag on the streets of New Malden, it is difficult to place Adele in the perilous role of a revolutionary but she has survived a bomb plot, dodged security forces and, seemingly,

embraced the cult of martyrdom by being an inspiration to an all-<u>female</u> cadre of volunteers whose only jewellery was a necklace holding a leather pouch containing a cyanide capsule.

The link between suburbia and deadly South Asian politics is, in part, a love story. Adele was brought up in rural Australia and worked as a nurse before travelling around Europe with two girlfriends and eventually settling in London, where she got a job as a community health worker.

A passionate supporter of the underdog, she was studying sociology when she met and fell in love with Sri Lankan Anton Balasingham, a charismatic academic who was to become a key player in the Tigers' cause and provide the intellectual framework for their campaigns.

Balasingham was 12 years older and a former translator at the British High Commission in the capital Colombo who came to Britain to seek medical treatment for his first wife's chronic renal condition. She died after a five-year illness and he later met the then Adele Wilby, who had a mundane upbringing before studying socialism.

Their relationship was "intimate and intense" as they connected on a personal and political level.

"Just being with him seemed to be all that was necessary and the restless, discontented person, immersed in a mundane world characterised by consumerism and materialism, faded away to the priority of an enduring, intimate relationship with another human being, " she wrote in Will To Freedom, her 2001 autobiography.

The couple lived frugally in London and decided to marry in 1978. They wanted to hold the ceremony next day at Brixton Register Office but had to wait a week because they did not have enough cash for the dearer 24-hour-notice marriage licence.

Adele's bridal outfit was a brown corduroy skirt and a printed blouse.

Tamil community members cooked a wedding meal of goat curry washed down with whisky.

There was little to suggest this earnest couple would do anything more daring than exist in the exotic ranks of London's Left-wing intelligentsia but Anton's Marxist-influenced theories on the Tamil struggle against the majority Singhalese on the island brought him to the attention of the organisation's leadership.

A year later, they were invited to India by Tiger leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran and became embroiled in a campaign that has raged for more than 25 years with sporadic bouts of bloody intensity. Anton became the chief negotiator and strategist for the organisation, known as the *LTTE*.

ADELE wrote: "Marrying Balasingham is one thing:

getting involved in a revolutionary struggle is another. I could have, had I been inclined after marriage, taken a different path and attempted to sway Bala in another direction. But I didn't."

"Our marriage was a union of ideological perspectives, values, aspirations and convictions. Since that time we have walked a revolutionary path together, united in the face of challenges and circumstances that few people could even imagine."

The Balasinghams were committed to peaceful negotiation and distanced themselves from physical conflict but Adele revealed that Prabhakaran had taught her to fire a revolver.

"I viewed weapons as a necessity for self-defence and an instrument of liberation, " she wrote. "Later, carrying an automatic rifle and sleeping with one in my room became a norm."

She even defended the practice of giving young, <u>female</u> Tiger fighters suicide capsules so they could kill themselves rather than be captured.

"The cyanide capsule has come to symbolise a sense of self-sacrifice by the cadres in the movement and determination, their commitment to the cause and ultimately of course their courage, " she stated.

The couple had a nomadic existence, alternating between homes in Jaffna and jungle camps with the Tamil leadership as they eluded arrest. Her total faith gave her elevated status and she became a powerful figure in the <u>women</u>'s section of the movement. She was at ease in military fatigues among the fighters and her presence was seen as a rare example of Western legitimisation for their cause.

"Undoubtedly, my life has been unusual and extremely interesting, " she said recently. "I was one of those fortunate people who had the rare experience of an exceptional partner with whom to share an unusual life."

Anton became entrenched as the Tigers' chief negotiator and strategist and home was any address safe from the Sri Lankan Army.

Figures are hotly disputed by both sides but thousands have died and at one stage the Balasinghams, even though recognised by many as a moderating force, were refused entry to her native Australia to visit family.

Anton's failing health with kidney disease and diabetes brought the couple back to London, where they continued to work for the Tamil cause and they were again called back to Sri Lanka for crucial peace negotiations five years ago.

It is a measure of his importance that the Tamils did not want to negotiate without Anton and further evidence of the lethal nature of Sri Lankan politics that they feared he could be assassinated.

A clandestine operation took Anton and Adele to the Maldives and then on to a privately chartered seaplane which landed in a rebel-controlled area despite a no-fly zone being imposed by the government.

Anton's health worsened when he returned to Britain and Adele nursed him as they faded from the spotlight.

He died last December, aged 68, from cancer and more than 30,000 mourners attended his funeral and visited his coffin which lay "in state" at Alexandra Palace, north London.

Friends say Mrs Balasingham is still distraught over the loss of her husband and has no interest in taking his place at the forefront of the organisation. Her mother Betty, a former shop assistant, has been staying with her since his death.

INpublic, Adele shuns attention.

She has reacted only to dismiss any notion that she would be a Tamil figurehead in Europe. The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> are proscribed in 32 countries and British laws, passed in 2001, make it an offence to support them. Sri Lankan official sources have said they would press for Mrs Balasingham's arrest if she worked for the Tigers while here.

Opening the door to her detached home last Friday, Mrs Balasingham declined to be interviewed.

Rumours persist that the house is paid for by Tamil support groups but it is hardly a terrorist HQ. This is a home of sorrow where the woman who fell in love with an idealist and shared his vision is mourning his loss.

The polarised world of Sri Lankan politics exists at arm's length from the lives of Adele's neighbours but for Anton Balasingham's widow, the challenge of coping without her soulmate continues and will require every ounce of the resolve that helped her survive on the front line.

Graphic

IDEALIST: Anton was the Tigers' negotiator

FREEDOM FIGHTER: Adele, left, would often don military fatigues when she and her husband visited Tamil Tiger camps, right, to help with the rebels' struggle in Sri Lanka

ANONYMOUS: With her greying hair and restrained clothes in a peaceful British street no one would imagine that Adele was once a Tamil Tiger supporter Picture: STUART CLARKE

Load-Date: February 16, 2008



US Fed News

October 1, 2006 Sunday 8:09 AM EST

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Length: 6382 words **Byline:** US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research Electronic Affairs Publication Office issued the following Background Note:

PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

GEOGRAPHY

Area: 65,610 sq. km. (25,332 sq. mi.); about the size of West Virginia.

Cities: Capital-Colombo (pop. est. 1.3 million-urban area). Sri Jayewardenepura-Kotte is the officially designated capital and is the site of Parliament, but it is currently only an administrative center. Other cities-Kandy (150,000), Galle (110,000), Jaffna (100,000).

Terrain: Coastal plains in the northern third of country; hills and mountains in south-central Sri Lanka rise to more than 2,133 meters (7,000 ft.).

Climate: Tropical. Rainy seasons-light in northeast, fall and winter, with average rainfall of 50 in.; heavy in southwest, summer and fall, with average rainfall of 200 in.

PEOPLE

Nationality: Noun and adjective-Sri Lankan(s).

Population (2005): 19.7 million.

Annual growth rate: 1.1%.

Ethnic groups (2002): Sinhalese (74%), Tamils (18%), Muslims (7%), others (1%).

Religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity.

Languages: Sinhala and Tamil (official), English.

Education: Years compulsory-to age 14. Primary school attendance-96.5%. Literacy-91%.

Health: Infant mortality rate-14/1,000. Life expectancy-72 yrs. (male); 77 yrs. (female).

Work force: 8.1 million.

GOVERNMENT

Type: Republic.

Independence: February 4, 1948.

Constitution: August 31, 1978.

Suffrage: Universal over 18.

Branches: Executive-president, chief of state and head of government, elected for a 6-year term. Legislative-unicameral 225-member Parliament. Judicial-Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, subordinate courts.

Administrative subdivisions: Nine provinces and 25 administrative districts. (The northern and eastern provinces, however, have been technically jointly administered since 1988.)

Political parties: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Jathika Hela Urumaya, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Tamil National Alliance, United National Party, several small Tamil and Muslim parties, and others.

ECONOMY (2005)

GDP: \$23.5 billion.

Annual growth rate: 6.0%.

Natural resources: Limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, and phosphate.

Agriculture (17.2% of GDP): Major products-rice, tea, rubber, coconut, and spices.

Services (55.8% of GDP): Major types-tourism, transport, telecom, banking and finance.

Industry (27.9% of GDP): Major types-garments and leather goods, food processing, chemicals, refined petroleum, wood products, basic metal products, and paper products.

Trade: Exports-\$6.3 billion: garments, tea, rubber products, jewelry and gems, refined petroleum, and coconuts. Major markets-U.S. (\$2 billion), U.K., India Imports-\$8.9 billion. Major suppliers-India, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Iran, Malaysia, Japan, UK, UAE, Belgium, Indonesia, South Korea, U.S. (\$200 million).

PEOPLE

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is an island in the Indian Ocean about 28 kilometers (18 mi.) off the southeastern coast of India with a population of about 19 million. Density is highest in the southwest where Colombo, the country's main port and industrial center, is located. The net population growth is about 1.3%. Sri Lanka is ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse.

Sinhalese make up 74% of the population and are concentrated in the densely populated southwest. Ceylon Tamils, citizens whose South Indian ancestors have lived on the island for centuries, total about 12% and live predominantly in the north and east.

Indian Tamils, a distinct ethnic group, represent about 5% of the population. The British brought them to Sri Lanka in the 19th century as tea and rubber plantation workers, and they remain concentrated in the "tea country" of south-central Sri Lanka. In accordance with a 1964 agreement with India, Sri Lanka granted citizenship to 230,000

"stateless" Indian Tamils in 1988. Under the pact, India granted citizenship to the remainder, some 200,000 of whom now live in India. Another 75,000 Indian Tamils, who themselves or whose parents once applied for Indian citizenship, now wish to remain in Sri Lanka. The government has stated these Tamils will not be forced to return to India, although they are not technically citizens of Sri Lanka. In October of 2003, an act of Parliament granted citizenship to several thousand of these "tea estate" Tamils.

Other minorities include Muslims (both Moors and Malays), at about 7% of the population; Burghers, who are descendants of European colonists, principally from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (U.K.); and aboriginal Veddahs. Most Sinhalese are Buddhist; most Tamils are Hindu. The majority of Sri Lanka's Muslims practice Sunni Islam. Sizable minorities of both Sinhalese and Tamils are Christians, most of whom are Roman Catholic. The 1978 constitution, while assuring freedom of religion, grants primacy to Buddhism.

Sinhala, an Indo-European language, is the native tongue of the Sinhalese. Tamils and most Muslims speak Tamil, part of the South Indian Dravidian linguistic group. Use of English has declined since independence, but it continues to be spoken by many in the middle and upper middle classes, particularly in Colombo. The government is seeking to reverse the decline in the use of English, mainly for economic but also for political reasons. Both Sinhala and Tamil are official languages.

HISTORY

The actual origins of the Sinhalese are shrouded in myth. Most believe they came to Sri Lanka from northern India during the 6th century BC. Buddhism arrived from the subcontinent 300 years later and spread rapidly. Buddhism and a sophisticated system of irrigation became the pillars of classical Sinhalese civilization (200 BC-1200 AD) that flourished in the north-central part of the island. Invasions from southern India, combined with internecine strife, pushed Sinhalese kingdoms southward.

The island's contact with the outside world began early. Roman sailors called the island Taprobane. Arab traders knew it as "Serendip," the root of the word "serendipity." Beginning in 1505, Portuguese traders, in search of cinnamon and other spices, seized the island's coastal areas and spread Catholicism. The Dutch supplanted the Portuguese in 1658. Although the British ejected the Dutch in 1796, Dutch law remains an important part of Sri Lankan jurisprudence. In 1815, the British defeated the king of Kandy, last of the native rulers, and created the Crown Colony of Ceylon. They established a plantation economy based on tea, rubber, and coconuts. In 1931, the British granted Ceylon limited self-rule and a universal franchise. Ceylon became independent on February 4, 1948.

Post-Independence Politics

Sri Lankan politics since independence have been strongly democratic. Two major parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), have generally alternated rule.

The UNP ruled first from 1948-56 under three Prime Ministers-D.S. Senanayake, his son Dudley, and Sir John Kotelawala. The SLFP ruled from 1956-65, with a short hiatus in 1960, first under S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and then, after his assassination in 1959, under his widow, Sirimavo, the world's first *female* chief executive in modern times. Dudley Senanayake and the UNP returned to power in 1965.

In 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike again assumed the premiership. A year later, an insurrection by followers of the Maoist "Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna" (JVP, or "People's Liberation Front") broke out. The SLFP government suppressed the revolt and declared a state of emergency that lasted 6 years.

In 1972, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government introduced a new constitution, which changed the country's name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, declared it a republic, made protection of Buddhism a constitutional principle, and created a weak president appointed by the prime minister. Its economic policies during this period were highly socialist and included the nationalization of large tea and rubber plantations and other private industries.

The UNP, under J.R. Jayewardene, returned to power in 1977. The Jayewardene government opened the economy and, in 1978, introduced a new constitution based on the French model, a key element of which was the

creation of a strong executive presidency. J.R. Jayewardene was elected President by Parliament in 1978 and by nationwide election in 1982. In 1982, a national referendum extended the life of Parliament another 6 years.

The UNP's Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prime Minister in the Jayewardene government, narrowly defeated Mrs. Bandaranaike (SLFP) in the 1988 presidential elections. The UNP also won an absolute majority in the 1989 parliamentary elections. Mr. Premadasa was assassinated on May 1, 1993 by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam ("LTTE" or "Tigers"), and was replaced by then-Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, who appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe Prime Minister.

The SLFP, the main party in the People's Alliance (PA) coalition, returned to power in 1994 for the first time in 17 years. The PA won a plurality in the August 1994 parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government with Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Kumaratunga later won the November 1994 presidential elections and appointed her mother (former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike) to replace her as Prime Minister. President Kumaratunga won re-election to another 6-year term in December 1999. In August 2000, Mrs. Bandaranaike resigned as Prime Minister for health reasons, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka was appointed to take her place. In December 2001, the UNP assumed power, led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe. Chandrika Kumaratunga remained as President. In November of 2003, President Kumaratunga suddenly took control of three key ministries, triggering a serious cohabitation crisis. In January 2004, the SLFP and the JVP formed a political grouping known as the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). In February, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. In these elections, which took place in April 2004, the UPFA received 45% of the vote, with the UNP receiving 37% of the vote. While it did not win enough seats to command a majority in Parliament, the UPFA was able to form a government and appoint a cabinet headed by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Presidential elections were held in November 2005. Mahinda Rajapaksa became President, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayake became Prime Minister.

Communal Crisis

Historical divisions continue to have an impact on Sri Lankan society and politics. From independence, the Tamil minority has been uneasy with the country's unitary form of government and apprehensive that the Sinhalese majority would abuse Tamil rights. Those fears were reinforced when S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike triumphed in the 1956 elections after appealing to Sinhalese nationalism. His declaration that Sinhala was the country's official language-an act felt by Tamils to be a denigration of their own tongue-was the first in a series of steps over the following decades that appeared discriminatory to Tamils. Tamils also protested government educational policies and agriculture programs that encouraged Sinhalese farmers from the south to move to newly irrigated lands in the east. The decades following 1956 saw intermittent outbreaks of communal violence and growing radicalization among Tamil groups. By the mid-1970s Tamil politicians were moving from support for federalism to a demand for a separate Tamil state-"Tamil Eelam"-in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, areas of traditional Tamil settlement. In the 1977 elections, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) won all the seats in Tamil areas on a platform of separatism. Other groups-particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers)-sought an independent state by force.

In 1983, the death of 13 Sinhalese soldiers at the hands of the <u>LTTE</u> unleashed the largest outburst of communal violence in the country's history. Hundreds of Tamils were killed in Colombo and elsewhere, tens of thousands were left homeless, and more than 100,000 fled to south India. The north and east became the scene of bloodshed as security forces attempted to suppress the <u>LTTE</u> and other militant groups. Terrorist incidents occurred in Colombo and other cities. Each side in the conflict accused the other of violating human rights. The conflict assumed an international dimension when the Sri Lankan Government accused India of supporting the Tamil insurgents.

In October 1997, the U.S. Government designated the <u>LTTE</u> as a foreign terrorist organization under provisions of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and has maintained this designation since then, most recently redesignating the group in October of 2003.

By mid-1987, India intervened in the conflict by air-dropping supplies to prevent what it felt was harsh treatment and starvation of the Tamil population in the Jaffna Peninsula caused by an economic blockade by Colombo. Under a July 29, 1987, accord (the Indo-Lanka Accord) signed by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene, the Sri Lankan Government made a number of concessions to Tamil demands, which included devolution of power to the provinces, merger-subject to later referendum-of the northern and eastern provinces, and official status for the Tamil language. India agreed to establish order in the north and east with an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) and to cease assisting Tamil insurgents. Militant groups, although initially reluctant, agreed to surrender their arms to the IPKF.

Within weeks, however, the <u>LTTE</u> declared its intent to continue its armed struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam and refused to disarm. The IPKF found itself engaged in a bloody police action against the <u>LTTE</u>. Further complicating the return to peace was a burgeoning Sinhalese insurgency in the south. The JVP, relatively quiescent since the 1971 insurrection, began to reassert itself in 1987. Capitalizing on opposition to the Indo-Lankan Accord in the Sinhalese community, the JVP launched an intimidation campaign against supporters of the accord. Numerous UNP and other government supporters were assassinated. The government, relieved of its security burden by the IPKF in the north and east, intensified its efforts in the south. The JVP was crushed but at a high cost in human lives.

From April 1989 through June 1990, the government engaged in direct communications with the <u>LTTE</u> leadership. In the meantime, fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the IPKF escalated in the north. India withdrew the last of its forces from Sri Lanka in early 1990, and fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the government resumed. Both the <u>LTTE</u> and government forces committed serious human rights violations. In January 1995, the Sri Lankan Government and the <u>LTTE</u> agreed to a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step in a government-initiated plan for peace negotiations. After 3 months, however, the <u>LTTE</u> unilaterally resumed hostilities. The government then adopted a policy of military engagement with the Tigers, with government forces liberating Jaffna from <u>LTTE</u> control by mid-1996 and moving against <u>LTTE</u> positions in the northern part of the country called the Vanni. An <u>LTTE</u> counteroffensive begun in October 1999 reversed most government gains and by May 2000 threatened government forces in Jaffna. Heavy fighting continued into 2001.

Peace Process

In December 2001, with the election of a new UNP government, the <u>LTTE</u> and government declared unilateral cease-fires. In February 2002, the Government (GSL) and <u>LTTE</u> signed a ceasefire agreement sponsored by peace process facilitator Norway. Peace talks began in Norway in December 2002. The Tigers dropped out of talks in February 2003, however, claiming they were being marginalized. In July 2004, the first suicide bomb since 2001 struck Colombo.

In March 2004, Eastern Tiger commander Karuna broke with the <u>LTTE</u>, going underground with his supporters. In March 2006, the Karuna faction registered a political party, the Tamil People's Liberation Tigers. The main <u>LTTE</u> and the Karuna faction have targeted each other in low-level attacks since that time.

Over 30,000 Sri Lankans died in the December 2004 tsunami, and hundreds of thousands of others fled their homes. In June 2005, the GSL and <u>LTTE</u> reached an agreement to share \$3 billion in international tsunami aid. However, the agreement was challenged in court and was never implemented. In August 2005, the <u>LTTE</u> assassinated Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil. Parliament passed a state of emergency regulation that has been renewed every month since then.

During the November 2005 presidential election, the <u>LTTE</u> enforced a voting boycott in areas under its control. As a result, perceived hard-liner Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Mahinda Rajapaksa won by a narrow margin. Low-level violence between the <u>LTTE</u> and security forces escalated. In December 2005, pro-<u>LTTE</u> Tamil National Alliance MP Joseph Pararajasingham was assassinated within a GSL high security zone in the eastern town of Batticaloa.

In February 2006, exactly four years after the ceasefire agreement was signed, the GSL and <u>LTTE</u> renewed their commitment to the agreement at talks in Geneva. There was a lull in violence until April, when an explosion rocked

a Sinhalese market in Trincomalee, followed by limited Sinhalese backlash against Tamils. Several days later, an <u>LTTE</u> suicide bomber attacked the main army compound in Colombo, killing eight soldiers and seriously wounding Army Commander General Fonseka. The government retaliated with air strikes on Tiger targets. In June, an <u>LTTE</u> suicide bomber succeeded in killing Army third-in-command General Kulatunga in a suburb of Colombo.

The European Union banned the <u>LTTE</u> as a terrorist organization on May 30, 2006. In June 2006, GSL and <u>LTTE</u> delegations flew to Oslo to discuss the future of the Scandinavian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The Tigers refused to sit for talks with the GSL and instead demanded the SLMM remove any monitors from EUmember nations.

Heavy fighting in August 2006, the worst since the 2002 ceasefire, killed hundreds of people and caused tens of thousands to flee their homes when the Tamil Tiger rebels clashed with government forces in the north and east. In September 2006, the government carried out the first major seizure of enemy territory by either side since the 2002 ceasefire when it drove Tamil Tiger rebels from the entrance of the strategic Trincomalee harbor. Despite the fighting, both sides still claim to adhere to the ceasefire.

GOVERNMENT

Under the 1978 constitution, the president of the republic, directly elected for a 6-year term, is chief of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. Responsible to Parliament for the exercise of duties under the constitution and laws, the president may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of Parliament with the concurrence of the Supreme Court.

The president appoints and heads a cabinet of ministers responsible to Parliament. The president's deputy is the prime minister, who leads the ruling party in Parliament. A parliamentary no-confidence vote requires dissolution of the cabinet and the appointment of a new one by the president.

Parliament is a unicameral 225-member legislature elected by universal suffrage and proportional representation to a 6-year term. The president may summon, suspend, or end a legislative session and dissolve Parliament. Parliament reserves the power to make all laws.

The 1978 constitution clearly envisaged a system where the president and the prime minister were from the same party. Following the December 2001 parliamentary elections, the president and the prime minister were from different parties. This led to serious cohabitation strains. In November 2003, for example, President Kumaratunga suddenly took over three key ministries (Defense, Interior, and Mass Communications), precipitating a serious cohabitation crisis between the two sides. In February of 2004, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. The UPFA, while receiving enough seats in Parliament to form a minority government, fell short of the 113 seats necessary for a majority in Parliament. Mahinda Rajapaksa of the SLFP became Prime Minister and former Prime Minister and UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Leader of the Opposition. Presidential elections were held in November 2005. Mahinda Rajapaksa became President, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayake became Prime Minister.

Sri Lanka's judiciary consists of a Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, and a number of subordinate courts. Sri Lanka's legal system reflects diverse cultural influences. Criminal law is fundamentally British. Basic civil law is Roman-Dutch. Laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and inheritance are communal.

Under the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987-and the resulting 13th amendment to the constitution-the Government of Sri Lanka agreed to devolve significant authority to the provinces. Provincial councils are directly elected for 5-year terms. The leader of the council majority serves as the province's chief minister; a provincial governor is appointed by the president. The councils possess limited powers in education, health, rural development, social services, agriculture, security, and local taxation. Many of these powers are shared or subject to central government oversight. Predating the accord are municipal, urban, and rural councils with limited powers.

Principal Government Officials

President-Mahinda Rajapaksa

Prime Minister-Ratnasiri Wickramanayake

Ambassador to the United States-Bernard Goonetilleke

Ambassador to the United Nations-Prasad Kariyawasam

Sri Lanka maintains an embassy in the United States at 2148 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-4834025).

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Sri Lanka's two major political parties-the UNP and the SLFP-embrace democratic values, international nonalignment, and encouragement of Sinhalese culture. Past differences between the two on foreign and economic policy have narrowed. The SLFP, however, envisions a broader role for the state in general.

Sri Lanka has a multi-party democracy that enjoys considerable stability despite relatively high levels of political violence. <u>LTTE</u> violence is largely confined to the north and eastern provinces, which are 6 to 8 hours by road from the capital. Before the advent of the peace process, <u>LTTE</u>-perpetrated terrorist bombings directed against politicians and civilian targets were common in Colombo, Kandy, and elsewhere in the country. <u>LTTE</u> terrorist activities have generally been aimed at destabilizing Sri Lanka politically, economically, and socially. <u>LTTE</u> attacks on key political figures include the assassination of Army General Kulatunga in June 2006, the attempted assassination of Army Commander General Fonseka in April 2006, the assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 2005, the killing of the Industrial Development Minister by suicide bombing in June 2000, and the December 1999 attempted assassination of President Kumaratunga. Economic targets included the airport in July 2001, the Colombo World Trade Center in October 1997, and the central bank in January 1996. In January 1998, the <u>LTTE</u> detonated a truck bomb in Kandy, damaging the Temple of the Tooth relic, the holiest Buddhist shrine in the country.

ECONOMY

Sri Lanka is a lower-middle income developing nation with a Gross Domestic Product of about \$23.5 billion. This translates into a per capita income of \$1,200. Sri Lanka's 90 percent literacy rate in local languages, and life expectancy of 72 years rank well above those of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. English language ability is relatively high but has declined significantly since the 1970s.

Sri Lanka's income inequality is severe, with striking differences between rural and urban areas. About a quarter of the country's population of 19.7 million remains impoverished. Civil conflict, falling agricultural labor productivity, lack of income-earning opportunities for the rural population, and poor infrastructure outside the Western Province are impediments to poverty reduction.

In 1978, Sri Lanka shifted away from a socialist orientation and opened its economy to foreign investment. But the pace of reform has been uneven. A period of aggressive economic reform under the UNP-led government that ruled from 2002 to 2004 was followed by a more statist approach under former President Chandrika Kumaratunga and current President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Despite a brutal civil war that raged from 1983 until 2001, economic growth averaged around 4.5% in the last ten years. In 2001, however, GDP growth was negative 1.4%-the only contraction since independence. Growth recovered to 4.0% in 2002. Following the 2002 ceasefire and subsequent economic reforms, the economy grew more rapidly, recording growth rates of 6.0% in 2003 and 5.4% in 2004.

The economic situation in Sri Lanka in 2005 was remarkably stable, despite the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which killed 32,000 people, displaced 443,000, and caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage. The tsunami's overall economic impact was less severe than originally feared, with the economy growing by 6% in 2005 as the damage was offset by the reconstruction effort. GDP grew by 8% in the first half of 2006.

President Rajapaksa's broad economic strategy was outlined in his election manifesto "Mahinda Chintana" (Mahinda's Thoughts), which now guides government economic policy. Mahinda Chintana policies focus on poverty alleviation and steering investment to disadvantaged areas; developing the small and medium enterprise sector (SME); promotion of agriculture; and expanding the already enormous civil service. The Rajapaksa Government rejects the privatization of state enterprises, including "strategic" enterprises such as state-owned banks, airports, and electrical utilities. Instead, it plans to retain ownership and management of these enterprises and make them profitable.

The future of Sri Lanka's economic health primarily depends on political stability, return to peace, and continued policy reforms-particularly in the area of fiscal discipline and budget management. Rising oil costs have contributed to Sri Lanka's high public debt load (94% of GDP in 2005). Sri Lanka needs economic growth rates of 7-8% and investment levels of about 30% of GDP for a sustainable reduction in unemployment and poverty. In the past 10 years, investment levels have averaged around 25% of GDP.

Sri Lanka depends on a continued strong global economy for investment and for expansion of its export base. The government plans an ambitious infrastructure development program to boost growth. It hopes to diversify export products and destinations to make use of the Indo-Lanka and Pakistan-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreements, GSP+ treatment by the European Union and other regional and bilateral preferential trading agreements.

The service sector is the largest component of GDP at 55.8%. In 2005-6, the service sector continued its strong expansion, fueled primarily by strong growth in telecom, trading and financial services. Public administration and defense expenditures have remained steady in 2005, but likely to have increased in 2006. There also is a growing information technology sector, especially information technology training and software development and exports. The tourism sector suffered in 2005 following the tsunami. While beach resorts have rebuilt, tourism remains well below potential.

Manufacturing accounts for about 16% of GDP. The textile, apparel, and leather products sector is the largest, accounting for 39.5% of total industrial output. The second-largest industrial sector, at 22.4% of total manufacturing output, is food, beverages, and tobacco. The third-largest industrial sector is chemical, petroleum, rubber, and plastic products. The construction sector accounts for 7.2% of GDP and has posted strong growth rates in 2005-6. Mining and quarrying accounts of 1.9%.

Agriculture has lost its relative importance to the Sri Lankan economy in recent decades. It employs 33% of the working population, but accounts for only 17.2% of GDP. Rice, the staple cereal, is cultivated extensively. The plantation sector consists of tea, rubber, and coconut; in recent years, the tea crop has made significant contributions to export earnings.

Trade and Foreign Assistance

Sri Lanka's exports (mainly apparel, tea, rubber, gems and jewelry) were \$6.3 billion and imports (mainly oil, textiles, food, and machinery) were \$8.8 billion in 2005. The resulting large trade deficit was financed primarily by foreign assistance and by remittances from Sri Lankan expatriate workers. Sri Lanka must diversify its exports beyond garments and tea. Garment exports face increased competition following the 2005 expiration of the worldwide Multifiber Arrangement. The tea industry is challenged by a shortage of plantation labor and by growing competition.

Exports to the United States, Sri Lanka's most important market, were \$2.1 billion in 2005, or 32.8% of total exports. For many years, the United States has been Sri Lanka's biggest market for garments, taking almost 60% of total garment exports. India is Sri Lanka's largest supplier, with exports of \$1.8 billion in 2003. The United States exported approximately \$160 million to Sri Lanka in 2005 (plus about \$20 million of tsunami related exports), consisting primarily of industrial machinery, as well as medical instruments, pharmaceuticals and specialized fabrics and textiles for the garment industry.

Sri Lanka is highly dependent on foreign assistance, with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, Japan, and other donors lending or giving over \$1.2 billion annually. While implementation of aid projects has been spotty

over the years, the government is trying to improve this record by streamlining tender processes and increasing project management skills. The United States led international efforts for tsunami relief and reconstruction, committing a total of \$134 million to Sri Lanka.

Labor

The unemployment rate has declined in recent years and hovers around 7.5%. The rate of unemployment among **women** and high school and college graduates, however, has been proportionally higher than the rate for less-educated workers. The government has embarked on educational reforms it hopes will lead to better preparation of students and better matches between graduates and jobs.

More than 20% of the 7.5 million-strong work force is unionized, but union membership is declining. There are more than 1,650 registered trade unions, many of which have 50 or fewer members, and 19 federations. Many unions have political affiliations. The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and Lanka Jathika estate workers union are the two largest unions, representing workers in plantation sector. The president of the CWC also is Minister of Youth Empowerment and Socio Economic Development. Other strong and influential trade unions include the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Sri Lanka Nidhahas Sevaka Sangamaya, Jathika Sevaka Sangayama, Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Ceylon Bank Employees Union, Union of Post and Telecommunication Officers, Conference of Public Sector Independent Trade Unions, and the JVP-aligned Inter-Company Trade Union.

Public sector trade unions have recently resisted Government moves to restructure the state-owned electrical utility board and the petroleum company. Private sector workers are also agitating for a "living wage" significantly higher than the current minimum wage.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Sri Lanka traditionally follows a nonaligned foreign policy but has been seeking closer relations with the United States since December 2001. It participates in multilateral diplomacy, particularly at the United Nations, where it seeks to promote sovereignty, independence, and development in the developing world. Sri Lanka was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It also is a member of the Commonwealth, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, and the Colombo Plan. Sri Lanka continues its active participation in the NAM, while also stressing the importance it places on regionalism by playing a strong role in SAARC.

U.S.-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

The United States enjoys cordial relations with Sri Lanka that are based, in large part, on shared democratic traditions. U.S. policy toward Sri Lanka is characterized by respect for its independence, sovereignty, and moderate nonaligned foreign policy; support for the country's unity, territorial integrity, and democratic institutions; and encouragement of its social and economic development. The United States is a strong supporter of ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka and the peace process that began in December 2001.

U.S. assistance has totaled more than \$1.63 billion since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it has contributed to Sri Lanka's economic growth with projects designed to reduce unemployment, improve housing, develop the Colombo Stock Exchange, modernize the judicial system, and improve competitiveness. At the June 2003 Tokyo Donors' Conference on Sri Lanka, the United States pledged \$54 million, including \$40.4 million of USAID funding.

In addition, the International Broadcast Bureau (IBB)-formerly Voice of America (VOA)-operates a radio-transmitting station in Sri Lanka. The U.S. Armed Forces maintain a limited military-to-military relationship with the Sri Lanka defense establishment. By February 2005, the U.S. had contributed \$67 million to Sri Lankan relief following the tsunami disaster of December 26, 2004.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador-Robert O. Blake

Deputy Chief of Mission-James R. Moore

Head of Political Section-Michael DeTar

Head of Economic/Commercial Section-Robert Gabor

Management Officer-Maria Brewer

Consular Officer-Philip Cargile

Defense Attaché-Lt. Col. James Oxley

Director, USAID-Rebecca Cohn

Public Affairs Officer-Terry White

IBB Station Manager-Glenn Britt

The U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-249-8500, fax: 94-11-243-7345). U.S. Agency for International Development offices are located at the American Center, 44 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-249-8000; fax: 94-11-247-2850/247-2860). Public Affairs offices also are located at the American Center (tel: 94-11-249-8100, fax: 94-11-244-9070).

IBB offices are located near Chilaw, 75 kms north of Colombo (94-32-225-5931 to 34/fax: 94-32-225-5822).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. Consular Information Sheets exist for all countries and include information on entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Public Announcements are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: http://travel.state.gov. Consular Affairs Tips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are available on the Internet and hard copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to register their travel via the State Department's travel registration web site at https://travelregistration.state.gov or at the Consular section of the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country by filling out a short form and sending in a copy of their passports. This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

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<u>SRI LANKA: 200,000 DISPLACED, SECURITY WORSENING IN</u> GOVERNMENT-SEPARATIST FIGHTING

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The following information was released by the United Nations:

Over 200,000 Sri Lankans have been displaced in the past six months and some 600,000 others remain cut off in the north of the island as the unresolved conflict and dangerously fragile ceasefire accord between the Government and Tamil separatists continue to affect gravely the lives of children and <u>women</u>, according to a United Nations update.

"With violence between the government and the <u>LTTE</u> [Liberation of Tigers of Tamil Eelam] at its highest level since 2002, the security situation is deteriorating especially in the North and East," the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said in its March report on the 20-year-old conflict which has already killed more than 65,000 people.

"Political functionaries have been killed and multiple attacks on military and police outposts have taken place. Religious/ethnic strife is common, and public life is often closed down as a means of popular protest," it added, noting that the recruitment of children by the <u>LTTE</u> and the breakaway Karuna Faction continues to be a major violation of children's rights in the Indian Ocean island.

In the case of increasing violence and warfare, additional resources will be needed to respond to the uprooting of up to 400,000 people with displacement likely to range up to several years, UNICEF warned.

Security in the north and east has deteriorated for humanitarian workers due to harassment, abduction and forced recruitment by the <u>LTTE</u> and Karuna Faction, while intensified security measures by the Armed Forces has led to reduced access for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN humanitarian staff and supplies to <u>LTTE</u>-operating areas, as well as to allegations of human rights violations.

Currently the immediate issues for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are services for water supplies, sanitation, drainage and solid waste management. "Ensuring that needs of public and personal hygiene are in place is critical," the report said, adding that some IDPs had already been uprooted several times.

UNICEF continues to monitor underage recruitment. During the last quarter of 2006, the number of children reportedly recruited by the <u>LTTE</u> further decreased from 187 to 145. Recruitment by the Karuna faction also dropped from 72 to 68 during the same period. The agency continues to talks with armed groups on the release of children and the cessation of recruitment.

SRI LANKA: 200,000 DISPLACED, SECURITY WORSENING IN GOVERNMENT-SEPARATIST FIGHTING

As of the end of January, UNICEF had recorded 6,241 children abducted, 6,006 by <u>LTTE</u> and 235 by Karuna, with 1,879 children still being held, 1,710 by <u>LTTE</u> and 169 by Karuna. Released children and other male youth continue to seek UNICEF's aid for special protection in fear of assassination, arrests and abduction.

Load-Date: March 15, 2007



How one Sri Lanka city stays above the ethnic fray

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

August 12, 2005, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 07

Length: 730 words

Byline: By Nachammai Raman Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: KANDY, SRI LANKA

Highlight: Tensions between two traditional opponents are kept in check - setting it apart from the divisions of other

regions.

Body

The only thing that slows traffic between Sri Lanka's capital and the heartland city of Kandy are the winding uphill roads. There are no checkpoints, no police, no soldiers pointing rifles - none of the security precautions, built up after years of ethnic conflict, that clutter roads heading farther north into ethnic Tamil strongholds.

But Kandy, too, has a significant Tamil population. The Tamil and Muslim minorities account for 20 percent of the population. Yet, Kandy, Sri Lanka's second largest city, doesn't have the simmering tensions between Tamils and the Buddhist Sinhalese majority like the capital, Colombo, whose ethnic composition is similar.

Kandy has stayed above the fray partly by occupying the geographic middle ground, making it difficult for the two warring factions - southern Buddhist hard-liners and the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> - to gain a foothold. Also, Tamils here are more economically dependent on the Sinhalese, dulling competition between the two groups.

But cross-cultural respect also plays a role, with Tamils speaking Sinhalese and Buddhists recognizing a common Indian heritage with their Tamil neighbors.

"Twenty-five percent of the reason could be that there's no <u>LTTE</u> here," says R. Selvarani, a Tamil restaurant owner, referring to the Tamil Tiger organization. "Kandy politics is also much more moderate than [in] Colombo or the south."

If the militarism of the Tigers is absent from Tamils here, so is the dismissiveness of minority culture by the majority. Many Buddhist Sinhalese in Kandy acknowledge their Indian-Hindu influences.

"We, too, have Indian blood because 2,500 years ago our first king came from India. Our kings married Nayak [an Indian kingdom] <u>women</u>," says Wimal Ranasinghe. He adds that when he lived in Canada and California he adopted an Indian pronunciation for his name by dropping the final "e". His home altar has statues of the Buddha as well as Hindu gods, whom he says he has great faith in.

One of the few times Kandy saw bloodshed and violence was during widespread riots of 1983 which set off the ethnic war in Sri Lanka that still has not ended. However, rioting was less intense here and local Tamils have not bitterly nursed memories of the event, which remains a rallying cry in northern Sri Lanka.

How one Sri Lanka city stays above the ethnic fray

Some attribute it to Kandy's sense of community. "Everybody knows each other here. It's a small town, so it's friendlier," says Selvarani. "We don't have so many people migrating to Kandy [as to Colombo]. Even if they come from other places, they have their roots here."

Residents of Kandy are also more educated than in other Sri Lankan cities and therefore more cultured, she says. "Most people here are educated. Even estate workers spend most of their time and money on education," she says.

The estate workers Selvarani refers to are Tamils whom the British brought from India as indentured laborers to work on Kandy's rolling tea plantations. Most of these Tamils of recent origin, as they're called in Sri Lankan census classifications, have lived in the country for three generations and have never been to India. They don't have much connection with northern Sri Lankan Tamil culture, either because even the Tamil they speak is different.

Nonetheless, this Tamil population does face considerable disadvantages: high dropout rates, alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. These Tamils of recent origin constitute two-thirds of the Tamil population in Kandy and their aspirations are much more mundane and immediate than Tamils in northern cities like Jaffna.

The basic goal of much of the plantation community is to move out of the estates to better living conditions.

"I'm sending my children to school so that they're not in the same situation," says Velan Asokan, a Tamil of recent Indian origin, who works in a boarding house.

Indeed, the estate Tamils pose less of an economic threat to the Sinhalese than the northern Tamils, whose ancestors played a dominant role in colonial times. The separatist war began when Sri Lanka's Constitution was changed to give the Sinhalese priority in jobs and education.

Modest rural economic ambitions on both ethnic sides have helped Kandy stay laid back, says Nadeera Abeykoon, an economics student. "Our needs are so limited. We don't want luxuries like Colombo... We just want a calm and peaceful life."

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Load-Date: August 11, 2005



'Everything has been destroyed'

The Toronto Star

January 4, 2005 Tuesday

Copyright 2005 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A01

Length: 1046 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Having peered out the window of a Sri Lankan military chopper and surveyed this island nation's battered coastline from above yesterday, Canada's Marie Gervais-Vidricaire called it "a catastrophe of an amplitude that has not been seen before."

"You see just little piles of bricks and rubbish, that's all that's left - everything has been destroyed," the leader of Ottawa's relief assessment team declared, once back on solid ground.

"It's a situation that can last a long time."

Canada's disaster experts were deeply affected by the scenes of tsunami devastation during their two-day tour aimed at cementing recommendations on how Ottawa should respond.

Gervais-Vidricaire, a relief expert with Canada's foreign affairs department, said the 17-member team's goal was to assess how best to allocate part of an \$80 million southern Asian tsunami aid budget and where Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), which will be deployed Thursday, can provide the most help.

The team focused its efforts on the eastern coastal region of Ampara, she said, "because we thought the DART capabilities would be well suited to that."

DART's commanding officer, Lt.-Col. Mike Voith, said his team of 200 specialized military personnel should be up and running their water purification systems and medical clinics five days after flying out of Canada for Ampara, where the largest number of Sri Lanka's roughly 30,000 dead were found. There are an estimated 180,000 displaced people in the district.

Voith will remain in Sri Lanka with members of his advance team to lay the groundwork for the first deployment of the rapid response team since 1999. The rest of the 17-member task force that arrived here over the weekend, including experts from the foreign affairs department, the Canadian International Development Agency and a health policy expert, is flying next to Indonesia's hard-hit Aceh province for more assessments.

Yesterday, the team wrapped up their consultations and reconnaissance with Sri Lankan government officials, the United Nations and local aid agencies. They also met an assessment team from Britain to compare notes and avoid duplication with other donor countries and agencies in what is quickly becoming a crowded field.

Gervais-Vidricaire said they stressed that food shortages are "not really a big problem - the situation is more or less under control."

'Everything has been destroyed'

The team's health expert, Dr. Paul Gully, said later he was pleasantly surprised to see that Sri Lanka's public health system has significant capabilities.

"They seem to have a good public health surveillance system, so they do have a capability to go look at what happens in the camps," said Gully, who is deputy chief public health officer at the Public Health Agency. "They clearly do have a system that works and that can respond appropriately."

But local officials in Ampara pointed to water purification and temporary shelter as the most pressing needs of people who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

"They confirmed that water is the real issue because wells have been badly damaged," said Gervais-Vidricaire.

Voith said his DART operation can purify 100,000 litres of water a day and operate a medical clinic to treat 250 outpatients daily. The team includes combat engineers to set up and support the deployment, but who could also help in the rebuilding effort by fixing schools, restoring power, and improving sanitation by working on plumbing.

"The primary aim would be to provide water and medical support," he said.

The half-dozen general practitioners are oriented toward basic primary care rather than emergency treatment. "It's similar to a walk-in clinic in Canada: You come in and those are the kinds of things we treat," Voith said.

DART will take about two days to fly in from Canada, followed by a day of overland travel and another day or so to set up its operation - roughly five days.

"Those are times that are fixed and cannot be accelerated," Voith added.

Gervais-Vidricaire defended her team against criticism that it took too long to reach conclusions that have been selfevident for more than a week, saying consultations are necessary before a planeload of Canadian soldiers arrives on the scene.

"You need to have face-to-face time if you want to be able to deploy a unit like this in a foreign country," she told reporters.

Sri Lanka is a tropical island of 19 million people off India's southeast coast. The U.N., Red Cross and private aid groups have been in place since ethnic conflict erupted in the early 1980s between the rebel <u>Tamil Tigers</u> and the Sinhalese-dominated armed forces.

Gervais-Vidricaire said government assurances had satisfied her that there were no problems with food getting past army checkpoints or into areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, as the separatists are known.

However, members of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, the Tigers' de facto relief wing, have complained that donations intended for them have been blocked at some army checkpoints in eastern Sri Lanka outside Batticaloa.

Sri Lankan defence ministry spokesperson Daya Ratnayake denied those charges yesterday and asserted that the Tigers are "going on with a misinformation campaign, saying ... totally false allegations."

He said army officers may have tried to redirect aid where it was needed most, but had not confiscated or delayed legitimate relief supplies.

In an interview, Ratnayake countered that the Tigers are guilty of sabotaging relief efforts in **LTTE**-controlled areas of the north in order to assert their pre-eminence.

He cited the case of a refugee centre that was torched over the weekend in the northern peninsula of Jaffna, allegedly by Tiger guerrillas retaliating against local families for accepting army help.

"The army was looking after the people, and the LTTE don't like that," Ratnayake said.

'Everything has been destroyed'

Meanwhile, a private team of eight Canadian medical workers started providing care in crowded refugee camps yesterday after arriving in the east coast town of Batticaloa.

The group, which includes Canadians of Sri Lankan origin who are paying their own way, brought medicine from Toronto and additional supplies from the capital, Colombo.

Most of the patients were **women** and children, said team leader Dr. Jegapathy Rajendra, a Toronto psychiatrist.

Load-Date: January 4, 2005



Sri Lanka minister survives assassination attempt

Japan Economic Newswire

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 7:11 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 220 words

Dateline: COLOMBO Nov. 28

Body

A Sri Lankan government minister on Wednesday escaped an assassination attempt by a <u>female</u> suicide bomber dispatched by the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Defense Ministry said.

Social Services and Social Welfare Minister Douglas Devananda, previously targeted by the <u>LTTE</u> on at least eight occasions, was inside his office where the woman blew herself up. He escaped unscathed but one person was killed and two others seriously injured, the ministry said.

Devananda was meeting with people in the office in a southern neighborhood of Colombo when the woman who was speaking to a coordinating secretary to the minister blew herself up. The secretary was killed.

"This is clearly an attempt to assassinate Minister Douglas Devananda," the ministry said on its website, blaming the *LTTE*.

The <u>LTTE</u> reported the attempt on its TamilNet website, describing the scene of the blast as the "Colombo office of the pro-government paramilitary group-cum-political party EPDP (Eelam Peoples Democratic Party)," but did not claim responsibility for the attack.

Devananda, a former Tamil militant, leads EPDP, which is part of the ruling coalition government of President Mahinda Rajapakse.

The <u>LTTE</u> accuses EPDP cadres of fighting against the rebels alongside government troops and providing the military with vital intelligence.

Load-Date: November 29, 2007



Convulsions in Colombo

Hindustan Times

November 29, 2007 Thursday 2:43 PM EST

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Length: 370 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, Nov. 29 -- It may be the last thing Sri Lanka needs - the start of another bombing campaign by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*). But sadly it looks likely that the brace of suicide bomb attacks in Colombo signals just that.

On Tuesday, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber reportedly blew herself up in the office of Social Services Minister Douglas Devananda, minutes before he was scheduled to meet patients. Although the minister survived, his public relations officer was killed and several people injured. And on Wednesday, 18 people were killed and several more injured when a parcel bomb left on the counter at a private company exploded.

The attack on Mr Devananda, who heads one of the major parties representing Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka, is not surprising, considering he has been an <u>LTTE</u> target for his vocal criticism of its terrorist activities. In his annual Hero's Day speech last Tuesday, the <u>LTTE</u> leader V. Prabakaran announced that the rebels were determined "to carve out a separate homeland for Tamils in

Sri Lanka through intensified warfare". These outrages were probably part of that violent retaliation. If the past is any guide, whenever the rebels have suffered a series of military setbacks on the ground, they would resort to indiscriminate suicide attacks. And there is no reason to believe it is going to be any different this time. The rebels are literally fighting with their backs to the sea after Sri Lanka's army won control of the island's eastern region last July after nearly 15 years of fighting.

The current leadership crisis in the <u>LTTE</u> only worsens the situation. For the death of Thamilselvan, chief of the <u>LTTE</u>s political wing, in a Sri Lankan Air Force bombing raid earlier this month has evidently dealt a body blow to the organisation. As the only leader untainted by the terror tag, he brought political credibility to the <u>LTTE</u>. Now that he's gone, there is little elbow room for countries like India to take a more active interest in peace talks. This is unfortunate since it lessens the chances of arriving at a political solution to the strife - rather than a military one.

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Load-Date: November 29, 2007



Top Sri Lankan officer killed in suicide attack

Financial Times (London, England)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

London Edition 1

Copyright 2006 The Financial Times Limited

Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 318 words

Byline: By KHOZEM MERCHANT

Dateline: MUMBAI

Body

Sri Lanka's third highest ranking military official was killed in a suicide bombing yesterday, in a further targeting of the country's army elite by suspected Tamil Tiger rebels.

In April, a *female* suicide bomber severely injured Sri Lanka's army commander, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, in an attack near the army central command in Colombo.

In yesterday's assault, near Colombo, Major General Parami Kulatunga and three others, including two soldiers, died when their army convoy vehicle was rammed by a motorcycle ridden by a suicide bomber.

Sri Lankan officials pinned the blame on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and said they were considering their retaliation. The *LTTE* denied any involvement.

Analysts said the attack on a senior security official near Colombo - in effect bringing the war to the capital - was another way of applying pressure on a government the <u>LTTE</u> believes is moving too slowly on advancing the peace process. Sri Lanka's government has taken a progressively more severe stand against the <u>LTTE</u>, while at the same time reaffirming its support for a ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 that has all but collapsed in the past few months as the rebel group and government forces have traded deadly blows.

Earlier this month, Sri Lanka's military forces attacked rebel targets in the northeast after a bus was blown up in a grenade attack that killed morethan 60, including many children.

The step-up in military confrontation comes after the European Union said last month that the <u>LTTE</u> was a terrorist organisation, achieving diplomatic isolation of the group after similar moves by the US and India.

As a consequence, the <u>LTTE</u>, which in the past year has resurrected its military offensive to pursue its goal of a separate homeland in the north and northeast of the island, demandedthe removal of EU nationals from an independent peacekeeping organisation mission based in Colombo.

Load-Date: June 26, 2006



ROUNDUP: Bomber kills one, herself near minister's Colombo office

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 11:20 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS Length: 452 words Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts ROUNDUP: Bomber kills one, herself near minister's Colombo office Adds details of suicide bomber and incident Colombo

A suicide bomber blew herself up Wednesday near a minister's office in Colombo, killing another person and injuring at least three people, a police official said.

The bomber tried to enter the minister's office in Narahenpita, on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital, but detonated herself while she was being checked, police said.

Social Services Minister Douglas Devananda, who heads the Eelam People's Democratic Party, was inside the office at the time but escaped injury.

The victim killed was identified as Devananda's coordinating secretary Steven Peiris.

The party has a paramilitary wing that backs security forces in operations against rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE), who frequently carry out suicide bombings.

The bomber, disabled from polio, had posed as a teacher seeking an appointment with the minister, but Devananda's staff was reluctant to allow her inside because she had no prior appointment. She detonated the explosives when officials began questioning her.

Police investigators said they believed the explosives were hidden in her bra.

The woman had produced an identity card giving her name a Saruwanan Sujantha of the northern town of Anandapuliyankulam.

At least 10 people were arrested for questioning soon after the blast from around the office.

The military blamed the LTTE for the attempted suicide attack

ROUNDUP: Bomber kills one, herself near minister's Colombo office

"Initial investigations into the incident show that <u>LTTE</u> had set the explosives around the woman's breast, deviating from their usual tactic of placing explosives in the lower abdominal areas of suicide girls," a defence ministry statement said.

According to the army, the woman had managed to pass through the first checkpoint because she was handicapped.

The $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$ had made three previous attempts to kill Devananda.

He was beaten with clubs by <u>LTTE</u> prisoners when he visited a maximum-security jail, and rebels also stormed his residence in Colombo, but he escaped out the back door. The last attempt was in

2000 when another $\underline{\textit{female}}$ suicide bomber was dispatched, but she was detected and taken to a police station where she detonated herself, killing five policemen.

Wednesday's bombing came one day after <u>LTTE</u> chief Velupillai Prabhakaran vowed to fight on for a separate Tamil state as the Air Force bombed a rebel radio station in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least nine people.

The incident prompted ministers to step up their security and additional road blocks have been set up to prevent more attacks in the south, while the military concentrates on military operations in the north.

Nov 2807 1120 GMT

Notes

Adds details of suicide bomber and incident

Load-Date: November 29, 2007



Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: officials

Agence France Presse -- English

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 4:30 AM GMT

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Length: 399 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: COLOMBO, Nov 28 2007

Body

A disabled *female* suicide bomber with explosives hidden in her bra killed herself in the Sri Lankan capital on Wednesday, wounding at least three security men outside a senior minister's office, officials said.

The Tamil Tiger rebel attacker tried to enter the heavily guarded building housing the offices of welfare and social development minister Douglas Devananda, police said.

But she was halted and blew herself up outside.

The minister, who was inside meeting the public on an open day, escaped unhurt, police added.

"At 8:05 am today (an) <u>LTTE</u> handicapped <u>female</u> suicide cadre exploded herself at the office of minister Douglas Devanada," the defence ministry said in a statement.

The wounded, two in serious condition, were brought to the city's General Hospital.

"The three people who are injured are security people for the minister," hospital spokeswoman Pushpa Soysa told AFP.

The blast came a day after Tamil Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran declared that Sri Lankan peace efforts were a waste of time and vowed to strike back at the island's "genocidal" government.

"Those who plan to destroy the Tamil nation will in the end be forced to face their own destruction," he said.

In an annual policy speech delivered from a jungle hideout in his northern fiefdom, Prabhakaran launched a furious assault on the island's Sinhalese majority.

"The Sinhala nation is trying to destroy the Tamil nation," the reclusive head of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) said in the speech.

"It is unleashing unthinkable violence against another people. It only desires to find a solution to the Tamil question through military might and oppression," he said.

Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: officials

On Monday the island's defence secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, told AFP that his forces were now going all out to kill Prabhakaran and recapture the north of the country.

The 35-year-old conflict, which has left tens of thousands dead, has escalated since 2004 when a peace deal began to unravel.

The government has this year wrested control of the east from the <u>LTTE</u>, sunk several <u>LTTE</u> gun-running ships and killed the <u>LTTE</u>s political chief in an air raid.

The <u>LTTE</u> commemorated in July the 20th anniversary of their first-ever suicide bombing by honouring 322 fighters who have killed themselves in attacks.

The pro-rebel Puthinam.com website said the "Black Tigers" had deployed 61 suicide bombers in the past year alone, many of them woman.

Load-Date: November 28, 2007



Roundup: Escalation of violence hampers revival of Sri Lanka's peace process

Xinhua General News Service

August 24, 2004 Tuesday 1:30 PM EST

Copyright 2004 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 441 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Killing took place again on Monday in eastern Sri Lanka in a spate of violence which has hampered the early revival of the stalled peace process in the country.

A government soldier on a road patrol at Mankerni, north of Batticaloa, was injured when an unidentified gunman fired at him around mid day Monday.

The killing followed violence in the same areas on Friday and Saturday when two leaders of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) were killed allegedly by loyalists of the rebel renegade eastern commander known as "Karuna" and two army men suffered injuries due to a hand grenade attack.

Eastern Sri Lanka has been a hotbed of violence ever since Karuna broke ranks with the LTTE in March.

Karuna went underground one month later when his 6,000 strong men were unable to resist attacks by the mainstream rebel group coming from the north.

Violent killings between the two rival rebel factions and the <u>LTTE</u>'s killing of its opponents, members of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) have become commonplace both in the east and in the capital Colombo since then.

The <u>LTTE</u> rebels launched their first suicide attack since ceasefire in February 2002 when a <u>female</u> rebel suicide bomber blew herself up early last month in Colombo in an attempt to kill EPDP leader Douglas Devananda who is also a government minister. Four police personnel were also killed in the suicide bomb explosion.

The government has called on the <u>LTTE</u> rebels to stop their killing spree, but the rebels blamed the government for refusing to discuss their self-rule blueprint and delaying the revival of the stalled peace talks.

The violence has caused concerns of the international community including the Norwegian facilitators, the United States and the European Union.

The Norwegian facilitators has warned that the escalation of violence following the split in <u>LTTE</u> is the most dangerous since the ceasefire.

"There is no excuse for such violence, which can never resolve the internal differences in Sri Lanka," the EU said in a statement.

Roundup: Escalation of violence hampers revival of Sri Lanka 's peace process

"Assassinations and suicide bombings are unacceptable. The recruitment of child soldiers must cease," the US embassy here said in a statement.

The <u>LTTE</u> rebels and the government started direct talks in September 2002, seven month after they entered the Norwegian- brokered ceasefire.

However, the rebels suspended talks in April last year after six-round of peace talks. All efforts made by the Norwegian facilitators became futile.

More than 64,000 people have been killed in the two decades of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka since 1983.

Load-Date: August 24, 2004



Series of battles kill 23 rebels, 1 soldier in volatile northern Sri Lanka: military

Associated Press International

November 10, 2007 Saturday 6:12 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 406 words

Byline: By BHARATHA MALLAWARACHI, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

A series of battles between soldiers and Tamil rebels in war-torn northern Sri Lanka left 23 guerrillas and one soldier dead, the military said Saturday.

The rebels, meanwhile, triggered a roadside bomb near a southern wildlife park on Saturday, killing a civilian and wounding another, the military said.

Troops attacked two rebel bunkers along the front line separating government-controlled areas from the rebels' mini-state in northern Vavuniya district Friday morning, killing six guerrillas, said military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara.

Nanayakkara said military operations were launched because <u>Tamil Tigers</u> "were directing fire toward soldiers in the area."

Later in the day, troops and Tamil Tiger rebels exchanged small arms fire, killing six insurgents in Narikkulam village in Vavuniya, he said. There were no military casualties in that exchange.

Also on Friday, in the neighboring Mannar district, five rebels died in artillery strikes, Nanayakkara said.

Separately, three <u>female</u> insurgents were killed in a clash with soldiers in a village in Vavuniya, and one soldier also died. Two other gunbattles left three rebels dead in the district.

It was not possible to independently verify the military's claim because the area is restricted. Rebel spokesman Rasiah llanthirayan could not be reached for comment.

On Saturday, one civilian was killed and another wounded when the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> set off a roadside bomb near Yala wildlife park in the south, the military media center said.

While fighting has largely been concentrated in the north and east for decades, the Tigers have in recent weeks mounted attacks in the Sinhalese-majority south.

Last month the guerrillas attacked a mini military camp around the same region, killing six soldiers, and another died in a mine blast while transporting casualties.

Series of battles kill 23 rebels, 1 soldier in volatile northern Sri Lanka: military

The rebels have been fighting for more than two decades for an independent state for the island's ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east because of long-standing discrimination by the majority Sinhalese-controlled governments.

A Norwegian-brokered cease-fire in 2002 brought relative calm to the country, but a new wave of violence that began in December 2005 has killed more than 5,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands. More than 70,000 people have been killed since the insurgency began.

Despite the cease-fire's collapse, neither side has officially withdrawn from the pact, fearing international isolation.

Load-Date: November 11, 2007



Japanese envoy keeps up talks to save Sri Lanka peace bid

Agence France Presse -- English
May 10, 2006 Wednesday 5:19 AM GMT

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Length: 389 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, May 10 2006

Body

Japan's top peace envoy to Sri Lanka met with a key Muslim leader as he wrapped up a four-day visit to the country amid fears that the island could slide back into full-scale war.

Yasushi Akashi held talks with Rauf Hakeem, the leader of the main Muslim party in Sri Lanka, on ways to save a Norwegian-brokered ceasefire and the faltering peace process, diplomats said.

His meeting came a day after the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) told him to pressure the government to halt alleged military attacks against them and warned that the island could face "doom" if they retaliated.

The government similarly called on the *LTTE* to halt violence that has threatened a ceasefire in place since 2002.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera, on a two-day visit to brief the Indian government on the troubled peace bid, said the <u>LTTE</u> would bear full responsibility if the truce were to collapse completely.

"The international community must bring pressure on the <u>LTTE</u> by using all powers within them to get them back to the table." Samaraweera said in New Delhi.

"Something that hurts them the most is curtailing their fund-raising activities."

The leader of the <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing S.P. Thamilselvan also appealed to the international community to bring an end to "this warlike attack by the Sri Lanka armed forces and create a more conducive environment for peace talks."

Thamilselvan "informed the Japanese envoy the Tamil people, by these attacks and repression of their normal life, will be forced to take a decision that will bring doom to Sri Lanka," the *LTTE* said in a statement.

Akashi, who helped raise 4.5 billion dollars in aid to support the island's Norwegian-backed peace process in June 2003, held talks with President Mahinda Rajapakse on Monday, officials said.

Despite a truce signed in 2002, more than 200 people, mostly civilians, have died over the past month in tit-for-tat attacks by government and rebel forces.

Japanese envoy keeps up talks to save Sri Lanka peace bid

Talks on a permanent settlement have stagnated since April 2003 after six rounds of face-to-face discussions.

In the most serious attack since the truce began, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber killed 10 and wounded 30 others including army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka at army headquarters in Colombo on April 25.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the separatist conflict since 1972.

Load-Date: May 11, 2006



Sri Lanka foes seek foreign help to avert war

Agence France Presse -- English May 9, 2006 Tuesday 2:07 PM GMT

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Length: 603 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, May 9 2006

Body

Sri Lanka's government and Tamil rebels Tuesday sought foreign help to prevent them from returning to full-scale war amid fears that a Norwegian-brokered ceasefire was collapsing amid spiralling violence.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) told a visiting Japanese peace envoy to pressure the government to halt alleged military attacks against them and warned that the island could face "doom" if they decided to retaliate.

The <u>LTTE</u> appealed to Yasushi Akashi to persuade the Sri Lankan government to halt violence. The government similarly called on the <u>LTTE</u> to halt violence that threatens a ceasefire in place since 2002.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera, on a two-day visit to brief the New Delhi government on the faltering peace efforts, said the *LTTE* must bear full responsibility if the four-year truce collapsed completely.

"The international community must bring pressure on the <u>LTTE</u> by using all powers within them to get them back to the table," Samaraweera said in New Delhi. "Something that hurts them the most is curtailing their fund-raising activities."

The <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan also appealed to the international community to bring an end to "this warlike attack by the Sri Lanka armed forces and create a more conducive environment for peace talks."

"Thamilselvan added that he had informed the Japanese envoy that the Tamil people by these attacks and repression of their normal life will be forced to take a decision that will bring doom to Sri Lanka," the <u>LTTE</u> said in a statement.

The statement issued after closed-door talks with Akashi in rebel-held northern territory said the international community must understand the background to the ongoing fighting, which the **LTTE** blames on government support for a breakaway rebel faction.

Even as the meeting took place in the rebel-held town of Kilinochchi, 330 kilometres (206 miles) north of here, security forces in Jaffna, further north found a large haul of bombs and ammunition.

Sri Lanka foes seek foreign help to avert war

Residents in Jaffna also staged a one-day strike to protest against the killing last week of seven Tamil men, police said.

The military claimed the seven were Tamil Tiger rebels shot dead by security forces, but the Tigers maintained they were civilians on their way to a birthday party.

Jaffna's banks and offices closed and public transport stopped running as part of the stoppage, police said.

A curfew imposed Sunday in Jaffna was lifted Monday afternoon, the military said while the main entry and exit points to northern rebel-held territory, closed on Sunday, re-opened Tuesday.

Meanwhile, parliament Tuesday extended by a further month a state of emergency which gives sweeping powers to security forces to detain suspects, officials said.

The tough laws were introduced after Tiger rebels were blamed for the August assassination of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Akashi, who helped raise 4.5 billion dollars in aid to support the island's Norwegian-backed peace process in June 2003, held talks with President Mahinda Rajapakse on Monday, officials said.

Despite a truce signed in 2002, more than 200 people, mostly civilians, have died over the past month in tit-for-tat attacks by government and rebel forces.

Talks on a permanent settlement have stagnated since April 2003 after six rounds of face-to-face discussions.

In the most serious attack since the truce began, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber killed 10 and wounded 30 others including army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka at army headquarters in Colombo on April 25.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the separatist conflict since 1972.

Load-Date: May 10, 2006



SRI LANKA'S FRAGILE PEACE PROCESS FACES ANOTHER BLOW

Malaysia General News March 02, 2005, Wednesday

Copyright 2005 Pertubuhan Berita Nasional Malaysia

Length: 316 words

Byline: Ranga Kalansooriya

Dateline: Colombo, March 2, 2005

Body

The fragile peace process in Sri Lanka again faces a serious blow with the Tamil Tiger rebels accusing the government of carrying out attacks on its senior cadres.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) yesterday accused para military elements that are allegedly working with the country's security forces of attacking its Eastern woman political wing leader and two other *women* cadres on Monday.

Seriously injured <u>women</u> political wing leader Kuveni along with her two <u>women</u> cadres were flown into Colombo yesterday for further treatment, health sources said.

Sri Lanka-Peace

They are reported to be in critical condition.

"The continuing killing and shooting of our senior political leaders is a very serious and disturbing matter", said S.P. Thamilchelvan, head of <u>LTTE</u>'s political division, in a message conveyed to the Norwegian government through its ambassador in Colombo Tuesday night.

The Norwegian government is the broker in the peace process aimed at ending the 20-year old civil war in Sri Lanka that has claimed over 65,000 lives.

Last week, S. Kousalyan, another <u>LTTE</u> political leader, was gunned down by an unidentified group of killers in the country's Eastern province.

" The killing of Kousalyan and the attack on Kuveni since the the tsunami disaster is casting a dark shadow on the the peace process", said S. Puleedevan, secretary general of the <u>LTTE</u> peace secretariat.

Thousands of people died when tsunami struck Sri Lanka on Dec 26.

Military spokesman Brigadier Daya Ratnayake, denying the allegations on the involvement of the military in the killings, told Bernama that the security forces were doing their utmost to bring the culprits to book.

"The police have already arrested one person with regard to the attack on Kuveni," he said.

He said security in Sri Lanka's East had been beefed up with the spate of killings of the *LTTE* leaders.

SRI LANKA 'S FRAGILE PEACE PROCESS FACES ANOTHER BLOW

Load-Date: March 3, 2005



Norwegian envoy meets Sri Lankan rebels amid rising violence

Xinhua General News Service March 5, 2005 Saturday 3:00 AM EST

Copyright 2005 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 332 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The Norwegian ambassador to Sri Lanka flew to Tamil Tiger rebel held north Saturday amid rising tension in the north and east regions.

Ambassador Hans Brattskar was flown to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) headquarters in the northern Kilinochchi district, diplomatic sources said.

Brattaskar's visit comes after three days of continued violence in the eastern and northern provinces.

On Thursday the Tamils backed by the <u>LTTE</u> clashed with a group of majority community Sinhalese led by a ruling party lawmaker in the eastern port town of Trincomalee.

Friday saw the northern capital of Jaffna erupting following the accidental killing of a Tamil school girl by a speeding military vehicle.

The Army fired in the air to disperse a large crowd of rioters who had set fire to a military vehicle, a military sentry point and a political party office belonging to Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga's Freedom Party.

The sources said the <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing leader SP Thamilselvan is expected to raise these issues with the Norwegian ambassador.

In the face of rising tension which could threaten the ongoing cease-fire, the government last week appointed a probe committee to look into recent attacks in the east against the Tigers.

Early last month the <u>LTTE</u>'s eastern political leader was gunned down in an ambush while last Monday the chief of the <u>LTTE</u>'s eastern <u>women</u>'s political wing was attacked in another ambush.

The rebels blame these attacks on paramilitary groups working alongside government troops.

Colombo expects the rebels to convey through the Norwegian envoy their consent to a joint mechanism to provide relief to the Tsunami tidal wave victims in the north and east.

The international donors have urged the two sides to work out a joint arrangement following the government's denial of accusation by the rebels of not providing adequate relief to the tsunami victims in areas under their control.

Load-Date: March 6, 2005



SRI LANKA: ANNUAL DAY OF TIGER SUICIDE BOMBINGS PASSES QUIETLY

IPS - Inter Press Service July 9, 2006 Sunday

Copyright 2006 IPS - Inter Press Service/Global Information Network

Length: 945 words

Byline: Amantha Perera

Dateline: COLOMBO, July 9 2006

Body

The Nelliaddy government school in northern Jaffna peninsula is nondescript -- except for a statue honoring the first man to blow himself up on behalf of the militant Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) and its campaign to carve out a separate Tamil state.

On July 5, 1987, Vasanthan Vallipuram, alias Captain Miller, drove an explosives-laden truck into the barracks of the Sri Lanka army, then housed at the school. That attack by the first of the "Black Tigers," as the suicide squads of the *LTTE* are called, left 55 soldiers dead and halted a plan by the army to capture Jaffna town.

With a four-year-old ceasefire between the government and the <u>LTTE</u> faltering, the army did not take any chances on or around this year's Black Tiger Day, which fell on Wednesday. Security was tightened islandwide and additional troops were deployed in the capital.

Where the Black Tigers are concerned, no precaution is good enough. Their "high value" targets have included Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993 and former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. In 1999, then-president Chandrika Kumaratunga narrowly escaped a suicide bomber attack but with one eye permanently damaged.

Such successful strikes, penetrating tight security cordons, are attributed to high levels of motivation as well as meticulous planning. Black Tigers may stay dormant for years together, melting into the local population, until called upon to execute their deadly missions.

There is no accurate figure of how many people have fallen victim to the carnage wrought by the Black Tigers. What is certain is that 138 men and 135 **women** have blown themselves up to help the **LTTE** achieve military or political objectives.

The Black Tigers have honored the truce but are now back in the limelight. In April, Sri Lankan army commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka survived a suicide attack carried out by a woman inside army headquarters in Colombo. Two months later, in June, the army's third-highest-ranking officer, Maj. Gen. Parami Kulathunga, was not so lucky -- he was killed by a motorcycle-borne suicide bomber.

Since December, 700 persons, including 450 civilians, have died in hostilities involving the <u>LTTE</u> and the security forces. And the Black Tigers are known to have taken part in some of the worst incidents, including in devastating attacks at sea against the Sri Lankan navy.

SRI LANKA: ANNUAL DAY OF TIGER SUICIDE BOMBINGS PASSES QUIETLY

The <u>LTTE</u> has fought successive Sri Lankan governments since the early 1980's demanding a separate state for the country's minority Tamils in the north and east. The fighting killed more than 65,000 persons before it was temporarily halted by the February 2002 Norwegian-facilitated ceasefire, which is now being strained.

"No weapon, no technology can stop the determination of the Black Tigers. The suicide squads came into being at a critical juncture in the history of the Tamil struggle and (have) taken it to the next stage," Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran said in 2003.

The Sri Lankan military is equally aware of the deadly potency of the human bomb. "It is a one-way weapon. Once someone is in that mood there is no turning back," Maj. Gen. Sanath Karunarathna, now a commander in the north, told IPS.

Apart from top military and civilian leaders, the Black Tigers have destroyed with deadly precision the nerve-center of the Sri Lankan security forces, the central bank, key petroleum installations and airline fleets.

Very little is known of the Black Tigers, except of their spectacular attacks. They have only appeared in public once. In November 2003, 27 members took part in a parade in the <u>LTTE</u>'s political capital of Kilinochchi, wearing black hoods. The Tigers took care that the faces of possible suicide cadres, who appeared with Prabhakaran at this year's commemoration events, were blurred before the photographs were released.

Customarily a Black Tiger embarking on a mission partakes of a meal with Prabhakaran. They are given pride of place in *LTTE* cemeteries. But although marked by granite tombstones, many of their graves contain no bodies.

The suicide cadres are divided into two categories, according to military sources. They carry out reconnaissance on the front lines or specialize in infiltrating government areas. The Tigers also talk of another group known as "champion Black Tigers." Though exact figures are not made available, a senior Tiger leader said during July 5 commemorations in 2003 that there were at least 500 Black Tigers ready to go into action.

If July 5 passed quietly, this year, it could be because it also marks the evolution of the worst internal threat the **LTTE** has ever faced. On July 5, 2004, Ramalingam Padmaseelan alias Seenathiraja, who headed the Tiger political office in the eastern town of Batticaloa, was shot by the breakaway Karuna faction.

His death, eight days later, triggered severe bouts of internecine fighting. The <u>LTTE</u> and its breakaway group, led by its former eastern military commander Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan alias Karuna, have since fought each other fiercely with both sides losing high-ranking members.

The Tigers charge that the splinter group operates with support from government forces and this is one of the main reasons that the ceasefire is failing. The <u>LTTE</u> has, as a result of the split, been compelled to scale down political work. Black Tiger Day events are now low-key affairs.

But the Black Tigers continue to inspire young Tamils. "The killings, sexual assaults and arrests of our people should be stopped immediately. If not, all the students from every school will join in the struggle against the violence and later we will attack," said a message issued on Wednesday by a group of students from Nelliaddy.

Load-Date: July 10, 2006



Tamil Rebels Bring Discipline to Disaster

Associated Press Online January 2, 2005 Sunday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 919 words

Byline: ARTHUR MAX; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka

Body

In times of crisis, envy the authoritarians.

Veterans of a long guerrilla war, the Tamil rebels who control northern Sri Lanka moved with military precision to help victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

The speed and efficiency of the massive humanitarian operation showed an administrative capability that underscored the rebels' demand for Tamil independence from the Sinhalese-dominated southern part of Sri Lanka.

Within minutes of the disaster, soldiers of the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, or <u>LTTE</u>, were evacuating survivors and pulling bodies from the still-roiling water, villagers and aid workers said.

In a well-practiced drill, squads set up roadblocks to control panic and prevent looting. Others requisitioned civilian vehicles to move the injured to hospitals. Many donated blood.

Teams with digital cameras and laptops moved into disaster zones to photograph the faces of the dead for later identification, then swiftly cremated or buried the corpses.

Sathinathan Senthan, the village mayor of Kallappadu, said boats of the elite Sea Tigers, the <u>LTTE</u> naval arm which had a base at the neighboring town of Mullaitivu, arrived even as the tsunami floodwaters were receding. Other sailors arrived on bicycles, he said.

"Until now, they are still there," Senthan told a reporter in the refugee camp, where he was trying to hold the grieving survivors together. Half his village of 2,200 people was killed, he said, and not a building remained standing.

By the end of the first day, the first refugee centers were set up. <u>Women</u> in the Tigers' camouflage uniforms began registering the survivors and recording the relief items they received - ensuring no one got more than he should.

"They applied a very efficient military machine. All they had to do was give the command," said Reuben Thurairajah, a British doctor who watched the maneuver in amazement.

Meanwhile, in the south, the government was struggling to cope while politicians argued over who was in charge. From the field came isolated reports of corruption and hijacking of relief trucks.

Tamil Rebels Bring Discipline to Disaster

Thurairajah, a volunteer public health officer who was in the area several weeks before the tsunami, said the Tigers were scrupulous in ensuring equal distribution of aid.

"If they have 100 bars of soap and 800 people, they'd rather not give it to anyone," he said.

The tsunami brought an equal measure of tragedy to the Tamils of the north and the Sinhalese of the south. Nearly 30,000 people have been killed, a crushing toll for a nation of only 19 million.

Yet that is less than half the number of casualties from this island's 20-year ethnic war.

Tamil nationalists have been fighting for independence for the north and east, where the minority group is concentrated, since 1983.

A shaky cease-fire has held since February 2002, but peace talks broke down more than a year ago over the Tiger's demand to have a recognized self-governing authority while a final settlement is negotiated.

"Both sides are acutely aware that the way the relief efforts are being handled can affect their political status," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, head of the Center for Policy Alternatives.

The Tigers are likely to showcase their smooth handling of aid as they argue for autonomous authority. Sri Lankan hard-liners counter that only a central government with authority over the whole country can administer international donations.

The <u>LTTE</u> began as a ragged guerrilla force of 26 fighters in the early 1970s under Veluppelai Prabhakaran, a civil servant's son from a coastal village near the historic Tamil city of Jaffna.

Prabhakaran demanded absolute loyalty, dedication to the cause of Tamil independence, and strict adherence to a code of conduct.

The <u>LTTE</u> revived suicide as a weapon of war. In 1991, a woman detonated an explosive belt that killed former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Two years later, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa died in a suicide bomb.

Prabhakaran has never brooked dissent, and has ruthlessly eliminated rivals and rebels. He faced his biggest challenge in recent years last March when a top commander defected, and clashes still continue with the renegade group.

Both the <u>LTTE</u> and the government have signaled the tsunami could bring them closer together - "brothers in misery," as Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse put it - and help revive the peace process.

An exchange of conciliatory remarks and pledges to work together brought a sudden reversal in the gloomy political atmosphere.

"Before Dec. 26, we were closer to war than at any time since the cease-fire," said Saravanamuttu, speaking in Colombo. "Afterward, we are much further from war."

The hope is that joint relief efforts will break the cycle of distrust and build a level of confidence that would allow peace efforts to resume, he said.

But the cooperation in relief efforts began slowly and remains patchy, as the LTTE jealously guards its turf.

Relief operations in the rebel-controlled areas are guided by regional and local task forces comprising a government representative, an <u>LTTE</u> political officer, an aid official of the <u>LTTE</u>-financed Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, and a representative of an international charity group or U.N. body.

The system has worked surprisingly well, but with occasional glitches.

Tamil Rebels Bring Discipline to Disaster

On Sunday, the Sri Lankan army accused the <u>LTTE</u> of blocking the disbursement of aid at a government school near the Tamil capital of Jaffna, apparently because they were sidelined in the distribution. The <u>LTTE</u> spokesman could not be reached for comment.

Load-Date: January 3, 2005



Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia) (Sydney, Australia)

July 12, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Historical Feature; Pg. 26

Length: 1043 words

Byline: KEITH SUTER

Body

Suicidal killers are a recent phenomenon in armed resistance groups, writes KEITH SUTER

Eighty-eight Australians were killed in Bali on October 12, 2002. They were among 202 who died. This was one of the worst suicide terrorist attacks in modern history.

Between 1980 and 2003, there were 315 suicide bombings worldwide. Most were directed at developed countries. Almost all the attacks have been against a handful of nations: Australia, the United States, France, India, Indonesia, Israel, Russia, Sri Lanka, Spain, and Turkey. Since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, that nation has also been in the firing line.

MATP

The common aim of such a tactic is to force a democratic country to change its policy. Suicide bombing is generally a tool for groups fighting for national liberation of some sort. They see themselves fighting an invader or occupier (such as the US and its allies). Islamic fundamentalism is not necessarily involved.

The largest number of suicide attacks have been done by the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> in Sri Lanka, who are a communist movement drawn from Hindu families. Of 315 such attacks recorded, 76 were carried out by the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>. They are fighting for the independence of northern Sri Lanka from the majority Buddhist Sinhalese. The Tigers are the only such group in the world to have killed two heads of government with suicide bombs: India's prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 and Sir Lanka's president Ranasinhe Premadasa in 1993.

Modern suicide terrorist groups share a number of characteristics. In general they are militarily and numerically weaker than their opponents. Their goals, if not their tactics, are broadly supported by a distinct national community.

The militants have a close bond of loyalty to each other and a devotion to their leader. They have a system of initiation and rituals of commitment to the community.

Suicide terrorists are often educated people from affluent families, such as those involved in the September 11, 2001, attack on the US. They are not often, as we might think, psychologically disturbed young men. They seem quite well-adjusted (bearing in mind the rigorous training they undergo). Some of the most effective terrorists are **women**. Before 1980, the best-known suicide terror groups included the militant Jewish revolutionary groups the Zealots and the Sicarii (named after their dagger). They committed public assassinations about 2000 years ago against the Roman occupiers of the Holy Land. They attacked victims in broad daylight using daggers concealed under cloaks.

Inside the mind of a suicide bomber

Another famous group was The Assassins, Shiite Muslims based in Iran in the 11th and 12th centuries, who fought the Sunni rulers and Christian Crusaders. They welcomed death in combat.

Japanese kamikaze pilots targeted the military rather than civilians. But they were still willing to die for their cause, and did so frequently from October 25, 1944, until Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. About 3843 pilots killed themselves. They failed to stop the Allies but exacted a high cost. They damaged or sank at least 375 Allied ships, killed 12,300 Allied service personnel and wounded 36,400. Japanese soldiers preferred to die in battle rather than face capture, seen as the ultimate humiliation.

Between 1945 and 1980, suicide attacks temporarily disappeared from the international scene.

There were numerous acts of suicide by individuals in the service of political causes, such as IRA prisoners going on a hunger strike in the 1970s in Northern Ireland.

But there is not a single instance of a suicide terrorist killing others from 1945-80. The modern use of suicide attacks began in the early 1980s, with the Islamic Hezbollah group in Lebanon. The largest loss of American military personnel in history -- in percentage terms -- took place on October 23, 1983, when a suicide terrorist drove a truckload of explosives into the US Marines compound in Beirut; 241 soldiers were killed (about 10 per cent of the force). There was a near-simultaneous attack on the French base, which killed 58 French troops.

The US and France immediately quit Lebanon. The toll was an inspiration to other would-be suicide attackers. Suicide attacks are used because they can be effective.

They helped force Israel out of southern Lebanon in 1985, and they have helped force Israel out of the Gaza Strip (the settlers' withdrawal is currently underway). This style of attack also had a hand in forcing the Sri Lankan Government to create an independent Tamil state from 1990.

The assassination of the Indian prime minister stopped any Indian attempt at ever again deploying troops in Sri Lanka to assist the Sri Lankan government.

Having scared India off, the *Tamil Tigers* have not found it necessary to attack Indian targets again.

Meanwhile, there is a stalemate in current campaigns, such as the Chechens rebelling against Russian control, the Kashmiris against India and the Iraqi rebels against the US and its allies. Osama bin Laden is still on the loose in southern Afghanistan or northern Pakistan. He is the spiritual leader of the international al-Qaeda network, probably behind last week's London terror attacks.

Terrorist groups have learned from each other. For example, <u>Tamil Tigers</u> pioneered the now common "suicide belt". This is an undergarment with specially made pockets to hold explosives and triggering devices that fit the human bomb's body. Other groups have followed this idea.

Terrorist groups need community support. First, such support enables a group to replenish its membership to make up for the losses through deaths in action.

Second, terrorist groups need to avoid detection by security forces. Broad sympathy among local populations means they can quickly find safe places in which to hide.

Finally, community support is necessary for acceptance of the suicide terrorists as being martyrs to the cause. Many suicide terrorists make videos to be shown after their death. In the Middle East, souvenirs such as keyrings honour martyrs with portraits.

Suicide attacks comprise just 3 per cent of all terrorist attacks from 1980 to 2003, but account for 48 per cent of the fatalities.

* Acknowledgments to Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism, by Robert Pape (Scribe, Melbourne, on sale from yesterday)

Load-Date: July 11, 2005



18 killed in Sri Lanka bomb blasts: officials

Agence France Presse -- English
November 28, 2007 Wednesday 5:53 PM GMT

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Length: 588 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: COLOMBO, Nov 28 2007

Body

At least 18 people were killed in Sri Lanka on Wednesday in two bomb attacks blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels, officials said, one day after the guerrillas' leader said peace with Colombo was impossible.

A powerful parcel bomb exploded outside a clothing store on the outskirts of the capital Colombo, killing 17, wounding 43 others and leaving the street littered with body parts, police said.

The attack came just hours after a disabled <u>female</u> suicide bomber blew herself up outside the office of a Tamil government minister, killing his secretary and injuring two security guards.

Social Welfare Minister Douglas Devananda, a vocal opponent of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*), escaped unharmed. He had been the target of at least four previous attempts on his life.

Officials blamed both attacks on Tamil Tiger rebels, who have been fighting for an independent Tamil homeland for 35 years, a conflict that has left tens of thousands of people dead.

The two blasts came a day after Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran vowed to strike back at what he branded the "war of genocide" led by the Colombo government and said peace efforts on the island were a waste of time.

Prabhakaran launched a furious attack on the government of President Mahinda Rajapakse, accusing the "Sinhala nation" of trying to destroy the "Tamil nation" -- language which observers said could signal a return to all-out war.

The bombing outside the clothing shop came during the evening rush hour, preventing ambulances from reaching the scene. Three children were among the wounded, a hospital official said.

"It's chaos," a police officer told AFP.

"<u>LTTE</u> terrorists carried out this cowardly bomb attack targetting innocent civilians in the densely populated Nugegoda town this evening," the defence ministry said in a statement.

The government appealed to the public to be on the lookout for more bombs.

18 killed in Sri Lanka bomb blasts: officials

"The public is urged to be vigilant and inform the nearest police or army checkpoint of any suspicious parcels placed in public places," said military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara.

Earlier, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber with polio tried to enter the heavily guarded building housing Devananda's office but was halted and blew herself up outside.

Tiger suicide bombers usually don jackets with a manual detonating device around waist level, police said, but she appeared to have wired her bra to explode.

On Tuesday, the reclusive Prabhakaran delivered his annual speech from a jungle hideout in his northern fiefdom, warning: "Those who plan to destroy the Tamil nation will in the end be forced to face their own destruction."

The rebel chief's fiery assault on the island's Sinhalese majority came a day after the island's defence secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, said his forces would go all out to kill Prabhakaran and recapture the north from the *LTTE*.

Violence in Sri Lanka has escalated since late 2005, when a truce began to unravel.

The government has this year wrested control of the east from the <u>LTTE</u>, sunk several <u>LTTE</u> gun-running ships and killed the *LTTE*s political chief.

"It is unleashing unthinkable violence against another people. It only desires to find a solution to the Tamil question through military might and oppression," Prabhakaran said.

The <u>LTTE</u> in July commemorated the 20th anniversary of their first-ever suicide bombing by honouring 322 fighters who have killed themselves in attacks.

The pro-rebel Puthinam.com website said the "Black Tigers" had deployed 61 suicide bombers in the past year alone, many of them woman.

mg-pmc/sst

Load-Date: November 29, 2007



SRI LANKA: TWO REBEL GROUPS SPAR OVER WHO REPRESENTS TAMILS

IPS - Inter Press Service
July 21, 2006 Friday

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Length: 1064 words

Byline: Amantha Perera

Dateline: BATTICALOA, July 21 2006

Body

The large sign alongside the Batticaloa lagoon in eastern Sri Lanka reads "Vanakam (Welcome) TMVP" in bold, red Tamil letters, proclaiming that the formidable Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) has no power in these parts.

The public proclamation also indicates how much the Tamileelam Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (Tamil Freedom Panthers), or TMVP, has grown over the last two years, under the leadership of the <u>LTTE</u> renegade Vinayagamoorthi Muralitharan, alias Col. Karuna.

The TMVP has become a serious enough irritation for the <u>LTTE</u> to insist the government to the Sri Lankan army end its alleged support for Col. Karuna before the <u>LTTE</u> will return to the peace table.

"Paramilitary groups must be disarmed so as to ensure cessation of their activities in the Tamil Homeland by removing them from the north-east," Tiger political head S. P. Tamilselvan said in a letter to President Mahinda Rajapakse earlier this month.

Col. Karuna broke ranks with the Tigers in early 2004 and, soon afterward, defected to government-controlled areas where his group has been launching attacks on the <u>LTTE</u> cadres and camps. Several high-ranking Tigers and Karuna loyalists have died in the internecine warfare.

More importantly, the move strained the Norwegian-facilitated ceasefire that temporarily halted two decades of Tamil secessionist violence, in which more than 65,000 people died. In the last two years, the government and <u>LTTE</u> representatives have met only once -- in Geneva in January, where the Karuna issue dominated talks.

While the government steadfastly denies supporting the Karuna faction, the all-Scandinavian Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) has said, in reports submitted to both the government and the <u>LTTE</u>, that armed Karuna loyalists have been spotted in government-controlled areas in the east.

"Sighting of armed civilians claiming to represent Karuna is often reported to SLMM and on the 28th of March SLMM monitors encountered 10-15 armed men in civilian clothes operating in Valaichchenai (in Batticaloa), who told SLMM that they belong to the Karuna faction. SLMM district office in Batticaloa has also been contacted by individuals claiming to be Karuna members," the group said in a report submitted at the Geneva talks.

That report has caused Colombo much embarrassment and there were quick and vehement official denials of any link between the Sri Lankan establishment and Karuna's group.

SRI LANKA: TWO REBEL GROUPS SPAR OVER WHO REPRESENTS TAMILS

Karuna himself insists that his cadres operate in areas that lie between government areas and Tiger-held areas and denies that he has government backing. "Utter nonsense! How does the SLMM identify our cadres?"

But the TMVP has opened an office in Batticaloa town and its spokesman T. Thuyavan says that the group plans to open others in the capital of Colombo, and also in the eastern harbor town of Trincomalee and in Amapara, south of Batticaloa.

In contrast, existing Tiger political offices in government-controlled areas are now rapidly closing down. The *LTTE*'s Batticaloa office has came under attack on several occasions, which the Tigers have blamed on the Karuna group.

Along with rivalry on the political front, skirmishes and attacks have continued. The TMVP said that it launched an attack on a Tiger camp in the Trincomalee district the night of July 18.

"About eight <u>LTTE</u> cadres were killed. Four other cadres were said to have been killed in a Claymore mine attack at the same place the next morning. The attacks were carried out by the TMVP," Thuyavan said.

Angry Tiger officials in the area dismissed the claim as propaganda and said that only one of their men had been killed. "Our camps are always fortified and ready for war or peace. We have reason to strengthen ourselves," they said, indicating that the job of fighting the army was still left to the **LTTE** rather than the TMVP.

As the rivalry rages on, civilians find themselves in a bind. Whenever there is a clash they flee their homes in large numbers. Recently, close to 100 families arrived at the army-controlled areas in Mankerni, north of Batticaloa, alleging that the Tigers were forcibly imparting military training and recruiting children.

Civilians speak of heavily armed and masked men barging into their homes and demanding that terrified families disclose which of the two groups they were loyal to -- the <u>LTTE</u> or the TMVP. Summary shootings have been reported.

Traders and business people complain privately that in some areas the <u>LTTE</u>, the army and the TMVP are taking turns collecting taxes. No one wants to be quoted by name for fear of brutal reprisals from one or the other armed group.

As both factions step up their drive to forcibly recruit able-bodied men, <u>women</u> and children to their side, high tension prevails. Reconstruction work from the December 2004 tsunami has come to a standstill.

Batticaloa has also been acquiring a reputation for child-soldier recruitments, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has alleged that both the Tigers and the Karuna group are guilty.

While both have denied these charges, it is a common sight to see parents accompanying their children to school and back to prevent kidnappings by either group.

With the Tigers unlikely to back down on their demand that the Karuna group be disarmed, the situation has reached a deadlock. The Tigers have now started laying blame on the military for any attacks on their cadres -- both to deny credit to the TMVP and to emphasize links between its rival group and the establishment. They have also retaliated by attacking the army in the north where it is dominant.

For his part, Karuna has vowed not to give up arms. When he broke ranks he commanded 6,000 military cadres in the east. He says that he has the support of bulk of them but has declined to give exact figures. Analysts believe that he has at least 500 armed cadres operating in the east. His group has also been receiving official attention that has thus far been set aside exclusively for the Tigers.

Recently, the TMVP held discussions with UNICEF officials on allegations that it was recruiting children. While the U.N. agency said it was acting on complaints, including those made by the SLMM, the breakaway group regarded the dialogue as yet another indication of international recognition and legitimacy.

SRI LANKA: TWO REBEL GROUPS SPAR OVER WHO REPRESENTS TAMILS

"The next meeting will be held very soon in the Meenagam office shortly. We will have regular meetings," TMVP political head Pradeep said.

Load-Date: July 24, 2006



Three Gandhi assassination accused still on death row

Indo-Asian News Service
May 20, 2005 Friday 1:41 PM EST

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Length: 556 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, May 20 -- As India marks the 14th anniversary of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination May 21, three men linked to his killing are still on the death row.

The three are Suthenthirarajah alias Santhan and Sriharan alias Murugan, both Sri Lankans, and Perarivalan alias Arivu, an Indian national.

The wife of Murugan, S. Nalini, was also sentenced to death but it was later commuted to life imprisonment at the intervention of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv's widow.

Barring one, all the rest of the 26 Indian and Sri Lankan accused are no more in prison, having already spent several years behind bars.

While Santhan and Arivu are lodged in the Salem Central Jail, Murugan is in the Vellore Central Jail along with Nalini.

It was on May 21, 1991 that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) used a woman suicide bomber Dhanu to blow up Gandhi at an election rally in a small town near Chennai called Sriperumbudur. Dhanu died in the blast.

The mercy petitions of Santhan, Murugan and Perarivalan have been pending with the Indian president for the last five years.

"The government is yet to take a decision on their petitions," said a senior official.

In its 1999 verdict, the Supreme Court announced that the four would pay with their lives for the assassination, while 19 of the 26 sentenced to death by the trial court were acquitted.

It was Sonia Gandhi's personal intervention that led to Nalini's sentence getting commuted in 2000. At a meeting with then president K.R. Narayanan, Sonia Gandhi conveyed her family's "feelings" that the life of Nalini should be spared because she was the mother of a child.

Nalini, who was present at the election rally and watched Rajiv Gandhi getting blown up, married Murugan, a hardcore *LTTE* activist, after the assassination.

In the country's most exhaustive investigation and trial, a total of 41 people were chargesheeted by SIT for Gandhi's killing.

Three Gandhi assassination accused still on death row

Of these, three - <u>LTTE</u> chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, his intelligence chief Pottu Amman and <u>LTTE</u> <u>women</u>'s wing leader Akhila - were declared proclaimed offenders. Akhila later died.

Twelve others, including 11 Sri Lankans, committed suicide. The trial was conducted against the remaining 26 Indians and Sri Lankans.

Two accused, Ravichandran and Robert Pyas, were also sentenced to life imprisonment but subsequently spared the charges of murder conspiracy. The years they spent in jail were deemed punishment for the other offences they were charged with.

The assassination trial started in January 1994 and was held in camera. Of the 1,044 witnesses cited, 288 were examined. The arguments concluded in November 1997.

On Jan 28, 1998, special judge V. Navaneetham sentenced all the 26 accused to death.

It was held that all of them conspired to assassinate Gandhi on the orders of <u>LTTE</u>, which feared that the Congress leader might return to power and again send Indian troops to Sri Lankan to disarm the Tigers.

As prime minister, Gandhi signed a peace pact with then Sri Lankan president J.R. Jayewardene in 1989 to end Tamil separatism. But Indian troops deployed in the island's northeast ended up fighting the <u>LTTE</u>, returning home in March 1990. The <u>LTTE</u> was outlawed in India as a terrorist group in 1992.

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Load-Date: May 21, 2005



Suicide bombing kills senior Sri Lankan officer as army elite is targeted

Financial Times (London, England)

June 27, 2006 Tuesday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: ASIA-PACIFIC; Pg. 3

Length: 318 words

Byline: By KHOZEM MERCHANT

Dateline: MUMBAI

Body

Sri Lanka's third-highest-ranking military official was killed in a suicide bombing yesterday, in further targeting of the country's army elite by suspected Tamil Tiger rebels.

In April, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber severely injured SriLanka's army commander, Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, in an attack near the army central command in Colombo.

In yesterday's assault, near Colombo, Major General Parami Kulatunga and three others, including two soldiers, died when theirarmy convoy vehicle was rammed by a motor-cycle ridden by the suicide bomber.

Sri Lanka officials pinned the blame on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and said they were considering their retaliation. The <u>LTTE</u> denied any involvement.

Analysts said the attack on a senior security officialnear Colombo - in effect bringing the war to the capital - was another way of applying pressure on a government the <u>LTTE</u> believes is moving too slowly on advancing the peace process. Sri Lanka's government has taken a progressively more severe stand against the <u>LTTE</u>, while at the same time reaffirming its support for a ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 that has all but collapsed in the past few months as the rebel group and government forces have traded deadly blows.

Earlier this month, Sri Lanka's military forces attacked rebel targets in the north-east after a bus was blown up in a grenade attack that killed morethan 60, including many children.

The step-up in military confrontation comes after the European Union said last month that the <u>LTTE</u> was a terrorist organisation, achieving diplomatic isolation of the group after similer moves by the US and India.

As a consequence, the <u>LTTE</u>, which in the past year has resurrected its military offensive to pursue its goal of a separate homeland in the north and north-east of the island, demandedthe removal of EU nationals from an independent peace-keeping organisation mission based in Colombo.

Load-Date: June 26, 2006



3rd Ld Explosion kills 16, injures 20 in Colombo

Xinhua General News Service

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 1:18 AM EST

Copyright 2007 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 264 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least 16 people were killed and 20 more were injured as a huge explosion hit Sri Lankan capital Colombo late Wednesday afternoon, defense officials said.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said the explosion occurred in a business district in Colombo's southeastern suburb of Nugegoda around 5:50 p.m. (1220 GMT), and the explosion also caused fire in the area.

Defense officials said at least 16 people have been confirmed dead in the explosion and 20 others were injured and rushed to local hospitals.

The government has blamed the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for the explosion.

Early on Wednesday, a <u>female</u> Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed one people and injured two others after exploding herself near the office of Douglas Devananda, a pro-government Tamil politician and the minister of Social Services and Welfare.

Fortunately, Devananda himself escaped the suicide attack.

The two attacks came just one day after the **LTTE** supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran delivered his annual policy speech.

"Thousands of our fighters are standing ready to fight with determination for our just goal of freedom and we will overcome the hurdles before us and liberate our motherland," the *LTTE* leader said on Tuesday.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the *LTTE* has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new wave of violence since the end of 2005.

Load-Date: November 30, 2007



Sri Lankan govt condemns killing of Tamil party member

Xinhua General News Service
August 17, 2004 Tuesday 3:01 AM EST

Copyright 2004 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 267 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The Sri Lankan government has strongly condemned the killing of a Tamil party member by Tamil Tiger rebels, said a government statement available on Tuesday.

Kandasamy Iyer Balanadarajah, media Secretary of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) was shot dead in Colombo on Monday in a spate of killings perpetrated by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) rebels.

"The GOSL (government oF Sri Lanka) is concerned that these incidents are being perpetrated with disregard to the provisions of the ceasefire agreement, and contrary to the spirit of building an environment for peace," the statement said.

"The government will assert its authority firmly and fairly in order to uphold law and order, maintain the ceasefire agreement and observe the civilized standards our people deserve and expect, " it stated.

The <u>LTTE</u> rebels recently killed several members of the EPDP, a former armed separatist group which later joined the country's political mainstream.

EPDP leader Douglas Devananda, who is also a government minister, survived an assassination attempt by a <u>female</u> suicide squad member of the <u>LTTE</u> in early July.

The latest killing took place on Monday when European Union officials met in the northern rebel stronghold of Kilinochchi town with the *LTTE* political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan.

"The killing of political opponents is a breach of fundamental human rights," said an EU statement issued after the meeting.

"There is no excuse for such violence, which can never resolve the internal differences in Sri Lanka," the statement noted.

Load-Date: August 18, 2004



Sri Lanka seeks foreign pressure on Tigers

Agence France Presse -- English May 9, 2006 Tuesday 1:27 PM GMT

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Length: 275 words

Dateline: NEW DELHI, May 9 2006

Body

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera told reporters in India Tuesday that foreign help is needed to pressure Tamil Tiger rebels back to peace talks to save a fragile ceasefire.

Samaraweera, in New Delhi on a two-day visit to brief the Indian government on the faltering peace efforts, said the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) must bear full responsibility if the four-year peace process collapsed.

"The international community must bring pressure on the <u>LTTE</u> by using all powers within them to get them back to the table," Samaraweera told a press conference. "Something that hurts them the most is curtailing their fund raising activities," he added.

On Tuesday, the <u>LTTE</u> met Japanese special peace envoy Yasushi Akashi in rebel-held territory and appealed to him to persuade the Sri Lankan government to halt spiraling violence in the country.

The government has similarly called on the **LTTE** to halt violence that threatens a ceasefire that has been in place since 2002.

The two sides last held talks on salvaging the ceasefire in Switzerland in February. The two parties agreed to meet again on April 19, but the Tigers declined citing continued violence by alleged government-backed paramilitaries.

Despite the truce, more than 200 people, mostly civilians, have died over the past month in tit-for-tat attacks by government and rebel forces.

In the most serious attack since the truce began, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber killed 10 and wounded 30 others including army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka at army headquarters in Colombo on April 25.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the separatist conflict since 1972.

Load-Date: May 10, 2006



Bravo to pro-war monks

Ottawa Citizen

August 20, 2006 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10; David Warren

Length: 724 words

Byline: David Warren, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

My spirits were lifted this week, when a bunch of "pro-war Buddhist monks" (so described by the news agency) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, attacked a rostrum full of Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist clerical peaceniks.

The peaceniks were promoting various acts of appeasement toward the psychopaths in Sri Lanka's northern jungles who are called the *Tamil Tigers*.

But mostly, they were like peaceniks anywhere -- on the lookout for a photo opportunity.

I must admit, there is a certain thrill in sanctimony, even when, as in the West, it involves taking no risks -- and the harm you do, by undermining people who are risking their lives, can only come to others. That does not make it less evil, however. In my experience, the sanctimonious pose is the invariable indicator of a fraud, before God and his fellow man. You find that the moment his ideals are put to the test.

Whereas truly righteous indignation is not a pose, and will endure testing.

Naturally, the peaceniks fought back when attacked. Their prescriptions are only meant for others. It was a good scuffle, according to Reuters journalists, although "there were no reports of any serious injuries."

Hundreds of people have been slaughtered this year alone by the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, who use -- who pioneered -- many of the techniques that fanatical Muslim terrorists now use around the world. They are the original "suicide bombers," according to one account, and pioneering recruiters of <u>women</u> and children. Their fanaticism is more ethnic than Hindu -- but anti-Muslim as well as anti-Sinhalese. Arguing with them is as pointless an activity as this planet offers. They are armed, organized, determined, ruthless and the thing to do is kill them. Capturing them is only a holding action, because they will return to slaughter when released.

As usual, the western media tend to romanticize the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, and give easily distracted attention to any "war crimes" that could possibly be charged against the legitimate forces of the government of Sri Lanka. What can I say? It is hard to account for the behaviour of some western journalists without a theory of demonic possession. I'm sure the pro-war Buddhist monks would agree.

All I can say is, "Bravo, pro-war Buddhist monks!" You do honour to your saffron robes.

Bravo to pro-war monks

Am I a warmonger, as many of my correspondents, and some journalistic colleagues, suggest? I am glad they are able to get something right. When there is a war to fight, and no alternative to fighting it, you bet I am a warmonger. The sooner we have destroyed the enemy, the sooner we can get back to sucking our thumbs.

The rostrum I should particularly like to attack -- ideally with the help of a few battle-seasoned Buddhist monks -- is that upon which the West's diplomatic community arranged itself last week, after brokering a Lebanese ceasefire that leaves Hezbollah neither disarmed nor accommodating; waiting to have its missiles replenished by its masters in Tehran and Damascus. I felt particularly ill while reading Condoleezza Rice's defence of the infamy in Wednesday's Washington Post.

It contained the ridiculous lie that Hezbollah had earned "the blame of the world for causing the war." (Lying is another indication of poor character.)

The war wasn't over. Israel hadn't won it yet. They had no business signing a ceasefire agreement before Hezbollah had been destroyed. The rest of the world had no business making them sign a ceasefire that the whole Muslim world is reading as a "hudna" (a deceitful peace, allowing one's own side to regroup). I can only hope a few lessons are learned, and that the next round in this war will end differently.

In the meantime, do not ask peace from Israel. The sponsors of Hezbollah and Hamas, chiefly Iran and Syria, have been perfectly candid about their intentions: "Ceasefire now, annihilation later."

I am a Catholic. We have our own history with the Jews. But forget that: no time to discuss it. If the reader of this column is a Jew, I want him to go to the mirror right away, and say 1,000 times, "never again!" And I want every Catholic, every Christian, every decent person, Muslims included, to say the same on Israel's behalf.

This is a war -- a real, honest-to-goodness war between irreconcilables -- and it ends not in ceasefire, but in victory or defeat.

David Warren's column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Saturday.

Load-Date: August 20, 2006



US urges Sri Lankan Tamil rebels to renounce terrorism

Xinhua General News Service

September 9, 2004 Thursday 1:15 AM EST

Copyright 2004 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 244 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A visiting US official has urged Sri Lankan Tamil Tiger rebels to renounce terrorism in word and in deed and resume peace talks with the government as soon as possible, the official Daily News said on Thursday.

US Ambassador at Large and State Department Coordinator for Counter-terrorism J. Cofer Black, who is on a visit to Sri Lanka, said here Wednesday that the US government strongly supports the current peace process in Sri Lanka and salutes the persisting efforts of the Norwegian government in facilitating this process.

He called upon the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) rebels to swiftly resume the peace talks and seriously move toward an agreement that is acceptable to both sides.

He also expressed his concern over the increasing violence recently in the country including the July 7 suicide attack by the <u>LTTE</u> rebels in capital Colombo in which four police personnel were killed when a <u>female</u> suicide bomber blew herself up at a police station.

He said that the <u>LTTE</u> rebels need to renounce terrorism in word and deed and enter into good faith negotiation with the government, otherwise they would remain in the US list of foreign terrorist organizations.

The <u>LTTE</u> rebels and the government entered into Norwegian- brokered ceasefire in February 2002 and started direct peace talks seven months later.

The rebels walked out of the talks in April last year after six rounds of negotiations.

Load-Date: September 10, 2004



3rd Ld Explosion kills 17, injures 39 in Colombo

Xinhua General News Service

November 29, 2007 Thursday 1:19 AM EST

Copyright 2007 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 307 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least 17 people were killed and 39 more were injured as a huge explosion hit Sri Lankan capital Colombo late Wednesday afternoon, defense officials said.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said the explosion occurred in a business district in Colombo's southeastern suburb of Nugegoda around 5:50 p.m. (1220 GMT), and the explosion also caused fire in the area.

Defense officials said at least 17 people have been confirmed dead in the explosion and 37 others were injured and rushed to local hospitals, adding that four of the injured were in critical condition.

The government has blamed the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for the explosion.

Initial investigations show that the bomb was inside an unattended parcel which was found at the counter of a shopping complex.

Some vehicles were caught fire following the explosion.

Early on Wednesday, a <u>female</u> Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed one people and injured two others after exploding herself near the office of Douglas Devananda, a pro-government Tamil politician and the minister of Social Services and Welfare.

Fortunately, Devananda himself escaped the suicide attack.

The two attacks came just one day after the <u>LTTE</u> supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran delivered his annual policy speech.

"Thousands of our fighters are standing ready to fight with determination for our just goal of freedom and we will overcome the hurdles before us and liberate our motherland," the <u>LTTE</u> leader said on Tuesday.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the *LTTE* has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new wave of violence since the end of 2005.

Load-Date: November 30, 2007



Relief work goes smoothly in areas of Sri Lanka controlled by Tamil rebels

The Canadian Press (CP)
January 2, 2005 Sunday

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Section: FOREIGN GENERAL NEWS

Length: 925 words

Byline: BY ARTHUR MAX

Body

KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka (AP) _ In times of crisis, envy the authoritarians.

Veterans of a long guerrilla war, the Tamil rebels who control northern Sri Lanka moved with military precision to help victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami.

The speed and efficiency of the massive humanitarian operation showed an administrative capability that underscored the rebels' demand for Tamil independence from the Sinhalese-dominated southern part of Sri Lanka.

Within minutes of the disaster, soldiers of the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam, or <u>LTTE</u>, were evacuating survivors and pulling bodies from the still-roiling water, villagers and aid workers said.

AP

In a well-practised drill, squads set up roadblocks to control panic and prevent looting. Others requisitioned civilian vehicles to move the injured to hospitals. Many donated blood.

Teams with digital cameras and laptops moved into disaster zones to photograph the faces of the dead for later identification, then swiftly cremated or buried the corpses.

Sathinathan Senthan, the village mayor of Kallappadu, said boats of the elite Sea Tigers, the <u>LTTE</u> naval arm which had a base at the neighbouring town of Mullaitivu, arrived even as the tsunami floodwaters were receding. Other sailors arrived on bicycles, he said.

"Until now, they are still there," Senthan told a reporter in the refugee camp, where he was trying to hold the grieving survivors together. Half his village of 2,200 people was killed, he said, and not a building remained standing.

By the end of the first day, the first refugee centres were set up. <u>Women</u> in the Tigers' camouflage uniforms began registering the survivors and recording the relief items they received _ ensuring no one got more than he should.

"They applied a very efficient military machine. All they had to do was give the command," said Reuben Thurairajah, a British doctor who watched in amazement.

Meanwhile, in the south, the government was struggling to cope while politicians argued over who was in charge. From the field came isolated reports of corruption and hijacking of relief trucks.

Relief work goes smoothly in areas of Sri Lanka controlled by Tamil rebels

Thurairajah, a volunteer public health officer who was in the area several weeks before the tsunami, said the Tigers were scrupulous in ensuring equal distribution of aid.

"If they have 100 bars of soap and 800 people, they'd rather not give it to anyone," he said.

The tsunami brought an equal measure of tragedy to the Tamils of the north and the Sinhalese of the south. Nearly 30,000 people have been killed, a crushing toll for a country of only 19 million.

Yet that is less than half the number of casualties from this island's 20-year ethnic-based civil war.

Tamil nationalists have been fighting for independence for the north and east, where the minority group is concentrated, since 1983.

A shaky ceasefire has held since February 2002, but peace talks broke down more than a year ago over the Tiger's demand to have a recognized self-governing authority while a final settlement is negotiated.

"Both sides are acutely aware that the way the relief efforts are being handled can affect their political status," said Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu, head of the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The Tigers are likely to showcase their smooth handling of aid as they argue for autonomous authority. Sri Lankan hardliners counter that only a central government with authority over the whole country can administer international donations.

The <u>LTTE</u> began as a ragged guerrilla force of 26 fighters in the early 1970s under Veluppelai Prabhakaran, a civil servant's son from a coastal village near the historic Tamil city of Jaffna.

Prabhakaran demanded absolute loyalty, dedication to the cause of Tamil independence, and strict adherence to a code of conduct.

The <u>LTTE</u> revived suicide as a weapon of war. In 1991, a woman detonated an explosive belt that killed former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Two years later, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa died in a suicide bomb.

Prabhakaran has never brooked dissent, and has ruthlessly eliminated rivals and rebels. He faced his biggest challenge in recent years last March when a top commander defected, and clashes still continue with the renegade group.

Both the <u>LTTE</u> and the government have signalled the tsunami could bring them closer together _ "brothers in misery," as Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse put it _ and help revive the peace process.

An exchange of conciliatory remarks and pledges to work together brought a sudden reversal in the gloomy political atmosphere.

"Before Dec. 26, we were closer to war than at any time since the ceasefire," said Saravanamuttu, speaking in Colombo. "Afterward, we are much further from war."

The hope is that joint relief efforts will break the cycle of distrust and build a level of confidence that would allow peace efforts to resume, he said.

But the co-operation in relief efforts began slowly and remains patchy, as the *LTTE* jealously guards its turf.

Relief operations in the rebel-controlled areas are guided by regional and local task forces comprising a government representative, an <u>LTTE</u> political officer, an aid official of the <u>LTTE</u>-financed Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, and a representative of an international charity group or UN body.

The system has worked surprisingly well, but with occasional glitches.

Relief work goes smoothly in areas of Sri Lanka controlled by Tamil rebels

On Sunday, the Sri Lankan army accused the <u>LTTE</u> of blocking the disbursement of aid at a government school near the Tamil capital of Jaffna, apparently because they were sidelined in the distribution. The <u>LTTE</u> spokesman could not be reached for comment.

Load-Date: January 3, 2005



<u>Tamil rebels bring military discipline to tsunami relief, underscoring their</u> demand for independence

The Associated Press
January 2, 2005, Sunday, BC cycle

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Section: International News

Length: 919 words

Byline: By ARTHUR MAX, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: KILINOCHCHI, Sri Lanka

Body

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Tamil rebels bring military discipline to tsunami relief, underscoring their demand for independence

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The <u>LTTE</u> revived suicide as a weapon of war. In 1991, a woman detonated an explosive belt that killed former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Two years later, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa died in a suicide bomb.

Prabhakaran has never brooked dissent, and has ruthlessly eliminated rivals and rebels. He faced his biggest challenge in recent years last March when a top commander defected, and clashes still continue with the renegade group.

Both the <u>LTTE</u> and the government have signaled the tsunami could bring them closer together - "brothers in misery," as Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse put it - and help revive the peace process.

An exchange of conciliatory remarks and pledges to work together brought a sudden reversal in the gloomy political atmosphere.

"Before Dec. 26, we were closer to war than at any time since the cease-fire," said Saravanamuttu, speaking in Colombo. "Afterward, we are much further from war."

The hope is that joint relief efforts will break the cycle of distrust and build a level of confidence that would allow peace efforts to resume, he said.

But the cooperation in relief efforts began slowly and remains patchy, as the LTTE jealously guards its turf.

Relief operations in the rebel-controlled areas are guided by regional and local task forces comprising a government representative, an <u>LTTE</u> political officer, an aid official of the <u>LTTE</u>-financed Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, and a representative of an international charity group or U.N. body.

Tamil rebels bring military discipline to tsunami relief, underscoring their demand for independence

The system has worked surprisingly well, but with occasional glitches.

On Sunday, the Sri Lankan army accused the <u>LTTE</u> of blocking the disbursement of aid at a government school near the Tamil capital of Jaffna, apparently because they were sidelined in the distribution. The <u>LTTE</u> spokesman could not be reached for comment.

Graphic

AP Photos EKW102-3, 105, 108

Load-Date: January 3, 2005



What drives suicide bombers?: Authors reveal chilling observations about the war on terror

Ottawa Citizen
September 11, 2005 Sunday
Final Edition

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Section: THE CITIEN'S WEEKLZ: READING; Pg. C8

Length: 731 words

Byline: Robert Sibley, The Ottawa Citizen

Body

Suicide terrorism is the topic of these two books, too. And while neither follow Barry Cooper into the "spiritual" dimension of Islamist terror, they offer a similar lesson: Which side wins depends on which side understands the other best, and has the will to prevail.

In Dying to Win, Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, argues that terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda are not primarily motivated by religious ideology. Instead, Pape claims that terrorists have largely secular goals: "Suicide campaigns are primarily nationalistic, not religious, nor are they particularly Islamic."

Pape analyses more than 300 suicide attacks -- including those of the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> and the Palestinians -- that occurred worldwide between 1980 and 2003 to make his case that "the root cause of suicide terrorism" is the presence of foreign soldiers. The terrorists' main goal is "to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland."

This conclusion may fit the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> terror campaign in Sir Lanka and the Palestinian terror attacks on Israel, but Pape's claim that nationalism is behind al-Qaeda's campaign is arguable. From the start, al-Qaeda has been engaged in a global jihad and its zones of conflict have been places such as Afghanistan, Kashmir, Chechnya and Indonesia. For the most part al-Qaeda has stayed out of the Middle East, at least until recently. So, if the conflicts in Iraq, Palestine and Afghanistan are fomenting terrorism, why are so few Iraqis, Afghans and Palestinians among the suicide bombers striking at western cities? Most suicide bombers have come from the Arabian states, Egypt, North Africa and Pakistan.

And now, as the London attacks suggest, we are seeing homegrown terrorists. Pape would be hard-pressed to claim Arab nationalism as a motive for the four British-born men who blew themselves up on the London Underground. They weren't Iraqi or Palestinian. They were of Jamaican and Pakistani origin. Did they care about American troops in Saudi Arabia? If not, what inspired them to join the Islamist cause?

Mia Bloom, a political scientist at the University of Cincinnati, comes closer to the terrorists' motives in Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror. In offering a history of terrorism back to ancient times, she acknowledges that until recently suicide terrorists were more often motivated by political and social concerns. But religious terrorism is growing rapidly, she argues. In fact, "nearly half of the known, active international terror groups are religiously motivated."

What drives suicide bombers?: Authors reveal chilling observations about the war on terror

And this makes them even more dangerous than the politically-motivated terrorist. "Because religious terrorists are concerned not with rallying a constituency of fellow nationalists or ideologues but with pursuing their own vision of the divine will, they lack one of the major constraints that historically has limited the scope of terror attacks," says Bloom. "The most extreme religious terrorists can sanction almost limitless violence against a virtually open-ended category of targets; that is, anyone who is not a member of the terrorists' religion or religious sect."

Perhaps the most interesting -- and frightening -- feature of Bloom's study is her examination of the increasing use of <u>women</u> in suicide attacks. The Kurdish Workers' Party regularly used <u>women</u> pretending to be pregnant to carry explosives past Turkish soldiers.

In Sri Lanka, <u>women</u> constituted a third of the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>' suicide bombers. The Black Widows in Chechnya are much feared for their attacks against Russians.

Despite their differences, Bloom and Pape share one observation: terrorism is often an effective tactic against western democracies because citizens of democracies, used to living in relative peace and order, cannot take too much pain and violence. They offer this chilling notion: Despite the politicians' rhetoric about liberal democracy prevailing against religious tyranny, the fact is that democracies frequently make concessions in hopes of avoiding the pain of terror. In other words, winning this war is a matter of knowledge and will, and who can absorb the pain.

THE BOOK

Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism

By Robert A. Pape

Random House

352 pages, \$35.95

THE BOOK

Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror

By Mia Bloom

Columbia

University Press 280 pages, \$31.80

Load-Date: September 11, 2005



JVP wants Norway out as mediator

Hindustan Times

March 8, 2006 Wednesday 8:12 AM EST

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Length: 363 words

Byline: Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, March 8 -- THE JANATHA Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), an ally of the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa, has demanded the ouster of Norway from the role of facilitator of the peace process in the island. Making a special statement in parliament on Tuesday, the JVP group leader, Wimal Weerawansa, said that Norway was patently biased towards the <u>LTTE</u>, and was trying to get the international community to accept the **LTTE**'s concept of an independent "Tamil Eelam".

Demanding Norway's ouster from the role of peace facilitator, Weerawansa said the government should take the decision, "however difficult it might be". "According to the mandate given to President Mahinda Rajapaksa, there is no room for us to allow Norway to liquidate our motherland. Though we are late, we should make a decision right now, however difficult it is," he said. Quoting a news report, Weerawansa said that Norway had given the <u>LTTE</u> delegation a red carpet welcome when it came to Oslo after the Geneva talks.

The Sri Lankan government and the <u>LTTE</u> held talks on the ceasefire agreement in Geneva on February 22 and 23, with Norway acting as the facilitator. On the alleged red carpet welcome in Oslo, Weerawansa said: "This is a dangerous moment. Norway is jeopardising the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. There is no basis for Norway to give the <u>LTTE</u> delegation the status of state leaders."

"This is like a cricket umpire hosting a tea party for only one of the teams during the tea break," Weerawansa said. Sri Lankan <u>women</u> are asking for 30 per cent reservation in all elected bodies, including parliament. This follows a finding that there are too few <u>women</u> in these bodies, though <u>women</u> make up 50 per cent of the island's population of 20 million, and more than 50 per cent of the electorate. In the 1994 parliament, <u>women</u> were only 4.8 per cent <u>women</u> in the house of 225 members. In the National List of 29 MPs, there was only one woman. In the parliament of 2000, the percentage of <u>women</u> declined to four per cent. In 2001 it was 4.5 per cent. The 2004 elections saw another marginal increase, to 4.8 per cent.

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Load-Date: March 10, 2006



Sri Lanka's reclusive top Tamil Tiger leader to make annual speech

Associated Press International

November 27, 2006 Monday 9:59 AM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 442 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Sri Lanka's navy on Monday destroyed a boat suspected of ferrying arms for separatist <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, the military said, as the rebels' reclusive leader prepared for an annual speech that may determine the course this war-torn tropical island will take.

The navy confronted a suspicious fishing boat off the west coast, and after taking fire, retaliated, an official at the government's Media Center for National Security said.

The boat caught fire and exploded, indicating it was carrying ammunition and explosives, the official said, adding that all six people on board were believed killed.

The latest clash came as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam who have waged a more than two-decade battle for an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's 3.2 million Tamil minority prepared to remember their fallen fighters to mark the end of "Hero's Week."

Their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran's, speech comes amid an escalation of warfare this year that has killed more than 3,500 people and left a 2002 cease-fire in tatters.

It will be closely watched by Sri Lankan and international observers to try to determine the rebels' next move.

Many believe that the extent of the bloodshed this year may lead Prabhakaran to use his speech to officially withdraw from the Norway brokered cease-fire.

Last year, he hinted that he was ready to enter a negotiated peace process, and gave President Mahinda Rajapakse a one-year deadline to resolve Tamil demands for acceptable self rule in the country's north and east.

But, the last year has seen a sharp escalation in open conflict, especially after the attempted assassination of a top army commander by a rebel suicide bomber in April, and subsequent air strikes on rebel positions.

More than 3,500 fighters and civilians have died in aerial bombings, assassinations, bomb attacks and daily skirmishes, according to government figures. Government troops have also captured some territory held by the rebels.

The fighting also has created some 200,000 refugees.

Sri Lanka 's reclusive top Tamil Tiger leader to make annual speech

A pro-rebel Web site, TamilNet, said Monday that increasing violence has left 818 rebels dead this year, including 250 *female* fighters.

The Sri Lankan Defense Ministry said 915 security forces had died this year in fighting the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>, and 2,018 rebels were killed. The ministry also said 592 civilians died during the period.

There was no way to reconcile the figures.

Growing international pressure has forced the government and rebels to remain nominally committed to the cease-fire, despite ongoing fighting which can only be described as a full-scale war.

On the Web:

Pro rebel Web site: http://www.TamilNet.com

Ministry of Defense: http://www.nationalsecurity.lk

Load-Date: November 28, 2006



Tamils threaten suicide bombing

The Times (London)
June 20, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 34

Length: 443 words

Byline: Catherine Philp

Body

THE <u>Tamil Tigers</u> threatened yesterday to unleash suicide bombers across Sri Lanka if the Government restarted all-out civil war after a four-year ceasefire.

The threat came after the worst military confrontation of recent years, in which a hundred people died during five days of fighting between government troops and rebel forces. The Government called on the Tigers yesterday to return to peace talks to avoid opening a new and bloody chapter in the conflict, which has cost about 65,000 lives in a quarter-century. But, at the same time, heavy shelling struck the Jaffna peninsula, with each side blaming the other for the conflict.

"If the Sri Lankan Government, instead of bringing an end to the war, force another brutal war on the Tamils, then the effects of that war will be felt throughout the island," S. P. Thamilselvan, the political leader of the rebels, told Reuters. Asked whether the infamous Black Tigers, the rebels' suicide bombing squad, would be used, he said: "The Tamils will not hesitate to use any strategy to defend themselves."

The Tigers have used the strategy to devastating effect in their struggle to carve out their own homeland in the north and east of the island. Even during the ceasefire they never entirely abandoned the tactic. They sent a young *female* bomber to attack a military base in Colombo in 2004, raising the first serious fears of a return to war.

Those fears became all the more real in April this year, when a Black Tiger bomber tried to assassinate the army's chief of staff, injuring him and killing several other soldiers and prompting retaliatory air strikes from the Government.

Many saw this as an attempt by the Tigers to provoke the Government into war, and several more such provocations have taken place. Last month the Tigers' naval division, the Sea Tigers, attacked a government fleet near Jaffna. International monitors, on board the navy vessels, described the attack as a gross ceasefire violation and abandoned their monitoring programme.

Last week 64 people were killed in a mine attack on a civilian bus, blamed on the Tigers, and more than 30 died in the battles over Jaffna.

Last November President Rajapakse won elections on a promise not to cede autonomy to Tamils and, since then, rebel activity has intensified.

Many observers believe that the violence is an attempt by the Tigers to go into peace talks from a position of strength. Others believe that they are trying to provoke the Government into full-scale hostilities.

Tamils threaten suicide bombing

In recent weeks Canada and the EU have added the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> to their lists of proscribed groups, in what observers say is a setback for rebel fundraising and diplomacy.

Load-Date: June 20, 2006



Tamil Tiger rebels warn that new violence could mar Sri Lanka's peace

Associated Press International March 1, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 458 words

Byline: SHIMALI SENANAYAKE; Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO, Sri Lanka

Body

Tamil Tiger rebels warned Tuesday that an attack that critically injured a top Tiger <u>female</u> leader and two others could jeopardize peace efforts with Sri Lanka's government.

The attack came three weeks after the most senior rebel leader in eastern Sri Lanka was slain in the same region.

"If this trend continues it can create a very dangerous situation risking the entire peace process," said S. Pulidevan, chief of the Tigers' peace secretariat.

Pulidevan blamed the attack on the military, but police said they suspected that a renegade rebel group was responsible.

Eastern Sri Lanka has been a hotbed of factional violence among Tamils in the past year, with the Tigers accusing the Sri Lankan military of supporting their opponents - a charge the army denies. European cease-fire monitors also warn that the violence threatens Sri Lanka's fragile 2002 truce.

In the latest attacks, a <u>female</u> Tiger leader known as Kuveni and two other <u>women</u> rebels were critically wounded late Monday when two unidentified men on a motorbike opened fire in Ampara, eastern police chief Neville Wijesinghe said.

"We take the incident very seriously, it just shows how vulnerable the eastern situation is," said Helen Olafsdottir, spokeswoman for the European cease-fire monitors. "It destabilizes the cease-fire, there's no doubt about it and we are very concerned."

She said the Tigers had lodged an official complaint about the incident.

All three <u>women</u> rebels suffered severe chest and stomach wounds, said K. Murugananthen, director of the Kalmunai hospital.

The injured cadres were flown to a hospital in capital, Colombo, later Tuesday.

Hours after the shooting, a man believed to have belonged to a Tamil guerrilla group that opposed the Tigers was fatally shot by unidentified gunmen in neighboring Batticaloa, 220 kilometers (135 miles) east of Colombo, Wijesinghe said. That guerrilla group disarmed after the Norwegian-mediated cease-fire.

Tamil Tiger rebels warn that new violence could mar Sri Lanka 's peace

The motives for the slayings were unclear.

Eastern Sri Lanka has been embroiled in violence since a 6,000-member group broke away from the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> last April. The mainstream Tigers largely crushed the renegade group, but its remaining members are believed to have gone underground, continuing attacks in which scores have died.

Pulidevan said that after Monday's attack one of the two assailants was seen entering a nearby security forces camp.

"This clearly shows the security forces were involved," Pulidevan said.

But military spokesman Brig. Daya Ratnayake said security forces "had no involvement whatsoever in the incident."

The <u>Tamil Tigers</u> began fighting in 1983 to create a separate state for minority Tamils, but now are demanding extensive autonomy instead. Nearly 65,000 people were killed before the cease-fire.

Load-Date: March 2, 2005



Timeline of the recent upsurge in violence in Sri Lanka

Associated Press International

June 15, 2006 Thursday 2:50 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 455 words

Body

1975: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam formed, demand separate state for minority Tamils in island's north and east.

1983: Civil war begins, sparked by anti-Tamil riots in Colombo many believe were organized by Sinhalese-dominated government.

1991: <u>Female</u> Tamil Tiger suicide bomber assassinates India's former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, at an election campaign rally in southern India, apparently in revenge for sending Indian peacekeeping troops who ended up fighting the rebels.

1993: Tamil Tiger suicide bomber kills President Ranasinghe Premadasa at a May Day parade after his government's failed peace efforts.

1999: Tamil Tiger suicide bomber attempts to kill President Chandrika Kumaratunga at an election meeting. Kumaratunga survives but loses an eye.

Feb. 2002: Sri Lankan government signs cease-fire agreement with <u>Tamil Tigers</u> ending 19 years of civil war, which left more than 65,000 dead.

Dec. 26, 2004: The Indian Ocean tsunami kills more than 35,000 Sri Lankans and leaves tens of thousands homeless.

Early 2005: Hopes kindled that the tsunami and post-disaster reconstruction efforts could bridge the island's ethnic divide and bring war to a complete end.

June 2005: Relations between government and Tiger rebels deteriorate over issue of sharing international tsunami aid.

Aug. 2005: Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil who opposed a separate state for the minority, is assassinated by snipers in killing blamed on the Tigers.

Dec. 2005: Tiger rebels launch first major attack since truce, killing at least 12 Sri Lankan navy sailors. Series of attacks followed.

Feb. 22, 2006: Government and rebel officials meet in Geneva, Switzerland, for peace talks and agree to deescalate violence.

Timeline of the recent upsurge in violence in Sri Lanka

April 19, 2006: Second round of peace talks postponed as rebels and government argue over transport and security. New date fixed for April 24-25, but talks not held.

April 25, 2006: Suicide bombing blamed on <u>Tamil Tigers</u> targets government's top military commander, killing 8. Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka hurt along with 26 others. The army responds by attacking rebel bases.

May 11, 2006: Rebel suicide boats, targeting a troop transport ship, ram and sink a navy patrol craft, killing at least 17 sailors. During the naval battle 5 Tiger ships are destroyed, killing 50 rebels. The government responds with airstrikes on Tiger positions.

June 8, 2006: Talks in Norway aimed at reviving the peace collapse after Tigers refuse face-to-face meetings with Sri Lankan government representatives.

June 15, 2006: A land mine blast under a bus kills 62 and wounds 78 in the deadliest single act of violence since the cease-fire was signed. The government blames the rebels and launches airstrikes. The Tigers deny involvement.

Load-Date: June 16, 2006



Refugees facing bleak future as Tigers hit back

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

May 2, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 13

Length: 592 words

Byline: Rahul Bedi in Sampur

Body

FRESH fighting erupted between Tamil Tiger rebels and government forces yesterday as refugees feared that allout war in Sri Lanka could prevent them from returning home.

Rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) fired artillery at two army positions in the eastern Trincomalee district and the soldiers retaliated, Brig Prasad Samarasinghe, a military spokesman, said. No casualties were reported.

Rebels earlier overran three camps operated by a breakaway faction in the village of Welikanda, in the eastern district of Batticaloa, killing 15 people, Pakkiyaraja Thayamohan, the *LTTE*'s political head in Batticaloa, said.

The clashes increased fears that the country was rapidly returning to civil war after four years of fragile peace. Diplomats strove to bring the opposing sides back to the negotiating table.

More than 200 soldiers, rebels and civilians have been killed in low-level fighting since November.

Since last Tuesday, when a suicide attack wounded the top army commander and killed 11 other people in the capital Colombo, relations between the government and the <u>LTTE</u> have sharply deteriorated and the country has descended into the worst violence since 2002.

Up to 40,000 civilians have had to flee their homes. In Sampur, in the north-east, some survivors of last week's military bombings on rebel-held territory wandered listlessly around makeshift camps, uncertain about the future. In debilitating heat, many more of the 15,000 refugees, mostly <u>women</u> and children from the bombed fishing village of Sampur, 180 miles north-east of Colombo, lay under trees or bullock carts.

Stragglers from adjoining villages continued to swell their number, fearing the resumption of government shelling.

"We expect further retaliation from the Sri Lankan military," said Indrani, 28, a mother of four who fled Sampur on Tuesday immediately after the first bombing raids and artillery fire in which 12 people were killed.

Krishna Pillay, 38, a farmer, said that shells shattered the school and flattened 15 houses. Fresh-faced Tamil Tiger rebels in fatigues and armed with assault rifles almost larger than themselves patrolled the eerily quiet streets.

Sampur is one of many territories across northern and eastern Sri Lanka controlled by the LTTE.

Refugees facing bleak future as Tigers hit back

The rebels run schools, collect taxes, dispense justice and even run a bank. Although the government has no influence in these regions, it continues to provide the people with money and food.

"We all want to live in peace but the government is not serious about making it happen," said T Suthershan, a 22-year-old rebel limping from bullet wounds.

Nearly 70,000 people have died in the civil war that erupted in 1983 after Tamils, who make up 12 per cent of the island's 19 million population, took up arms against the majority Sinhala community, demanding equal rights.

"We will retaliate," the <u>LTTE</u>'s district political chief, S Elilan, said as he sat, ringed by young rebels, under a photograph of his leader, Vellupillai Prabhakaran.

Rohita Bogollagama, the minister for investment and one of four government peace negotiators in Geneva, said: "A healing period is necessary for both sides in this conflict after the latest round of violence."

The <u>LTTE</u> is acknowledged as one of the world's most ruthless guerrilla groups and has successfully taken on the Sri Lankan and Indian armies.

The government estimates that it has between 8,000 and 10,000 fighters. Intelligence officials say it has made use of the four-year ceasefire to re-group, re-arm and re-deploy in preparation for renewed fighting.

Load-Date: May 2, 2006



Sri Lanka rebels seek Japan's help to prevent 'doom'

Agence France Presse -- English
May 9, 2006 Tuesday 11:42 AM GMT

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Length: 568 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, May 9 2006

Body

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels Tuesday sought foreign help to halt alleged military attacks against them and warned that the island could face "doom" if they decided to retaliate.

The rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>) appealed to Japanese envoy Yasushi Akashi to persuade the Sri Lankan government to halt the spiralling violence. The government has similarly called on the <u>LTTE</u> to halt violence that threatens a ceasefire in place since 2002.

The <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan said in a statement that the international community could bring an end to "this warlike attack by the Sri Lanka armed forces and create a more conducive environment for peace talks."

"Thamilselvan added that he had informed the Japanese envoy that the Tamil people by these attacks and repression of their normal life will be forced to take a decision that will bring doom to Sri Lanka," the <u>LTTE</u> statement said.

The statement, issued after closed-door talks with Akashi in rebel-held northern territory, said the international community must understand the background to the ongoing fighting, which the **LTTE** blames on government support for a breakaway rebel faction.

Even as the meeting took place in the rebel-held town of Kilinochchi, 330 kilometres (206 miles) north of here, security forces in Jaffna, further north, found a large haul of bombs and ammunition.

Residents in Jaffna also staged a one-day strike to protest against the killing last week of seven Tamil men, police said.

The military claimed the seven were Tamil Tiger rebels shot dead by security forces, but the Tigers maintained they were civilians on their way to a birthday party.

Jaffna's banks and offices closed and public transport stopped running as part of the stoppage, police said.

A curfew imposed Sunday in Jaffna was lifted Monday afternoon, the military said while the main entry and exit points to northern rebel-held territory, closed on Sunday, re-opened Tuesday.

Sri Lanka rebels seek Japan 's help to prevent 'doom'

Meanwhile, parliament Tuesday extended by a further month a state of emergency which gives sweeping powers to security forces to detain suspects, officials said.

The tough laws were introduced after Tiger rebels were blamed for the August assassination of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Akashi, who helped raise 4.5 billion dollars in aid to support the island's Norwegian-backed peace process in June 2003, held talks with President Mahinda Rajapakse on Monday, officials said.

The government said in a statement it was keen to resume negotiations with the *LTTE* and end the violence.

"It is imperative that it is through negotiations that the cycle of violence, which is spiraling dangerously out of control, could be brought to a halt," it said.

It urged the Tigers to return to ceasefire talks last held in Switzerland in February. The two parties agreed to meet again on April 19, but the Tigers declined.

Despite a truce signed in 2002, more than 200 people, mostly civilians, have died over the past month in tit-for-tat attacks by government and rebel forces.

Talks on a permanent settlement have stagnated since April 2003 after six rounds of face-to-face discussions.

In the most serious attack since the truce began, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber killed 10 and wounded 30 others including army chief Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka at army headquarters in Colombo on April 25.

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the separatist conflict since 1972.

Load-Date: May 10, 2006



ROUNDUP: At least 17 dead, over 43 injured in two blasts in Colombo

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 2:27 PM EST

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Section: POLITICS Length: 549 words Dateline: Colombo

Body

DPA POLITICS SriLanka Conflicts ROUNDUP: At least 17 dead, over 43 injured in two blasts in Colombo Releads with second blast Colombo At least 17 people were killed and 43 injured in

two blasts in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo Wednesday.

Sixteen people were killed and over 40 injured when a powerful blast rocked Nuegoda town, 10 kilometres south-east of the Sri Lankan Colombo as workers made their way home, police and hospital sources said.

The bomb had been wrapped in a parcel and was handed over a clothes shop counter and detonated when a security guard tried to check it, a military spokesman brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

The injured have been taken to nearby hospitals.

The blast came just hours after a suicide bomber blew herself up near a minister's office in Colombo, killing a member of staff and injuring at least three people, a police official said.

The bomber had tried to enter the minister's office in Narahenpita, on the outskirts of Colombo, but detonated the device while she was being checked, police said.

Social Services Minister Douglas Devananda, who heads the Eelam People's Democratic Party, was inside the office at the time but escaped injury.

The victim killed was identified as Devananda's coordinating secretary Steven Peiris.

The party has a paramilitary wing that backs security forces in operations against rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

 $(\underline{\textit{LTTE}})$, who frequently carry out suicide bombings.

The bomber involved in the first blast was disabled from polio and had posed as a teacher seeking an appointment with the minister. But Devananda's staff was reluctant to allow her inside because she had

ROUNDUP: At least 17 dead, over 43 injured in two blasts in Colombo

no prior appointment. She detonated the explosives when officials began questioning her.

Police investigators said they believed the explosives were hidden in her bra. The woman had produced an identity card giving her name a Saruwanan Sujantha of the northern town of Anandapuliyankulam.

At least 10 people were arrested for questioning soon after the blast around the office.

The military blamed the LTTE for the attempted suicide attack

"Initial investigations into the incident show that <u>LTTE</u> had set the explosives around the woman's breast, deviating from their usual tactic of placing explosives in the lower abdominal areas of suicide girls," a defence ministry statement said.

According to the army, the woman had managed to pass through the first checkpoint because she was handicapped.

The ${\it LTTE}$ had made three previous attempts to kill Devananda.

He was beaten with clubs by <u>LTTE</u> prisoners when he visited a maximum-security jail, and rebels also stormed his residence in Colombo, but he escaped out the back door. The last attempt was in

2000 when another $\underline{\textit{female}}$ suicide bomber was dispatched, but she was detected and taken to a police station where she detonated herself, killing five policemen.

Wednesday's bombing came one day after <u>LTTE</u> chief Velupillai Prabhakaran vowed to fight on for a separate Tamil state as the Air Force bombed a rebel radio station in northern Sri Lanka, killing at least nine people.

The incident prompted ministers to step up their security and additional road blocks have been set up to prevent more attacks in the south, while the military concentrates on military operations in the north.

Nov 2807 1427 GMT

Notes

Releads with second blast

Load-Date: November 29, 2007



All for Tamils, nothing for Muslims?

Hindustan Times

March 13, 2006 Monday 10:31 AM EST

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Length: 2095 words

Byline: PK Balachandran Hindustan Times

Dateline: NEW DELHI, India

Body

NEW DELHI, India, March 13 -- Sri Lanka's Muslim parties and leaders are rallying round President Mahinda Rajapaksa, given his growing popularity and the weakening of the opposition United National Party (UNP).

The most significant development is that the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), which is currently with the opposition, has decided to give "issue-based" support to the government from outside. In effect, it is going to be an ally.

But the consolidation of the Muslims behind the Rajapaksa government is unlikely to result in solutions for the basic issues confronting the community.

These issues relate to the political aspirations and the security of the Muslims in the eastern districts of Sri Lanka, namely, Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

Here, the community's aspirations are thwarted and its security is threatened by the Tamil militant group, the **LTTE**.

Participation in the government in Colombo or being an ally of the government in the Sri Lankan parliament, may help solve bread and butter issues, but not the "core" issues of political aspirations and security, political observers feel.

To solve the core questions, the Muslims and the government will have to interact with the <u>LTTE</u>, either engage it in meaningful talks or fight with it militarily.

Since a military solution is becoming impossible, given the internationalisation of the Sri Lankan ethnic issue, peace negotiations have become imperative.

But the negotiations held since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) in February 2002, have been bumpy. They have moved in fits and starts.

Six rounds of talks ended in April 2003, with the **LTTE** withdrawing from the process, albeit temporarily.

Muslim issue not discussed

At any rate, the Muslim issue was not "discussed" at the talks, though the Muslim member of the government's delegation, SLMC leader Rauff Hakeem "voiced" the Muslims' concerns in his interventions.

The <u>LTTE</u> said that it was not in favour of discussing the Muslim issue at that point of time because the talks were primarily on the Tamil problem, the crux of the ethnic question in Sri Lanka.

The talks were also primarily between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the <u>LTTE</u>, the "sole representative" of the Tamil people.

The <u>LTTE</u> did grant that the Muslims had issues, but said that these would be taken up later, after the Tamil-GOSL problems were resolved.

The LTTE also refused to give in to the Muslims' demand for separate representation at the peace talks.

The militant group said that the peace talks were only between the <u>LTTE</u> and the GOSL. When issues relating to the Muslims were being taken up, the Muslims could send a delegation of their own, the <u>LTTE</u> said.

The talks were resumed in February 2006. But they were only on the "smooth implementation" of the CFA, involving the militaries of the Sri Lankan government and the *LTTE*.

At the talks in Geneva, the government delegation did have a Muslim, cabinet minister Ferial Ashraff, but like Hakeem, she too could not go beyond stating her community's problem.

The next round of talks is to take place in April, but that is also going to be on the implementation of the CFA in the light of the agreement entered into at the February meeting. The issues relating to the Muslims are not going to be taken up.

Core issues: Security

Security is the most immediate issue facing the Muslims of the Eastern districts. This issue is important because one-third of Sri Lanka's Muslim population lives in the Eastern districts.

The Muslims of the East are land owners, transporters and traders. They have been upwardly mobile since the 1980s and have outstripped the Tamil majority in many walks of life.

Unlike the Muslims of other areas, they have been a political force. The SLMC is based there.

Muslim advancement is attributed to their consistent participation in Sri Lanka's mainstream politics.

The Tamils' relative backwardness is attributed to their involvement in separatist movements led by the <u>LTTE</u> and other Tamil militant groups.

The problem of growing economic disparities between the Tamils and the Muslims has been compounded by the Muslims' resolute stand against separatism.

Such a stand had led to the Tamils feeling that the Muslims living in their midst were a security threat. The Muslims either had to be expelled or subdued by force of arms.

This attitude of the Tamil militants led to a series of actions against the Muslims from the mid-1980s onwards.

Says MIM Mohideen, of the Muslim National Peoples' Alliance: "Hundreds of Muslims, men, <u>women</u> and children, have been killed and injured in the Eastern and Northern Province of Sri Lanka by the Tamil Eelam separatists."

"Since the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord on 29th July 1987, more than 100,000 Muslims have been forced to leave their homes and billions of rupees worth of properties belonging to the Muslims have been pillaged and destroyed by the Tamils."

In October 1990, the Muslims of Jaffna were asked to leave at gun point on 48 hours notice.

Today, 65,000 of them languish in refugee camps in Puttalam, north of Colombo. The loss to the Muslim community is estimated to be SLRs 5048 million (USD 50 million).

In his monograph, Position paper on the Muslim question Mohideen says that the <u>LTTE</u> has seized 45,000 acres of paddy lands from the Muslims.

Agricultural produce, cattle and vehicles had been regularly confiscated. Muslims were abducted and ransoms sought.

On the Amparai coast, in the South East, the *LTTE* had seized boats and fishing gear belonging to the Muslims.

"The politico-military strategy of the *LTTE* has been to weaken the economic power of the Muslim community," Mohideen points out.

The <u>LTTE</u> has shown scant regard for the religion and culture of the Muslims, says the researcher-activist.

"The grenade attack on a mosque in Akkarapattu and the massacre of Muslims at congregations in mosques at Kattankudy and Eravur, as well as the cold-blooded murder of Hajj pilgrims in 1990 demonstrate the extent of intolerance shown towards the religion and culture of the Muslims," Mohideen points out.

According to him, the India-Sri Lanka Accord and the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) between 1987 and 1990, only made matters worse for the Muslims.

He accuses the IPKF of blindly supporting the Tamil militants or turning a blind eye to the anti-Muslim atrocities of the Tamil militants.

Mohideen says that the Tamil National Army (TNA) formed by the Varatharajaperumal administration, with IPKF's blessings, had killed Muslims.

Over a 100 people were killed when the TNA attacked police posts in Muslim areas in Amparai district. In Karaithivu, 45 Muslim Reserve policemen were separated and killed in cold blood.

"The Muslims have been the most vulnerable community without protection and security," Mohideen says.

While the Tamils have the <u>LTTE</u>, and the Sinhalas have the government, the Muslims have none to protect them with weapons, he points out.

"It is unfortunate that the protection of human rights and the minorities has not been built into the MOU signed by the government and the <u>LTTE</u> (in February 2002). It is essential that human rights protection and minority safeguards are built into the provisions of any Interim Administrative Arrangements," Mohideen pleads.

Political issues

Following the Tamils' demand for autonomy for the Tamil-speaking North East, the Muslims also asked for autonomy for areas in which they were dominant numerically.

The Muslims were against the merger of the North and East to form one Tamil-speaking province, because they would become a very small minority in a merged North East.

They then asked for a Pondicherry type of arrangement in which Muslim areas spread across the length and breadth of the island could be brought under one Muslim administration.

With the worsening of the security situation from mid-1980s onwards, the demand for a separate political unit of the conventional type or the Pondicherry type, gathered support among the community.

The Muslims' struggle to break free from the stranglehold of the Tamils and get separate representation, began in the early decades of the 20th century.

MC Abdul Rahman was the first Muslim representative in the pre-independence Legislative Council.

Following agitations, the Manning Reforms increased Muslim representation to three members in 1924.

But the Donoughmore reforms in 1931 did away with communal representation. This hurt the Muslims badly.

The Soulbury Reforms of 1945 gave much protection to the minorities. But the 1972 and 1978 constitutions drafted after independence, took away all the protective provisions. Both the Tamils and the Muslims suffered.

But while the Tamils began to agitate for an autonomous Tamil speaking North East and Tamil militants took to armed struggle to achieve an independent Tamil Eelam, the Muslims merely kept grumbling.

It was only in the mid 1980s that they began to make representations and that too in a constitutional manner.

On August 9, 1986 the "East Sri Lanka Muslim Front" wrote a letter to Sri Lankan President JR. Jayewardene seeking a Muslim Majority Provincial Council on the grounds that Muslims should have a share in power.

The council would comprise the Muslim majority electorates in East Sri Lanka. Muslim areas outside this province were to have separate local bodies.

The India-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987 shocked the Muslims of the North East because it united the Northern and Eastern Provinces to make a single Tamil dominated province. It gave no protection for the Muslims. Their demand for autonomy went unrecognized.

The merger had made the Muslims a small minority.

Though the Northern and Eastern Provinces have remained merged, the North Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC) did not last long.

After the elected Tamil Chief Minister A Varatharajaperumal declared independence unilaterally, the NEPC was dissolved and has not been revived till now.

This helped the Muslims. But the problems with the Tamil militants continued, increasing in intensity, in fact.

In the meanwhile, the Muslims of the East continued to participate in mainstream Sri Lankan politics with gusto.

The SLMC founded by MHM Ashraff became a major force in the struggle for power in Colombo.

Ministerial and political power under a unitary constitution enabled Ashraff and his successors to do a lot for the Muslim community in bread and butter matters.

There were political gains too. Local bodies were re-demarcated to create Muslim majority units.

But the need for a separate political council was badly felt. Ashraff pressed for a South Eastern Council.

But this left out the Muslims outside the South East. Ashraff then toyed with the idea of having a Pondicherry type of arrangement in which even non-contiguous Muslim areas could be brought under one Muslim council located in the South East.

Tamils' objections

But the Tamils, moderates as well as extremists, rejected these ideas. They would not brook any tampering of the North East, which had been united after much struggle and bloodshed.

The Tamils also say that the Muslims are entitled to autonomy in cultural and religious matters but not political matters.

The Muslims, who are Tamil-speaking, must consider themselves as being part of Tamil polity.

All for Tamils, nothing for Muslims?

The Tamils reject the idea of separate local bodies on administrative grounds. As one Tamil MP said: "You cannot divide these areas on communal lines because Tamil and Muslim villages exist side by side. You cannot have one village under a Muslim Pradeshiya Sabha and the next village under a Tamil Sabha."

Sinhala stand

The stand of the majority community, the Sinhalas, is ambivalent.

At this point of time, they seem to support the Muslims' demand for autonomy. But according to political observers, this is only to drive a wedge between the Tamils and the Muslims, the *LTTE* and the Muslims.

Going by their track record in dealing with the Tamils' demand for autonomy, there is little or no chance of the Muslims getting an autonomous enclave.

On the security issue too, the Muslims complain that they have not got the support due to them from successive Sinhala-dominated governments in Colombo. They have been defenceless in the face of attacks by the *LTTE*.

However, Muslim leaders should also share the blame. By general reckoning they have not put enough pressure on the state to protect them. Extreme factionalism among them is not the only reason for this.

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Load-Date: March 15, 2006



Suspected rebel landmine kills 64 in Sri Lanka, army shells Tigers

Agence France Presse -- English

June 15, 2006 Thursday 8:08 AM GMT

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Length: 689 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, June 15 2006

Body

A landmine which ripped through a bus Thursday killed 64 passengers and injured 39 in the deadliest attack on civilians in Sri Lanka since a 2002 truce, sparking military strikes on Tamil rebel positions.

The military launched long-range artillery retaliation after blaming the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for the carnage in an ethnic Sinhalese district in the island's North-Central province.

The rebels denied involvement in the blast and said it was aimed at discrediting them.

The spiralling violence renewed fears that the island is sliding back to war after peace broker Norway last week failed to arrange a face-to-face meeting between Colombo and the *LTTE*.

Policy Planning Minister Keheliya Rambukwella, the government's spokesman on defence-related issues, said at least 58 people including two Buddhist monks were killed while another 45 escaped with injuries.

Hospital sources said six more people had died in hospital, raising to 64 the total number of dead.

The bus packed with villagers was heading to Kebitigollewa town when it was torn apart by the powerful blast. Casualties were high as it was overcrowded with people travelling to a weekly market, Rambukwella said.

"This is a most barbaric terrorist act of the Tigers," he said, accusing the *LTTE* of carrying out the attack.

"It was not a case of a mistaken target where they thought soldiers were travelling in this bus," Rambukwella told a press conference.

"The military does not use this route and the LTTE knew that it was a civilian bus," the minister said.

"This is not a declaration of war but an act of terrorism. As far as the peace process and the ceasefire agreement are concerned, they are still on, but we have to re-look at it seriously in a proper context."

The separatists also condemned the blast.

"The <u>LTTE</u> condemns this attack on the civilian bus," they said in a statement. "Directly targeting civilians, as the Kebitigollewa Claymore attack has, cannot be justified under any circumstances."

Suspected rebel landmine kills 64 in Sri Lanka, army shells Tigers

Military spokesman Prasad Samarasinghe said the bus was hit by a Claymore mine, or a side charger, which overturned the vehicle and sent it crashing down the road for about 25 metres (yards). **Women** and children were among the victims.

The attack took place in the district of Anuradhapura, 200 kilometres (125 miles) north of Colombo.

Retaliatory shelling targeted rebel positions at Sampur in the eastern district of Trincomalee, military officials said, adding that they did not have details of any casualties or damage.

The military carried out air strikes on positions in the same area in April after a suicide bomb attack at army headquarters in Colombo.

The rebels said air strikes were also launched against the <u>LTTE</u>-controlled Mullaitivu area but military officials would neither confirm nor deny the claim.

A spate of recent bomb attacks have targeted security forces as well as civilians and have been officially blamed on Tamil Tiger guerrillas waging a campaign for independence.

A surge in violence has left at least 720 people since December, according to official figures.

The blast follows the return to the island on Wednesday of leaders of the **LTTE** after planned talks in Oslo with Sri Lankan government officials failed to take place.

The rebels refused to sit at the table with a Sri Lankan delegation for what had been billed as two days of talks to discuss ways of ensuring the safety of Scandinavians monitoring the truce.

The government and the Tigers have accused each other of stepping up attacks despite the Norwegian-arranged truce that was the centrepiece of internationally-backed peace efforts in the island.

Peace hopes all but vanished after Norway failed to bring the opposing parties to the table for two days of talks on June 8 and 9.

Diplomatic sources say Norway is now looking for an exit after spending six years attempting to broker peace in the island, where more than 60,000 people have been killed in three decades of fighting.

"There is at the present time no room for a Norwegian initiative in the peace process," Norwegian envoy Erik Solheim told AFP in Oslo last week after failing to get the Tigers to negotiate.

Load-Date: June 16, 2006



Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: police

Agence France Presse -- English
November 28, 2007 Wednesday 4:00 AM GMT

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Length: 320 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Nov 28 2007

Body

A <u>female</u> suicide bomber killed herself in the Sri Lankan capital on Wednesday, wounding at least three security men outside a senior minister's office, police said.

The bomber, a suspected member of the Tamil Tiger rebels, tried to enter the heavily guarded building housing the offices of welfare and social development minister Douglas Devananda, they said.

But she was halted and blew herself up outside.

The minister, who was inside meeting the public on an open day, escaped unhurt.

The wounded, two in serious condition, were brought to the city's General Hospital.

"The three people who are injured are security people for the minister," hospital spokeswoman Pushpa Soysa told AFP.

The blast came a day after Tamil Tiger rebel supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran declared that Sri Lankan peace efforts were a waste of time and vowed to strike back at the island's "genocidal" government.

"Those who plan to destroy the Tamil nation will in the end be forced to face their own destruction," he said.

In an annual policy speech delivered from a jungle hideout in his northern fiefdom, Prabhakaran launched a furious assault on the island's Sinhalese majority.

"The Sinhala nation is trying to destroy the Tamil nation," the reclusive head of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) said in the speech.

"It is unleashing unthinkable violence against another people. It only desires to find a solution to the Tamil question through military might and oppression," he said.

On Monday the island's defence secretary, Gotabhaya Rajapakse, told AFP that his forces were now going all out to kill Prabhakaran and recapture the north of the country.

Female suicide bomber targets Sri Lanka minister: police

The 35-year-old conflict, which has left tens of thousands dead, has escalated since 2004 when a peace deal began to unravel.

The government has this year wrested control of the east from the $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$, sunk several $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$ gun-running ships and killed the $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$ s political chief in an air raid.

Load-Date: November 28, 2007



Indian premier's assassins become cyber-savvy

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

January 18, 2003, Saturday 06:48 Central European Time

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Section: Politics
Length: 324 words
Dateline: New Delhi

Body

Two people sentenced to death for the assassination of Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi have enrolled in undergraduate courses in computer studies, a newspaper said Saturday.

The Hindustan Times reported that Murugan and Perarivalan, who both have only one name, have enrolled in the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Murugan's wife, Nalini, whose death sentence in the case was commuted to a life term because she had given birth to a child in prison, is also doing a master's degree in computer studies from the university, named after Rajiv Gandhi's mother, who was also prime minister and was also assassinated.

The paper said Nalini keeps Rajiv's widow and opposition Congress Party chief Sonia Gandhi updated on her educational progress and frequently receives congratulatory messages from her.

Sonia Gandhi has pleaded for the commutations of the death penalties in the case on humanitarian grounds.

"Considering the delay over their mercy petition, Murugan and Perarivalan are hopeful that their death sentences will be commuted to life terms, so they see a definite point in taking up the course," a university official said.

Murugan, Perarivalan and Santhan, three men lodged in a Tamil Nadu prison and condemned to death in the case, have had mercy petitions pending with the federal president since April 2000.

Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in May 1991 by a Sri Lankan woman suicide bomber in Sriperumbudur in the southern state of Tamil Nadu when he was out of power and was addressing an election meeting at what was widely seen as a comeback campaign.

The Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) has been blamed for the killing, and *LTTE* chief Veluppillai Prabhakaran, his intelligence chief Pottu Amman and *LTTE* women's wing chief Akila are the main people accused in the case.

Murugan and Santhan are LTTE activists while Perarivalan is an Indian sympathizer. dpa mvb Is

Load-Date: January 20, 2003



5th Ld, 7 killed, 33 injured in explosion in Sri Lankan capital

Xinhua General News Service May 29, 2007 Tuesday 1:00 PM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 317 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Seven civilians were killed and 33 others including four soldiers were injured Monday afternoon in an explosion in the southern suburb of the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, defense officials said.

A Claymore mine exploded at about 5:40 p.m. (1210 GMT) targeting a truck with nine personnel of police Special Task Force (STF) onboard near a book shop in Ratmalana, about 15 km south of downtown Colombo, said military spokesman Prasad Samarasinghe.

The dead were from the 36 civilians initially injured in the explosion, officials from the Media Center for National Security said, adding that three of the dead were <u>females</u> and four of them males.

Samarasinghe accused the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for the attack with civilians being clearly targeted.

The injured have been rushed to nearby hospitals, police said.

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse has condemned the attack on the civilians, the state television reported.

The truck was proceeding on the main Colombo-Galle road when the Claymore mine tied on the roof of a roadside house went off, officials said.

Several shops and vehicles were also damaged in the explosion.

This is the second attack on military targets in the capital area within a week.

One soldier was killed and six people including three civilians were injured in a Claymore mine attack carried out by suspected *LTTE* rebels in Colombo on Thursday.

Clashes between government troops and <u>LTTE</u> rebels are now an almost daily occurrence in the island country.

About 5,000 soldiers, rebels and civilians have been killed since December 2005 despite the Norwegian-arranged truce in place.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the majority ethnic Sinhalese-dominated government, the <u>LTTE</u> has been fighting for an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's 12.5 percent Tamil minority since the 1970s.

Load-Date: May 29, 2007



<u>Sri Lanka: Urgent need for effective protection of civilians as conflict</u> intensifies

Targeted News Service

April 13, 2007 Friday 1:15 AM EST

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Length: 1693 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Amnesty International issued the following news release:

Amnesty International urges all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under international law, to protect civilians and allow access by humanitarian aid agencies to populations in need. The security forces and the <u>LTTE</u> must renew their commitment to respect international humanitarian law, immediately cease all violations and take all measures necessary to ensure they are not repeated in the future.

Armed conflict in Sri Lanka between government forces, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) and other armed groups, which has escalated since April 2006, continues to be marked by widespread human rights abuses.

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about the rising number of civilians being killed or injured as a result of deliberate attacks in Sri Lanka's increasing violence.

Unlawful killings, abductions and enforced disappearance of civilians are daily occurrences, as is arbitrary detention. Both sides to the conflict systematically violate their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect from harm those taking no active part in hostilities. Tens of thousands of families have lost their property and their means of livelihood, and the number of conflict-affected internally displaced persons (IDPs) nationally has risen to at least 290,000. This adds to the large numbers of IDPs who have been kept away from their homes due to lack of safety there including ongoing fighting and fear of heavily mined areas for over a decade.

Lack of civilian protection

Fighting in Batticaloa District in Eastern Sri Lanka involves government forces, the <u>LTTE</u>, and a breakaway armed faction led by the <u>LTTE</u>s former eastern military commander, Colonel Karuna. Col. Karuna broke away from the <u>LTTE</u> in March 2004 and has since formed a political party, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP). The Karuna faction has been implicated in recruiting child soldiers. In the last month conflict has led to the displacement of at least 80,000 civilians doubling the existing IDP population in Batticaloa District to over 160,000. Fearful and facing acute insecurity, many of these IDPs are experiencing food shortages. They are unable to work and face an uncertain future due to loss of livelihoods. Water shortages are severe forcing families to attempt to dig their own wells. In one incident, the BBC Sinhala Service reported that on 3 March 2007 a child drowned in a water hole that her mother was attempting to dig.

Sri Lanka: Urgent need for effective protection of civilians as conflict intensifies

Since hostilities escalated humanitarian access has been restricted. For example, from late November 2006 until <u>LTTE</u> held Vakarai town, in the northern part of Batticaloa District, fell to the Sri Lankan army offensive on 19 January UN agencies and the ICRC had only very limited access to both the area and civilians, while the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation was unable to re-supply its aid workers on the ground appropriately to deal with civilian needs due to government imposed restrictions on bringing aid into *LTTE* controlled areas.

Aid agencies report that prior to the latest military offensive in March, the government as well as the <u>LTTE</u> severely restricted access to Batticaloa District and other conflict areas under their control, leaving tens of thousands of new IDPs, and large numbers of other affected populations, without adequate international protection and access to humanitarian assistance.

In this context civilians are at grave risk of being caught up in apparently indiscriminate artillery bombardments by both sides, or subjected to deliberate reprisal killings.

Recent incidents illustrating the continuing threat include:

Two children and two <u>women</u> were among eight civilians killed on 2 March 2007 in artillery bombardments in Sittandi and Murakottanchenai in Batticaloa. Eighteen others were wounded. A witness reported, "we were just sharing the food out, getting ready for the dinner. A shell fell into the house. My nephew was killed instantly. My daughter was hurt. We carried her to Murakkottanchenai. We stopped an ambulance on the road and took her to hospital".1

At least 16 civilians were killed in an explosion on a bus in the eastern district of Ampara on 2 April 2007. This was a suicide bombing reportedly by the <u>LTTE</u> followed a weekend of violence in which six tsunami reconstruction workers were allegedly shot dead by the <u>LTTE</u>.

Newly displaced persons living in camps in government-controlled areas of Batticaloa District report that armed men, reportedly wearing the uniforms of the Karuna faction, are infiltrating the camps, roaming them and even taking over the distribution of relief goods. Cases of abductions of IDPs have also been reported. In one incident, a 15-year-old boy was reportedly approached on 9 March 2007 by a white van as he waited for a bus at a temple near an IDP camp. Armed men tried to pull him into the van, but his struggling and screams attracted a crowd and the abductors fled. A witness said members of the Sri Lankan army observed the incident, but did not step in to help the boy. 2

Political killings: addressing a climate of impunity?

Both sides to the conflict have committed violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses. The <u>LTTE</u> has reportedly been responsible for numerous political killings and indiscriminate bomb attacks, and continues to forcibly recruit child soldiers. The group has prevented civilians from fleeing areas of combat in the north and east. Government forces have also failed to respect international humanitarian law, reportedly engaging in attacks in which civilians were killed. Government security personnel have also been implicated in extrajudicial executions.

Humanitarian workers have been targeted by unidentified gunmen. In one example which contributed to a continuing climate of fear, 17 Action Contre La Faime (ACF) workers were killed in an execution-style attack in Muttur District in August 2006. According to the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), since 2006 more than 2,000 relief workers have left the North and Eastern provinces due to the killings and frequent abductions.

Amid concerns that failures to effectively investigate and bring to justice those responsible for political killings risked entrenching a climate of impunity, the Government of Sri Lanka established a Commission of Inquiry (COI) and Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP) in September 2006.

Amnesty International does not believe that an independent group of eminent persons observing an essentially national inquiry can serve as a substitute for the independence, real and perceived, of the Commission of Inquiry itself. Amnesty International therefore called on the President of Sri Lanka to add independent, impartial and

Sri Lanka: Urgent need for effective protection of civilians as conflict intensifies

competent international experts to the proposed CoI and take other steps to ensure consultation with civil society in developing its work, access to relevant materials and persons, protection of witnesses appearing before it and that the CoI's recommendations are carefully considered with a view to their full implementation.

Amnesty believes that unless these requirements are met the CoI would not be able to function as an investigative body that would address violations of international law in a meaningful way, as required by international standards.

In addition, existing national human rights monitoring and investigative mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka, do not presently have the capacity to deal with large scale human rights violations. Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission says hundreds of people have 'disappeared' so far this year, on top of 1,000 last year.

At the international level, Sri Lanka has 5749 outstanding cases being reviewed by the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, several hundred of which have been reported since the beginning of 2006.

The need for international human rights monitors

The organisation believes there is an urgent need for human rights monitors on the ground to enhance civilian protection. The role of an international human rights monitoring presence is to conduct and make public systematic reporting to national and international bodies; report to a neutral body on a periodic and systematic basis and issue public reports. This is necessary due to the failure of domestic remedies for human rights violations - whether committed by the government, the <u>LTTE</u>, or other armed groups.

The aim of monitoring would be to address all serious violations of human rights, including extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances, and all breaches of international humanitarian law whether committed by government forces, the *LTTE*, the Karuna Group, or any other armed group or individuals operating on their behalf. Monitoring would consist of documenting and investigating the increasing number of abuses committed by the Sri Lankan security forces, *LTTE* and other armed groups; publicizing their findings and identifying the perpetrators so they can be brought to justice.

Amnesty International believes it is for the Government of Sri Lanka and other parties to the conflict to tailor to the Sri Lankan context an appropriate model. However, any model of international human rights monitoring must be founded on key principles including independence and impartiality; accountability and transparency nationally and internationally; a field presence in all key regions of the country and a victim/witness centred approach, including confidentiality and privacy. Monitoring will only be effective if adequately resourced and staffed by experienced and competent international investigators. An effective witness protection programme is key to the success of monitoring. A step forward could be the establishment of an OCHCR Office in Colombo along the lines suggested by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. 4

Given the gravity of the human rights situation Amnesty International urges the Sri Lankan government to strengthen civilian protection and invite international human rights monitors to the country immediately.

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Load-Date: April 15, 2007



Fierce fighting around Sri Lankan port reportedly kills 40 rebels, five soldiers

The Associated Press

August 2, 2006 Wednesday 2:52 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 474 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels engaged in heavy fighting around a key northeastern port Wednesday, with Sri Lanka's Defense Ministry claiming its forces killed 40 insurgents and wounded 70 others. Five government soldiers were reported killed.

The ministry's casualty claim could not be independently confirmed, but if true it would raise the death toll in recent days to 128 on both sides as worsening violence has many people fearful the island nation is plunging back into full-scale war.

There was no immediate comment from the rebels, who have accused the government of starting the latest round of fighting.

A two-decade civil war killed about 65,000 people before a 2002 cease-fire that left wide swaths of the north and east under rebel control. Escalating violence since December has shredded the truce and killed more than 850 people, half of them civilians.

The government said its troops repulsed rebel attacks around the port of Trincomalee and disputed reports that rebels overran four army camps near the city.

Trincomalee's harbor is an important lifeline for thousands of soldiers based in the northeast, where the <u>Tamil</u> <u>Tigers</u> want to carve out a separate homeland for the country's 3.2 million ethnic Tamils to escape discrimination by the Sinhalese majority.

The Defense Ministry said government troops inflicted "heavy casualties killing over 40 Tiger cadres and wounding 70 other terrorists." The statement said the insurgents retreated, leaving bodies behind.

The army's director of operations, Brig. Athula Jayawardena, denied rebels overran army camps.

"They attacked three of our camps. Fighting is still going on. But we are 100 percent stable," he told The Associated Press.

A pro-rebel Web site, TamilNet, said the fighting began around 2 a.m. Wednesday with a rebel artillery barrage on army and police posts.

Fierce fighting around Sri Lankan port reportedly kills 40 rebels, five soldiers

Rebel fighters "have overrun four key locations in Trincomalee district after fierce artillery shelling ... ," TamilNet said.

It also said an 8-year-old boy was killed and three <u>women</u> were injured when artillery fire hit a Roman Catholic church during fighting in the seaside town of Muttur, near Trincomalee.

The report did not say which side fired into the compound of St. Anthony's Church, where more than 600 people had taken shelter during the battle.

In recent days, Sri Lankan forces had been pushing to retake a reservoir that supplies water to about 60,000 people in government-controlled villages near Trincomalee. Rebels captured the reservoir last month.

The government insists it is committed to the 4-year-old cease-fire accord, but a rebel commander declared Monday that the *Tamil Tigers* considered the truce void.

Associated Press writer Bharatha Mallawarachi contributed to this report.

On the Net:

Pro-rebel Web site: http://www.TamilNet.com

Defense Ministry Web site: http://www.nationalsecurity.lk

Load-Date: August 3, 2006



Fighting in Sri Lanka Worsens; 128 Dead

Associated Press Online

August 2, 2006 Wednesday 2:48 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 474 words

Byline: By KRISHAN FRANCIS, Associated Press Writer

Dateline: COLOMBO Sri Lanka

Body

Government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels engaged in heavy fighting around a key northeastern port Wednesday, with Sri Lanka's Defense Ministry claiming its forces killed 40 insurgents and wounded 70 others. Five government soldiers were reported killed.

The ministry's casualty claim could not be independently confirmed, but if true it would raise the death toll in recent days to 128 on both sides as worsening violence has many people fearful the island nation is plunging back into full-scale war.

There was no immediate comment from the rebels, who have accused the government of starting the latest round of fighting.

A two-decade civil war killed about 65,000 people before a 2002 cease-fire that left wide swaths of the north and east under rebel control. Escalating violence since December has shredded the truce and killed more than 850 people, half of them civilians.

The government said its troops repulsed rebel attacks around the port of Trincomalee and disputed reports that rebels overran four army camps near the city.

Trincomalee's harbor is an important lifeline for thousands of soldiers based in the northeast, where the <u>Tamil</u> <u>Tigers</u> want to carve out a separate homeland for the country's 3.2 million ethnic Tamils to escape discrimination by the Sinhalese majority.

The Defense Ministry said government troops inflicted "heavy casualties killing over 40 Tiger cadres and wounding 70 other terrorists." The statement said the insurgents retreated, leaving bodies behind.

The army's director of operations, Brig. Athula Jayawardena, denied rebels overran army camps.

"They attacked three of our camps. Fighting is still going on. But we are 100 percent stable," he told The Associated Press.

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Fighting in Sri Lanka Worsens; 128 Dead

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Load-Date: August 3, 2006



ROUNDUP: Top military Sri Lankan officer, 3 others killed by bomb

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

June 26, 2006 Monday 9:33 AM EST

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Section: POLITICS Length: 635 words Dateline: Colombo

Body

A senior military officer, two soldiers and a civilian were killed in a suicide bomb attack close to Sri Lanka's capital on Monday morning, a military spokesman said.

Major General Parami Kulatunga, deputy chief of staff of the Sri Lanka army, was killed when a suspected Tamil rebel rammed his

motorcycle into the army officer's vehicle at Pannipitya, 20 kilometres south of the capital, as he was being driven to work, military spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe said.

The bomb also killed two of his military escorts and a bystander. Six civilians and two soldiers were injured in the blast.

The army officer is the third most senior officer in the Sri Lanka army and has been involved in a series of military operations against

Tamil rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (\underline{LTTE}) in the north and eastern parts of the country, before taking up the position in the army headquarters.

On April 25 rebels carried out a suicide bomb attack inside the army headquarters and seriously injured the army commander, Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka. He has been flown to Singapore for further treatment.

In the absence of the commander Maj. Gen. Kulatunga was playing a key role in carrying out the operations of the 120,000-strong army and was viewed as a potential commander.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa condemned the attack and said the

incident was another example of the " $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$'s continued commitment to terrorism and its cowardly use of suicide killers, and deserve both contempt and condemnation."

"This unabated violence by the $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$ should attract the opprobrium of the entire civilized world. It is a reminder to the international

community, and to the Tamil people, that the <u>LTTE</u> remains an organization dedicated to pursue violent means, especially the use of terror to achieve its objectives, which are far removed from the actual needs of the Tamil people," Rajapaksa said.

The Tamil rebels have not claimed responsibility for the attack. Eyewitnesses said the vehicle was engulfed in flames and was completely destroyed after the blast.

ROUNDUP: Top military Sri Lankan officer, 3 others killed by bomb

A <u>female</u> passer-by driving to work took the officer to hospital, but he was pronounced dead on admission.

"I thought the vehicle was caught in an accident and was in flames. When I checked out it was a bomb blast and I volunteered to take an officer who was fallen by the road side to hospital. I did not know that he was a senior officer," said Uthpala Ranasinghe. Eyewitnesses said that they believed that the officer was killed instantly.

The death of the officer was a serious setback to the military which has been preparing for more attacks from the rebels in the north and eastern parts of the country.

The escalation of violence since December 2005 has left more than 800 - civilians, soldiers and rebels - dead during this period while an estimated 100,000 have been displaced due to fresh attacks. The Norwegian-backed peace talks are also at a standstill while a cease-fire in the north and east is under a serious threat of collapsing after the rebels insisted that representatives from EU countries should not remain as monitors.

The EU banned the $\underline{\textit{LTTE}}$ last month as a terrorist organization. Representatives from EU-member countries Sweden, Denmark and Finland are currently on the monitoring team.

The monitoring group has declared that among the options which are being considered are scaling down their operations or completely pulling out.

Head of <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing SP Thamilselvan told a pro-rebel website that if Norway decided to suspend the monitoring role the decision would signal an end to the already fragile ceasefire and plunge the island into war.

Norwegians have arranged a meeting with the rebels on June 29 to discuss the issues related to monitoring the truce.

Notes

Adds details, president's comments

Load-Date: June 27, 2006



US Fed News

August 1, 2005 Monday 12:20 AM EST

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Length: 6461 words **Byline:** US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research Electronic Affairs Publication Office issued the following Background Note:

PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Geography

Area: 65,610 sq. km. (25,332 sq. mi.); about the size of West Virginia.

Cities: Capital-Colombo (pop. est. 1.3 million-urban area). Sri Jayewardenepura-Kotte is the officially designated capital and is the site of Parliament, but it is currently only an administrative center. Other cities-Kandy (150,000), Galle (110,000), Jaffna (100,000).

Terrain: Coastal plains in the northern third of country; hills and mountains in south-central Sri Lanka rise to more than 2,133 meters (7,000 ft.).

Climate: Tropical. Rainy seasons-light in northeast, fall and winter, with average rainfall of 50 in.; heavy in southwest, summer and fall, with average rainfall of 200 in.

People

Nationality: Noun and adjective-Sri Lankan(s).

Population (2003): 19.4 million.

Annual growth rate: 0.08%.

Ethnic groups (2002): Sinhalese (74%), Tamils (18%), Muslims (7%), others (1%).

Religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity.

Languages: Sinhala and Tamil (official), English.

Education: Years compulsory-to age 14. Primary school attendance-96.5%. Literacy-91%.

Health: Infant mortality rate-15/1,000. Life expectancy-71 yrs. (male); 76 yrs. (female).

Work force: 7.2 million.

Government

Type: Republic.

Independence: February 4, 1948.

Constitution: August 31, 1978.

Suffrage: Universal over 18.

Branches: Executive-president, chief of state and head of government, elected for a 6-year term. Legislative-unicameral 225-member Parliament. Judicial-Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, subordinate courts.

Administrative subdivisions: Nine provinces and 25 administrative districts. (The northern and eastern provinces, however, have been technically jointly administered since 1988.)

Political parties: Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, Jathika Hela Urumaya, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Tamil National Alliance, United National Party, several small Tamil and Muslim parties, and others. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, along with several small leftist parties, operate under an umbrella organization known as the "United People's Freedom Alliance." The United National Party and several other smaller parties operate as the "United National Front."

Economy (2003)

GDP: \$18.4 billion (est. 2003).

Annual growth rate: 5.9%.

Natural resources: Limestone, graphite, mineral sands, gems, and phosphate.

Agriculture (20.1% of GDP): Major products-rice, tea, rubber, coconut, and spices.

Services (53.6% of GDP): Major types-tourism, transport, telecom, banking and finance.

Industry (26.3% of GDP): Major types-garments and leather goods, food processing, chemicals, refined petroleum, wood products, basic metal products, and paper products.

Trade: Exports-\$5.1 billion: garments and footwear, tea, rubber products, jewelry and gems, refined petroleum, and coconuts. Major markets-U.S. (\$1.8 billion), U.K., Germany, Japan, Belgium. Imports-\$6.4 billion. Major suppliers-India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, U.K., U.S. (\$155 million). [U.S. data]

PEOPLE

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon) is an island in the Indian Ocean about 28 kilometers (18 mi.) off the southeastern coast of India with a population of about 19 million. Density is highest in the southwest where Colombo, the country's main port and industrial center, is located. The net population growth is about 1.3%. Sri Lanka is ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse.

Sinhalese make up 74% of the population and are concentrated in the densely populated southwest. Ceylon Tamils, citizens whose South Indian ancestors have lived on the island for centuries, total about 12% and live predominantly in the north and east.

Indian Tamils, a distinct ethnic group, represent about 5% of the population. The British brought them to Sri Lanka in the 19th century as tea and rubber plantation workers, and they remain concentrated in the "tea country" of south-central Sri Lanka. In accordance with a 1964 agreement with India, Sri Lanka granted citizenship to 230,000 "stateless" Indian Tamils in 1988. Under the pact, India granted citizenship to the remainder, some 200,000 of whom now live in India. Another 75,000 Indian Tamils, who themselves or whose parents once applied for Indian citizenship, now wish to remain in Sri Lanka. The government has stated these Tamils will not be forced to return to India, although they are not technically citizens of Sri Lanka. In October of 2003, an act of Parliament granted citizenship to several thousand of these "tea estate" Tamils.

Other minorities include Muslims (both Moors and Malays), at about 7% of the population; Burghers, who are descendants of European colonists, principally from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (U.K.); and aboriginal Veddahs. Most Sinhalese are Buddhist; most Tamils are Hindu. The majority of Sri Lanka's Muslims practice Sunni Islam. Sizable minorities of both Sinhalese and Tamils are Christians, most of whom are Roman Catholic. The 1978 constitution, while assuring freedom of religion, grants primacy to Buddhism.

Sinhala, an Indo-European language, is the native tongue of the Sinhalese. Tamils and most Muslims speak Tamil, part of the South Indian Dravidian linguistic group. Use of English has declined since independence, but it continues to be spoken by many in the middle and upper middle classes, particularly in Colombo. The government is seeking to reverse the decline in the use of English, mainly for economic but also for political reasons. Both Sinhala and Tamil are official languages.

HISTORY

The actual origins of the Sinhalese are shrouded in myth. Most believe they came to Sri Lanka from northern India during the 6th century BC. Buddhism arrived from the subcontinent 300 years later and spread rapidly. Buddhism and a sophisticated system of irrigation became the pillars of classical Sinhalese civilization (200 BC-1200 AD) that flourished in the north-central part of the island. Invasions from southern India, combined with internecine strife, pushed Sinhalese kingdoms southward.

The island's contact with the outside world began early. Roman sailors called the island Taprobane. Arab traders knew it as "Serendip," the root of the word "serendipity." Beginning in 1505, Portuguese traders, in search of cinnamon and other spices, seized the island's coastal areas and spread Catholicism. The Dutch supplanted the Portuguese in 1658. Although the British ejected the Dutch in 1796, Dutch law remains an important part of Sri Lankan jurisprudence. In 1815, the British defeated the king of Kandy, last of the native rulers, and created the Crown Colony of Ceylon. They established a plantation economy based on tea, rubber, and coconuts. In 1931, the British granted Ceylon limited self-rule and a universal franchise. Ceylon became independent on February 4, 1948.

Post-Independence Politics

Sri Lankan politics since independence have been strongly democratic. Two major parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), have generally alternated rule.

The UNP ruled first from 1948-56 under three Prime Ministers-D.S. Senanayake, his son Dudley, and Sir John Kotelawala. The SLFP ruled from 1956-65, with a short hiatus in 1960, first under S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and then, after his assassination in 1959, under his widow, Sirimavo, the world's first *female* chief executive in modern times. Dudley Senanayake and the UNP returned to power in 1965.

In 1970, Mrs. Bandaranaike again assumed the premiership. A year later, an insurrection by followers of the Maoist "Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna" (JVP, or "People's Liberation Front") broke out. The SLFP government suppressed the revolt and declared a state of emergency that lasted 6 years.

In 1972, Mrs. Bandaranaike's government introduced a new constitution, which changed the country's name from Ceylon to Sri Lanka, declared it a republic, made protection of Buddhism a constitutional principle, and created a weak president appointed by the prime minister. Its economic policies during this period were highly socialist and included the nationalization of large tea and rubber plantations and other private industries.

The UNP, under J.R. Jayewardene, returned to power in 1977. The Jayewardene government opened the economy and, in 1978, introduced a new constitution based on the French model, a key element of which was the creation of a strong executive presidency. J.R. Jayewardene was elected President by Parliament in 1978 and by nationwide election in 1982. In 1982, a national referendum extended the life of Parliament another 6 years.

The UNP's Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prime Minister in the Jayewardene government, narrowly defeated Mrs. Bandaranaike (SLFP) in the 1988 presidential elections. The UNP also won an absolute majority in the 1989 parliamentary elections. Mr. Premadasa was assassinated on May 1, 1993 by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam ("LTTE" or "Tigers"), and was replaced by then-Prime Minister Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, who appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe Prime Minister.

The SLFP, the main party in the People's Alliance (PA) coalition, returned to power in 1994 for the first time in 17 years. The PA won a plurality in the August 1994 parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government with Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Kumaratunga later won the November 1994 presidential elections and appointed her mother (former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike) to replace her as Prime Minister. President Kumaratunga won re-election to another 6-year term in December 1999. In August 2000, Mrs. Bandaranaike resigned as Prime Minister for health reasons, and Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka was appointed to take her place. In December 2001, the UNP assumed power, led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe. Chandrika Kumaratunga remains as President. In November of 2003, President Kumaratunga suddenly took control of three key ministries, triggering a serious cohabitation crisis. In January 2004, the SLFP and the JVP formed a political grouping known as the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA). In February, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. In these elections, which took place in April 2004, the UPFA received 45% of the vote, with the UNP receiving 37% of the vote. While it did not win enough seats to command a majority in Parliament, the UPFA was able to form a government and appoint a cabinet headed by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse.

Communal Crisis

Historical divisions continue to have an impact on Sri Lankan society and politics. From independence, the Tamil minority has been uneasy with the country's unitary form of government and apprehensive that the Sinhalese majority would abuse Tamil rights. Those fears were reinforced when S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike triumphed in the 1956 elections after appealing to Sinhalese nationalism. His declaration that Sinhala was the country's official language-an act felt by Tamils to be a denigration of their own tongue-was the first in a series of steps over the following decades that appeared discriminatory to Tamils. Tamils also protested government educational policies and agriculture programs that encouraged Sinhalese farmers from the south to move to newly irrigated lands in the east. The decades following 1956 saw intermittent outbreaks of communal violence and growing radicalization among Tamil groups. By the mid-1970s Tamil politicians were moving from support for federalism to a demand for a separate Tamil state-"Tamil Eelam"-in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, areas of traditional Tamil settlement. In the 1977 elections, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) won all the seats in Tamil areas on a platform of separatism. Other groups-particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or Tamil Tigers)-sought an independent state by force.

In 1983, the death of 13 Sinhalese soldiers at the hands of the <u>LTTE</u> unleashed the largest outburst of communal violence in the country's history. Hundreds of Tamils were killed in Colombo and elsewhere, tens of thousands were left homeless, and more than 100,000 fled to south India. The north and east became the scene of bloodshed as security forces attempted to suppress the <u>LTTE</u> and other militant groups. Terrorist incidents occurred in Colombo and other cities. Each side in the conflict accused the other of violating human rights. The conflict assumed an international dimension when the Sri Lankan Government accused India of supporting the Tamil insurgents.

Indian Peacekeeping

By mid-1987, India intervened in the conflict by air-dropping supplies to prevent what it felt was harsh treatment and starvation of the Tamil population in the Jaffna Peninsula caused by an economic blockade by Colombo. Under a July 29, 1987, accord (the Indo-Lanka Accord) signed by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President

Jayewardene, the Sri Lankan Government made a number of concessions to Tamil demands, which included devolution of power to the provinces, merger-subject to later referendum-of the northern and eastern provinces, and official status for the Tamil language. India agreed to establish order in the north and east with an Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) and to cease assisting Tamil insurgents. Militant groups, although initially reluctant, agreed to surrender their arms to the IPKF.

Within weeks, however, the <u>LTTE</u> declared its intent to continue its armed struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam and refused to disarm. The IPKF found itself engaged in a bloody police action against the <u>LTTE</u>. Further complicating the return to peace was a burgeoning Sinhalese insurgency in the south. The JVP, relatively quiescent since the 1971 insurrection, began to reassert itself in 1987. Capitalizing on opposition to the Indo-Lankan Accord in the Sinhalese community, the JVP launched an intimidation campaign against supporters of the accord. Numerous UNP and other government supporters were assassinated. The government, relieved of its security burden by the IPKF in the north and east, intensified its efforts in the south. The JVP was crushed but at a high cost in human lives.

From April 1989 through June 1990, the government engaged in direct communications with the <u>LTTE</u> leadership. In the meantime, fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the IPKF escalated in the north. India withdrew the last of its forces from Sri Lanka in early 1990, and fighting between the <u>LTTE</u> and the government resumed. Both the <u>LTTE</u> and government forces committed serious human rights violations. In January 1995, the Sri Lankan Government and the <u>LTTE</u> agreed to a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step in a government-initiated plan for peace negotiations. After 3 months, however, the <u>LTTE</u> unilaterally resumed hostilities. The government then adopted a policy of military engagement with the Tigers, with government forces liberating Jaffna from <u>LTTE</u> control by mid-1996 and moving against <u>LTTE</u> positions in the northern part of the country called the Vanni. An <u>LTTE</u> counteroffensive begun in October 1999 reversed most government gains and by May 2000 threatened government forces in Jaffna. Heavy fighting continued into 2001.

Peace Process

In December 2001, with the election of a new UNP government, the <u>LTTE</u> and government declared unilateral cease-fires. In February 2002, with Norwegian Government facilitation, the two sides agreed to a joint cease-fire accord. The peace process has continued apace, affecting Sri Lankans politically, economically, and socially in numerous and overwhelmingly positive ways. After holding six rounds of talks, the <u>LTTE</u> withdrew from the negotiation process in April 2003. At this time, the informal peace process continues on the ground and both sides continue to observe the February 2002 ceasefire. In May 2004, the new UPFA government and the <u>LTTE</u> committed themselves in public and in discussions with the Norwegian facilitators to resuming the negotiation track.

<u>LTTE</u> violence, including the assassination of approximately 40 Tamil alleged opponents from 2002 through 2003, is largely confined to the north and eastern provinces, which are 6 to 8 hours by road from the capital. Before the advent of the peace process, <u>LTTE</u>-perpetrated terrorist bombings directed against politicians and civilian targets were common in Colombo, Kandy, and elsewhere in the country. In July 2001, an <u>LTTE</u> suicide squad attacked the Bandaranaike International Airport outside of Colombo and destroyed a large number of military and civilian aircraft. In early March 2004, a faction of the <u>LTTE</u> from the east of the country broke off from the main organization and declared itself an independent body. In April, the main <u>LTTE</u> largely subdued this factional uprising in fighting that left up to 30 people dead.

In October 1997, the U.S. Government designated the <u>LTTE</u> as a foreign terrorist organization under provisions of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and has maintained this designation since then, most recently redesignating the group in October of 2003.

GOVERNMENT

Per the 1978 constitution, the president of the republic, directly elected for a 6-year term, is chief of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. Responsible to Parliament for the exercise of duties under the constitution and laws, the president may be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of Parliament with the concurrence of the Supreme Court.

The president appoints and heads a cabinet of ministers responsible to Parliament. The president's deputy is the prime minister, who leads the ruling party in Parliament. A parliamentary no-confidence vote requires dissolution of the cabinet and the appointment of a new one by the president.

Parliament is a unicameral 225-member legislature elected by universal suffrage and proportional representation to a 6-year term. The president may summon, suspend, or end a legislative session and dissolve Parliament. Parliament reserves the power to make all laws.

The 1978 constitution clearly envisaged a system where the president and the prime minister were from the same party. Since the December 2001 parliamentary elections, however, the president and the prime minister have been from different parties. This has led to serious cohabitation strains. In November 2003, for example, President Kumaratunga suddenly took over three key ministries (Defense, Interior, and Mass Communications), precipitating a serious cohabitation crisis between the two sides. In February of 2004, President Kumaratunga dissolved Parliament and called for fresh elections. The UPFA, while receiving enough seats in Parliament to form a minority government, fell short of the 113 seats necessary for a majority in Parliament. Mahinda Rajapakse of the SLFP became Prime Minister and former Prime Minister and UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Leader of the Opposition.

Sri Lanka's judiciary consists of a Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, and a number of subordinate courts. Sri Lanka's legal system reflects diverse cultural influences. Criminal law is fundamentally British. Basic civil law is Roman-Dutch. Laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, and inheritance are communal.

Under the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987-and the resulting 13th amendment to the constitution-the Government of Sri Lanka agreed to devolve significant authority to the provinces. Provincial councils are directly elected for 5-year terms. The leader of the council majority serves as the province's chief minister; a provincial governor is appointed by the president. The councils possess limited powers in education, health, rural development, social services, agriculture, security, and local taxation. Many of these powers are shared or subject to central government oversight. Predating the accord are municipal, urban, and rural councils with limited powers.

Principal Government Officials

President - Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga

Prime Minister - Mahinda Rajapakse

Ambassador to the United States - Devinda Subasinghe

Ambassador to the United Nations - Bernard Goonetilleke, Acting

Sri Lanka maintains an embassy in the United States at 2148 Wyoming Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-4834025).

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Sri Lanka's two major political parties-the UNP and the PA-embrace democratic values, international nonalignment, and encouragement of Sinhalese culture. Past differences between the two on foreign and economic policy have narrowed. The SLFP, however, envisions a broader role for the state in general.

Sri Lanka has a multi-party democracy that enjoys considerable stability despite relatively high levels of political violence. <u>LTTE</u> terrorist activities, generally aimed at destabilizing Sri Lanka politically and economically, have included assassination of politicians-killing the Industrial Development Minister by suicide bombing in June 2000; the December 1999 attempted assassination of current President Kumaratunga; bombing of economic targets such as the central bank in January 1996, the World Trade Center in October 1997, and the airport in July 2001; as well as attacks on Buddhist religious sites. In January 1998, the <u>LTTE</u> detonated a truck bomb in Kandy, damaging the Temple of the Tooth relic, the holiest Buddhist shrine in the country.

ECONOMY

With an economy of \$18.4 billion (est. August 2004), and a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$950, Sri Lanka enjoyed strong growth rates in recent years. Sri Lanka began to shift away from a socialist orientation in 1977. Since then, the government has been deregulating, privatizing, and opening the economy to international competition. The ethnic disputes of 1983 precipitated a slowdown in economic diversification and liberalization. The JVP uprising in the late 1980s caused extensive upheavals and economic uncertainty.

Following the quelling of the JVP, increased privatization, reform, and a stress on export-oriented growth helped revive the economy's performance, taking GDP growth to 7% in 1993. Economic growth has been uneven in the ensuing years as the economy faced a multitude of global and domestic economic and political challenges. Overall, average annual GDP growth was 5.2% over 1991-2000. In 2001, however, GDP growth was negative 1.4%-the first contraction since independence. Growth recovered to 4.0% in 2002 and 5.2% in 2003.

Foreign exchange reserves, which fell by 11% in 1999, decreased further in 2000. In response, the government floated the rupee on January 23, 2001. This led to a significant nominal depreciation in 2001, but the rupee has since stabilized and reserves have been replenished.

In 2003, continued peace allowed further progress on macroeconomic stabilization during the first half of the year. Some progress was reversed, however, during the political uncertainty in November and December 2003. Growth in 2003 was largely driven by the services sector (particularly telecom and tourism) and trade. Both exports and imports rose over 9% in the first 10 months. Interest rates declined. The inflation rate fell under 9%. External reserves were sufficient to cover 5.6 months of imports. The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) rebounded to become one of the better performers in the area. The CSE rose 45% in 2002 and hit a record high in June 2003 but performance declined at the end of the year. Fortunately, the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic did not spread to Sri Lanka, and tourism was not severely affected. Sri Lanka's garment exporters reported a surge in orders, shifted from China due to SARS. On the negative side, in mid-2003 Sri Lanka experienced its worst floods in 50 years, which caused extensive damage in south and southwestern parts of the country.

Projections for 6.5% growth in 2004 did not account for political instability, which negatively impacted performance. The December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami caused extensive damage in Sri Lanka. The human and environmental tragedy was enormous: over 30,000 people were killed and another 500,000 were displaced, and the bulk of the coastline was affected, leaving most fishing fleets destroyed. The United States is leading the international effort on relief and reconstruction, with damages estimated at \$1.5 billion in Sri Lanka.

The future of Sri Lanka's economic health is uncertain but is primarily dependent on continued tsunami relief and reconstruction, political stability, continuation of the peace process, and continued policy reforms-particularly in the area of fiscal discipline and direct management. Implementation of major reforms in the civil service and education sectors and more disciplined spending and improved revenue collection would help generate stronger economic growth. If export orientation strengthens, weaknesses in government will have less impact on growth.

A strong global economy should help Sri Lanka maintain and even expand its export base, while effective aid utilization will be critical in the post-tsunami reconstruction effort. Rising oil costs in 2004, coupled with lower government revenue, held Sri Lanka's fiscal deficit at about 9% of GDP. The government has indicated it intends to focus on better revenue collection mechanisms to deal with the problem. Post-tsunami investment needs may challenge government deficit reduction strategies over the coming years. Sri Lanka has a high debt burden (105% of GDP) and is reforming and modernizing its debt management structures.

Other challenges include diversification from Sri Lanka's key exports-tea and garments. Garment exports face increased competition in a quota-free era with the 2005 expiration of the Multi Fiber Arrangement. The future of the tea industry is threatened by a shortage of plantation labor and growing competition. There are new efforts to diversify exports, explore tourism potential, and improve competitiveness. The previous government had an ambitious information and communications technology strategy to connect and service every corner of the country. This project, if continued and implemented successfully, could change Sri Lanka's economy and social fabric and would take it into the information age. The government hopes to take advantage of Sri Lanka's strategic location on

shipping routes, make use of the Indo-Lanka Free Trade Agreement, and sign free trade agreements with other countries to achieve regional trading hub status. If peace returns and all these efforts bear fruit, real growth could be in the 6%-7% range beyond 2004, and will help realize the government's intention of making Sri Lanka the gateway to South Asia.

The service sector is the largest component of GDP (54%). In 2003, the service sector continued its strong expansion, fueled primarily by strong growth in telecom, tourism, and financial services. Public administration and defense expenditures have remained steady. Repatriated earnings of Sri Lankans working abroad continued to be strong. There also is a small but growing information technology sector, especially information technology training and software development and exports.

Manufacturing accounts for about 16% of GDP. The textile, apparel, and leather products sector is the largest, accounting for 44% of total industrial output. The second-largest industrial sector, at 24% of total manufacturing output, is food, beverages, and tobacco. The third-largest industrial sector is chemical, petroleum, rubber, and plastic products. Agriculture has lost its relative importance to the Sri Lankan economy in recent decades. It accounts for 20.1% of GDP and provides employment to 33% of the working population. Rice, the staple cereal, is cultivated extensively. The plantation sector consists of tea, rubber, and coconut; in recent years, the tea crop has made significant contributions to export earnings and saw production slightly decrease in 2003. Tea prices have remained stable. The construction sector accounts for 7.4% of GDP and mining and quarrying 1.8%. In recent years, the government has eliminated many price controls and quotas, reduced tariff levels, eliminated most foreign exchange controls, and sold more than 55 state-owned companies and 20 estate-holding companies. Colombo boasts one of the most modern stock exchanges in the region, and the Sri Lankan Government offers a range of tax and other incentives to attract potential investors.

Trade and Foreign Assistance

Exports to the United States, Sri Lanka's most important market, were estimated at \$1.8 billion in 2003, or 38.5% of total exports. For many years, the United States has been Sri Lanka's biggest market for garments, taking more than 63% of the country's total garment exports. India is Sri Lanka's largest supplier, with exports of \$835 million in 2002. Japan, traditionally Sri Lanka's largest supplier, was its fourth-largest in 2002 with exports of \$355 million. Other leading suppliers include Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. United States exports amounted to \$155 million in 2003. Sri Lanka is highly dependent on foreign assistance, and several high-profile assistance projects were launched in 2003. The most significant of these resulted from an aid conference in Tokyo in June 2003; pledges at the summit, which included representatives from the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Japan, the European Union, and the United States totaled \$4.5 billion. This funding was in response to a poverty reduction strategy program laid out in "Regaining Sri Lanka," an action paper authored by the Sri Lankan Government, and a number of studies commissioned by the donor community that, together, provide a basic framework for economic revival. While implementation of previous aid projects has been spotty, the government believes it can improve this record by streamlining tender processes and improving project management skills.

The United States is currently leading the international efforts for tsunami relief and reconstruction. In addition to pledging \$350 million to tsunami-affected countries, more than 15,000 U.S. military personnel were involved in providing relief support in the affected region. Twenty-five ships and 94 aircraft were participating in the effort. The U.S. military had delivered about 2.2 million pounds of relief supplies to affected nations, including 16,000 gallons of water, 113,000 pounds of food, and 140,500 pounds of relief supplies. USAID disbursed an additional \$78 million.

Labor

More than 20% of the 6.1 million-strong labor force, excluding the north and east, is unionized. Trade union membership is on the decline. There are more than 1,650 registered trade unions, many of which have 50 or fewer members, and 19 federations. Many unions have political affiliations. The Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and Lanka Jathika estate workers union are the two largest unions representing workers in the heavily unionized plantation sector. The president of the CWC also is Minister of Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure. The CWC's agenda includes political issues, such as citizenship status for stateless Indian Tamils. Some of the

stronger and more influential trade unions include the Ceylon Mercantile Union, Sri Lanka Nidhahas Sevaka Sangamaya, Jathika Sevaka Sangayama, Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Ceylon Bank Employees Union, Union of Post and Telecommunication Officers, Conference of Public Sector Independent Trade Unions, and the JVP-aligned Inter-Company Trade Union. The unemployment rate has declined in recent years and hovers at 10%. The rate of unemployment among high school and college graduates, however, remains proportionally higher than the rate for less-educated workers. The government has embarked on educational reforms it hopes will lead to better preparation of students and fewer mismatches between graduates and jobs. In addition, it also has begun a youth corps program to provide employment skills to the unemployed.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Sri Lanka traditionally follows a nonaligned foreign policy but has been seeking closer relations with the United States since December 2001. It participates in multilateral diplomacy, particularly at the United Nations, where it seeks to promote sovereignty, independence, and development in the developing world. Sri Lanka was a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It also is a member of the Commonwealth, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, and the Colombo Plan. Sri Lanka continues its active participation in the NAM, while also stressing the importance it places on regionalism by playing a strong role in SAARC.

U.S.-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

The United States enjoys cordial relations with Sri Lanka that are based, in large part, on shared democratic traditions. U.S. policy toward Sri Lanka is characterized by respect for its independence, sovereignty, and moderate nonaligned foreign policy; support for the country's unity, territorial integrity, and democratic institutions; and encouragement of its social and economic development. The United States is a strong supporter of ethnic reconciliation in Sri Lanka and the peace process that began in December 2001.

U.S. assistance has totaled more than \$1.63 billion since Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. Through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), it has contributed to Sri Lanka's economic growth with projects designed to reduce unemployment, improve housing, develop the Colombo Stock Exchange, modernize the judicial system, and improve competitiveness. At the June 2003 Tokyo Donors' Conference on Sri Lanka, the United States pledged \$54 million, including \$40.4 million of USAID funding.

In addition, the International Broadcast Bureau (IBB)-formerly Voice of America (VOA)-operates a radio-transmitting station in Sri Lanka. The U.S. Armed Forces maintain a limited military-to-military relationship with the Sri Lanka defense establishment. By February 2005, the U.S. had contributed \$67 million to Sri Lankan relief following the tsunami disaster.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador - Jeffrey J. Lunstead

Deputy Chief of Mission - James F. Entwistle

Head of Political Section - Patricia Mahoney

Head of Economic/Commercial Section - Dean Thompson

Management Officer - Jane Ross

Consular Officer - Marc Williams

Defense Attaché - Lt. Col. Richard Girven

Director, USAID - Carol Becker

Public Affairs Officer - Philip Frayne

IBB Station Manager - Glenn Britt

The U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka is located at 210 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-2448007, fax: 94-11-2437345). U.S. Agency for International Development offices are located at the American Center, 44 Galle Road, Colombo 3 (tel: 94-11-2472855; fax: 94-11-2472850/2472860). Public Affairs offices also are located at the American Center (tel: 94-11-2421270/2422121, fax: 94-11-2449070).

IBB offices are located near Chilaw, 75 kms north of Colombo (94-32-55931/32/94-72-285860, fax: 94-32-55822).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. Consular Information Sheets exist for all countries and include information on entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Public Announcements are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: http://travel.state.gov. Consular Affairs Tips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are on the Internet and hard copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to register their travel via the State Department's travel registration web site at https://travelregistration.state.gov or at the Consular section of the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country by filling out a short form and sending in a copy of their passports. This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at httsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: August 17, 2005



2 civilians killed in northern Sri Lanka blast

Xinhua General News Service September 25, 2007 Tuesday 7:01 AM EST

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Military

Length: 227 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

At least two civilians were killed Tuesday morning in a roadside bomb explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern Jaffna peninsula, defense officials said Tuesday.

The bomb exploded in Jaffna's Sittankerni area at 8:15 a.m. local time (0245 GMT) targeting an Army road patrol, killing two civilians and wounding three soldiers.

A 42-year-old <u>female</u> lecturer at the Jaffna university and a 25- year-old youth were the two killed in the explosion, officials said.

The military blamed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for renewed claymore mine attacks against the troops in Jaffna.

In the northern district of Mannar, the military said that four soldiers were injured in the continuation of fierce clashes in the Giant's Tank area early Tuesday morning.

At least nine LTTE cadres were killed and 36 injured in the battle, officials said.

Northern Province saw clashes between the troops and the rebels over the weekend.

Fighting continues in the island despite the Norwegian backed ceasefire and the peace process.

More than 5,000 people have died in the escalating conflict since the end of 2005.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the <u>LTTE</u> has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east.

Load-Date: September 26, 2007



Sri Lankan troops kill 12 rebels

Xinhua General News Service

November 12, 2007 Monday 1:15 AM EST

Copyright 2007 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Political

Length: 208 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

The Sri Lankan government troops killed 12 rebels in separate clashes with Tamil Tiger rebels in the country's north and east on Sunday, the military said Monday.

Officials from the Media Center for National Security said the troops found six bodies of <u>female LTTE</u> (Liberation Tigers of Tiger Eelam) members after they launched an attack against <u>LTTE</u> bunkers at Periyathampane in the northern Vavuniya district at 8 a.m. local time (0230 GMT).

Also in Vavuniya, three rebels were killed by the troops' retaliatory attack when the rebels fired mortars against them at Narikkulan area around 4:45 p.m. (1115 GMT).

Meanwhile, three rebels in a tractor were killed by the troops' retaliatory fire when the rebels tried to launched a grenade attack in a jungle area of Semminikulam in the eastern Ampara district around 6:40 p.m. (1310 GMT).

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the *LTTE* has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east of the country.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new wave of violence since the end of 2005, making the Norwegian brokered cease-fire agreement exist only on paper.

Load-Date: November 14, 2007



Muslims caught in midst of Sri Lanka chaos

The Toronto Star

August 5, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 556 words

Byline: Peter Apps, ; REUTERS NEWS AGENCY

Dateline: PALATHOPPUR, Sri Lanka

Body

Artillery fire thunders in the background as thousands of Sri Lankan Muslims fleeing an eastern war-torn town arrive at this village by bus, tractors, motorcycles and on foot.

The Red Cross estimates some 20,000 to 30,000 people fled south from Mutur yesterday, leaving behind them a town devastated by days of fighting between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) rebels.

"We had to leave," said 25-year-old water board employee M.A. Jevahir, trying to keep an eye on his family amongst the thousands taking shelter under trees and in abandoned buildings.

"We couldn't stay any longer. But this place does not feel safe either," he said.

<u>Women</u> cried and wailed, while some men stoically clutched the Qur'an. People, some obviously dehydrated after walking for a long time, rushed to a truck bringing water.

Most simply wanted to move away from the violence.

Northeast Sri Lanka is home to a volatile mix of Sinhalese, Muslims and Tamils. Some residents of mostly Muslim Mutur said Tamil residents had been told by the *LTTE* to leave weeks ago.

"The <u>LTTE</u> want to divide the country," shouted Abdul Aziz Raheed, pointing towards rebel territory. "The Tamils have their own place but this is our land. They want us gone. They have done this before, in Jaffna in 1991."

The <u>LTTE</u>, which has fought for two decades for a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east, evicted the Muslim population of the northern Jaffna peninsula in the mid-1990s. Muslims in eastern Sri Lanka have always feared a repeat.

Help in the village is hampered by ongoing fighting and ethnic tension. The windows on a Red Cross vehicle were smashed by a mob of majority Sinhalese who accuse international aid workers of only helping Tamils.

Fighting is continuing both around Mutur and the <u>LTTE</u>-held water sluice gate that sparked the confrontation last month when irrigation was turned off to some 50,000 farmers in government territory. Fields in the area are now dry and crops stunted.

Muslims caught in midst of Sri Lanka chaos

Elsewhere, soldiers just back from the front line sit under trees or slump on their backpacks, grime and exhaustion on their faces.

Other soldiers burn scrubland near the main roads to reduce the risk of <u>LTTE</u> ambushes while Russian-built MI-24 attack helicopters of the Sri Lanka air force fly low towards the battlefield.

Most of the explosions in the background seem to be far away, but many of the displaced screamed and ran for cover after shells or mortar bombs fell nearer, perhaps only five kilometres north, where the roads are still clogged with people.

Some of the displaced said shells fell near them as they walked out of the ruined town. While none of the refugees saw anyone killed during the mass evacuation, some aid workers said there were reports of up to 20 dead.

Clashes on Thursday left at least 20 civilians, 12 Tigers and one soldier dead. The military says it has killed more than 70 rebels in the past week and the Tigers say they have the bodies of 40 troops ready to hand over. But each side dismisses the other's claims.

There were some in the crowd yesterday who were wounded by explosions in Mutur. An ambulance carried two babies, one with blast wounds to the face.

"This is total chaos," said one Sri Lankan employee of an international aid group, who lived in Mutur. "No one is in charge here. Excuse me, I must go and find my family."

Graphic

LAKRUWAN WANNIARACHCHI afp getty images A Sri Lankan child injured in a shell attack in Mutur waits in hospital in Trincomalee yesterday.

Load-Date: August 5, 2006



Sri Lanka's president says rebel bombs are fuelling ethnic backlash

Agence France Presse -- English
January 7, 2007 Sunday 6:44 AM GMT

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Length: 238 words

Dateline: COLOMBO, Jan 7 2007

Body

Sri Lanka's president Sunday accused Tiger rebels of stoking an ethnic backlash by majority Sinhalese on the minority Tamil community after 17 people died in bomb blasts on crowded buses at the weekend.

"The aim of the <u>LTTE</u> (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is to have a backlash against the Tamils and to undermine our efforts to find a peaceful solution," President Mahinda Rajapakse said in a statement released by his office Sunday.

He appealed to the Sinhalese community to show maximum restraint to two separate bomb blasts blamed on suspected Tamil rebels on buses travelling the the main southern coastal highway from the capital Colombo at the weekend.

An <u>LTTE</u> defence spokesman, Rasiah Ilanthirayan, denied any responsibility for the blasts which occurred on a road widely used by tourists to reach southern beaches along Sri Lanka's west coast.

Officials said 11 people were killed and 47 wounded Saturday when a suspected <u>female</u> suicide bomber blew up a bus near Ambalangoda, 85 kilometres (53 miles) south of Colombo. The attack followed a bus blast late Friday when six passengers were killed and another 70 wounded near Colombo.

Authorities blamed both attacks on the <u>LTTE</u> which is fighting for an independent Tamil homeland in a conflict that has claimed more than 60,000 lives since 1972.

Fighting has escalated in the past year, with more than 3,800 people dead despite a nominal ceasefire agreement reached in 2002.

Load-Date: January 8, 2007



Thousands flee from Sri Lanka offensive: rebels

Agence France Presse -- English
February 22, 2007 Thursday 12:46 PM GMT

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Length: 552 words

Byline: Amal Jayasinghe

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb 22 2007

Body

Sri Lanka launched attacks against Tiger rebels Thursday as the guerrillas said thousands of civilians in the north fled their homes on fears of an upsurge of fighting in the region.

Troops in Trincomalee attacked suspected Tiger positions and residents reported hearing shelling throughout he day. The reports came on the eve of the fifth anniversary of a truce that is holding only on paper.

Military officials confirmed they were retaliating against rebel harassment, but said there was no major offensive in the region, although residents said they heard long-range artillery fire.

The attacks also came as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) said thousands of Tamil civilians in the northern Wanni region had fled their homes fearing a fresh military offensive against rebel-held territory.

The rebel <u>LTTE</u> said thousands of men, <u>women</u> and children from half a dozen villages along the de facto border line between the two sides were on the move and seeking refuge deeper inside rebel territory.

"About a thousand families out of 3,500 have already become refugees," <u>LTTE</u> spokeswoman N. Selvy said by telephone from the rebels' political headquarters in Kilinochchi, 330 kilometres (206 miles) north of here.

"People are afraid after recent Claymore (mine) attacks carried out by the Sri Lankan military," she said, adding the Tamil residents feared security forces could launch a fresh attack along rebel defence lines.

On Wednesday, 25 Tamil civilians carrying white flags entered a government-held area in the northern district of Vavuniya and were provided with shelter and meals by the troops, a military official said.

An exodus of civilians from the island's troubled regions is usually a first sign of stepped up fighting between troops and Tamil Tiger guerrillas who are campaigning for independence.

Troops last month dismantled a de facto local government run by the guerrillas at Vakarai and indicated they were planning to move towards rebel strongholds elsewhere in the island's north.

Thousands flee from Sri Lanka offensive: rebels

The escalation of fighting in the past year has claimed nearly 4,000 lives and tattered a ceasefire arranged and put in place by peacebroker Norway since February 23, 2002.

At least five people were killed on Thursday in clashes linked to the conflict, police said.

Norway's top peacebroker, Erik Solheim, Thursday offered to go the extra mile to revive peace talks, even as thousands of Sinhalese nationalists took to the streets here calling for the truce to be scrapped.

Solheim, who is also Norway's international development minister, expressed the hope that Sri Lanka's government and the *LTTE* would recognise the need to implement the truce.

"It is my strong hope that both parties will recognise the need to secure the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement as a first step toward reaching a political solution," Solheim said in a statement.

He said Norway remained in regular contact with the Sri Lankan government and the *LTTE*, despite the failure of the last meeting between the warring parties in October.

"Norway is willing to go the extra mile to assist their peace endeavours at their request," Solheim said. "As soon as the parties renew their peace efforts, we will be ready to do all we can to help."

More than 60,000 people have been killed in the island's 35-year-old Tamil separatist campaign.

Load-Date: February 23, 2007



US Fed News

October 11, 2007 Thursday 10:38 PM EST

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Length: 3113 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs issued the following Consular Information Sheet:

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Sri Lanka is a presidential parliamentary democracy with a developing economy. Civil war and terrorism have seriously disrupted the country since 1983. On February 22, 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) signed an indefinite cease-fire agreement. Over the past several years, incidents of violence have increased. From December 2005 to January 2007 more than 3,700 persons, including combatants and civilians, were killed in the conflict and the cease-fire agreement remains at risk. Despite the armed insurgency, Sri Lanka's beaches, hill country, and archeological sites continue to attract thousands of visitors each year from around the world. The capital city of Colombo, the Cultural Triangle (Kandy, Anuradhapura, and Polonnaruwa), and many southern beach towns all have good tourist facilities.

The Asian Tsunami on December 26, 2004 caused severe damage and loss of life to several coastal areas of eastern, southern, and southwestern Sri Lanka. Many affected resorts have completely recovered. Read the Department of State Background Notes on Sri Lanka for additional information.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport and onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds are required. A no-cost visitor visa, valid for 30 days, will be granted to tourists at the time of entry into Sri Lanka. Business travelers are required to have a visa prior to arrival. Individuals traveling to Sri Lanka for purposes other than tourism (i.e. volunteering or working), will need to obtain an entry visa from the nearest Sri Lankan Embassy or Consulate before your arrival in Sri Lanka. Visitors staying more than 30 days for any purpose must pay residency visa fees. Travelers need yellow fever and cholera immunizations if they are arriving from an infected area. All travelers departing Sri Lanka (except diplomats and certain exempted travelers) must pay an airport tax, in cash. Sri Lankan law requires all foreign guests in private households to register in person at the nearest local police station.

Individuals who stay in private households without registering may be temporarily detained for questioning. This requirement does not apply to individuals staying in hotels or guesthouses.

Specific inquiries should be addressed to the Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2148 Wyoming Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 483-4025 through 26, fax numbers (202) 232-7181, e-mail address: *consular@slembassyusa.org*, home page at http://www.slembassyusa.org, the Sri Lankan Consulate General in Los Angeles at 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1405, Los Angeles, CA 90010, telephone (213) 387-0210, or the U.N. Mission in New York City, telephone (212) 986-7040. There are several honorary Sri Lankan

consuls general and consuls in the United States. They can be located at the Sri Lankan Embassy web site. Visit the Embassy of Sri Lanka web site at http://www.slembassyusa.org for the most current visa information.

Information about dual nationality or the prevention of international child abduction can be found on our web site. For further information about customs regulations, please read our Customs Information sheet.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Due to the outbreak of hostilities in July 2006, the Department of State issued a Travel Warning for Sri Lanka that strongly advises American citizens not to travel to the North and East of Sri Lanka. Several thousand people have been killed since the fighting began, including over 1,000 security personnel. Since 1997, the State Department has included the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) on its list of foreign terrorist organizations. Terrorist activities such as suicide bombings and targeted assassinations in the capital city of Colombo and other areas of the country remain a serious threat. The *LTTE* have targeted many Tamil moderates, Sri Lankan military and government officials, and the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka. As the conflict continues, the U.S. Embassy expects that targeted assassinations and bombings in the Colombo area will continue. The Department of State strongly advises against all travel to the North and East of Sri Lanka.

Throughout its history, the LTTE have engaged in numerous terrorist acts, including suicide bombings at political rallies, government buildings, and major economic targets. On March 26, 2007, the Katunayake Air Force Base in Colombo came under attack from LTTE aircraft, causing the adjacent Bandaranaike International Airport to briefly curtail operations. On April 29, 2007, the LTTE also attacked two oil facilities in the Colombo area. In response to these incidents, the government announced that, beginning May 10, 2007, the Bandaranaike International Airport would be closed from 10:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. every day. On July 1, the airport resumed 24-hour operations; however, not all airlines have resumed their flights. In December 2006, the LTTE attacked the motorcade of Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa in downtown Colombo. In June 2006, LTTE frogmen were apprehended north of Colombo, possibly attempting to attack ships in the port of Colombo. More recently, in February 2007, LTTE boats were sunk by Sri Lankan forces while they were attempting to enter Colombo harbor. In 2003, the LTTE attacked several foreign commercial ships in the waters off the north and east coasts of Sri Lanka. Prior to the March 26, 2007 aerial attack, the LTTE attacked the Colombo International Airport in 2001 and destroyed both commercial and military aircraft located at the adjacent military base. Several military personnel were killed, while both military and airport employees were injured. Civilians were also caught in the crossfire. The LTTE have also engaged in political assassinations, including the August 2005 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar at his residence in Colombo.

Although U.S. citizens have not been specifically targeted, <u>LTTE</u> operations have been planned and executed with the knowledge that Americans and other foreigners might be killed or injured. American citizens traveling or residing in Sri Lanka may be inadvertently caught up in random acts of violence. Travel in restricted areas is dangerous. In the past, the <u>LTTE</u> have detonated bombs near major hotels, a tourist site in Kandy, and have targeted buses and trains. In January 2007, two bombs on public buses outside Colombo killed more than 20 people and injured dozens more. In May 2006, seven people were killed when a jeep carrying Sri Lankan tourists hit a landmine in Wilpattu National Park in the northwest of the country. The park had reopened in 2003, after being closed for 17 years due to the ongoing conflict. While most national parks are quite safe, tourists should be aware that the <u>LTTE</u> have the capability to operate in many national parks located in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Travelers should also be aware that the <u>LTTE</u> have employed vehicle-mounted bombs.

The Department of State strongly advises Americans tourists to stay away from military bases and vehicles in Sri Lanka. In March 2007, the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka sustained a minor injury when a Sri Lankan military helicopter he was traveling in landed at a military base in Batticaloa and came under <u>LTTE</u> mortar fire. The Ambassador was not the specific target of the <u>LTTE</u> attack. In October 2006, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked military targets in Galle and Habarana. On June 6, 2006 a claymore mine exploded 50 meters from the Welisara Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) camp in Ragama, on Colombo-Negombo Road. In April 2006, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber attacked the vehicle of the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army at army headquarters in Colombo, killing several members of his staff and injuring many more bystanders. While these attacks occurred near tourist areas, foreign tourists were not the target of these attacks and none were injured.

American citizens should also be alert to outbreaks of communal violence, such as that which occurred in April 2003 when two hand grenades were detonated in tourist hotels in Arugam Bay. Arugam Bay also experienced communal violence in September 2006 following the murder of 10 Muslim youths. There are also reports of increasing ethnic unrest in the Ampara district.

Americans are strongly advised to avoid political rallies and other mass gatherings as well as public transportation, and to limit their exposure to government buildings if possible. Non-Sri Lankan citizens of Tamil heritage have occasionally been detained during security operations. U.S. citizens of any ethnic heritage are encouraged to keep their passports with them at all times. In the event of a terrorist attack, Americans should monitor local radio and television, seek cover away from windows, and return to their homes or hotels when it is safe to do so. In light of the recent *LTTE* air attacks, Americans are advised to remain in their homes or hotels away from windows during possible air attacks in order to avoid falling shrapnel or bullets. If traveling, individuals should find a safe location in a building as soon as possible. The Government of Sri Lanka has periodically imposed curfews in Colombo; Americans should strictly observe curfew regulations and monitor local radio and television. Travelers in Colombo are often the subject of searches by the police, as security forces increase their vigilance. U.S. citizens should expect frequent delays in travel due to the deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka. American citizens should comply with instructions from the security forces. Americans are also strongly advised against taking photographs of Sri Lankan military bases, foreign missions in Sri Lanka and government buildings, which could be a violation of the law under current security restrictions in the country.

American citizens are strongly advised not to travel north of a line from Puttalam on the west coast through Anuradhapura in the central north to Polonnaruwa, Bibile, and Pottuvil on the east coast. However, thus far the U.S. Embassy does not perceive any threat to the tourist areas in the Cultural Triangle, including the tourist sites at Polonnaruwa and Dambulla. Areas north of this line contain many land mines, making travel very dangerous. The security forces have bombed several locations in <u>LTTE</u>-controlled areas. Ongoing fighting between government and <u>LTTE</u> forces may pose severe hazards to American citizens traveling in this region. Official travel by U.S. Government personnel to these areas in the North and East is restricted, and unofficial travel is prohibited. Americans should consider their personal security foremost before considering traveling or working in northern or eastern Sri Lanka.

In addition, roads in these areas are often substandard, and police, medical and other emergency help is severely limited or unavailable. Communications within the eastern areas are also limited, with no cell phone accessibility and very limited landline telephone access. The U.S. Embassy may not be able to provide consular services in a timely manner to American citizens who travel to the North and East.

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See our information on Victims of Crime: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies 1748.html.

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Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC's web site at http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's (WHO) web site at http://www.who.int/en. Further health information for travelers is available at http://www.who.int/ith.

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Please refer to our Road Safety page for more information. Visit the website of Sri Lanka's national tourist office and national authority responsible for road safety at http://www.lanka.net.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: As there is no direct commercial air service between the United States and Sri Lanka, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed Sri Lanka's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. For more information, travelers may visit the FAA's Internet web site at http://www.faa.gov/safety/programs initiatives/oversight/iasa/.

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Please see our Customs Information: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis pa tw/cis/cis 1468.html.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Sri Lanka's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Sri Lanka are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. Please see our information on Criminal Penalties: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1467.html.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information see our Office of Children's Issues web pages on intercountry adoption and international parental child abduction.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at httsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: October 15, 2007



<u>Fealty to multiculturalism makes us reluctant to act decisively against</u> agitators, says Rondi Adamson

The Toronto Star

June 11, 2006 Sunday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A16

Length: 495 words

Body

Last Saturday, I watched the press conference in Toronto that revealed the arrests of the 17 terror suspects. I heard an RCMP officer coin the now oft-repeated phrase, "broad strata." As in, the suspects represent a broad strata of society. If the alleged crimes weren't so serious, it would have been funny.

Given the times we live in, and the fact that the police spokesman said the suspects were inspired by Al Qaeda, I made, at that moment, a guess about exactly how broad that strata was. I was correct.

Canadian tolerance does not cause terrorist activity. There is terrorist activity in regions of the world where tolerance has never been a part of life, officially or otherwise.

But it isn't hard to see where Canada's niceness, multiculturalism, sensitivity - call it what you will - emboldens people who may wish to threaten us, from within or without. Equally important, it weakens those who wish to fight the threats.

Not all Muslims are terrorists. But our current enemy is Islamists, an extremist manifestation of Islam. Do we help the overwhelming majority of Canadian Muslims (the people whose feelings that RCMP officer appeared concerned with) who represent no threat to Canada by pretending otherwise?

Rather, is it not insulting to Muslims to assume they want us to be sensitive to Islamists?

It's a safe bet that many Muslims came here to escape extremism. Not to mention that Islamists gleefully murder many of their fellow Muslims. Hence the rejoicing in Iraq on Thursday at the news of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's death.

Nonetheless, I'd be curious to know whether any of the terror suspects felt they were safe to make extremist statements. Did they know that their fellow Canadians, showing fealty to multiculturalism, would be reluctant to comment? After all, a Canadian might say, who are we to judge their longing for al-Andalus?

We have precedents in Canada. Did refusing to call the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> "terrorists," protect the feelings of Tamils who didn't support them? Or did it send a message that we believe all Tamils support the <u>Tamil Tigers</u>? Did it help Sikhs, or the people on Air-India Flight 182 in 1985, to pretend Sikh fanatics had nothing to do with Sikhism? With our squishiness, we have let it be known that we will make concessions rather than risk offending, rather than risk ire, or being labelled racist.

Fealty to multiculturalism makes us reluctant to act decisively against agitators, says Rondi Adamson

We have seen, in several European nations, Islamists convincing children and grandchildren of law-abiding Muslim immigrants to join jihad. We have seen how abandoning critical thought, leaving communities to themselves, out of "respect," or (more accurately) fear, only exacerbates the situation.

In some of those countries, the results are zealous, harsh attempts to outlaw burqas, or to fine <u>women</u> who wear them. I would hate Canada to get to that point. The arrests last week, will, I hope, convince us to speak uncomfortable truths out loud.

Rondi Adamson is a writer based in Toronto. She can be reached at rondi.adamson @ gmail.com.

Load-Date: June 11, 2006



1ST LEAD: 5 killed, 12 injured as female suicide bomber setsoff explosion in Colombo police station Eds: Adds deaths and injuries

Deutsche Presse-Agentur

July 7, 2004, Wednesday 08045208:04:52 Central European Time

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Section: Politics

Length: 347 words

Dateline: Colombo

Body

A <u>female</u> Tamil rebel suicide bomber set off an explosion inside a police station in Sri Lanka's capital killing herself and four police officers and injuring 12 others, including civilians, Wednesday noon, police said. The woman was taken in for questioning after behaving suspiciously in the vicinity of a ministry actively working against Tamil rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (<u>LTTE</u>). The police station is located in the Kollupitiya area adjoining the Prime Minister's office in the capital. The U.S. embassy and the British High Commission are located in the near vicinity. The <u>female</u> bomber was first spotted outside the office of Hindu Affairs Minister Douglas Devananda's and refused to be checked by two <u>female</u> police officers, Inspector General of Police Indra de Silva said. He said that the woman was taken to the police station and when she was about to be checked she set off the explosion in the reception area of the police station. Her accomplice was arrested later inside the ministry, but it was not immediately clear whether she was carrying any explosives. Deavanada, leader of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), is a strong critic of the <u>LTTE</u> rebels and in recent weeks has been helping the leader of a breakaway group of rebels. The minister was inside his office when the <u>female</u> bomber was intercepted and taken away for questioning. Rebels have been accusing the military of helping the leader of the breakaway group, V. Muralitharan alias Karuna, while Devananda has been helping him to register as a political party.

This was the first major incident in the city since the <u>LTTE</u> and the government signed a cease-fire agreement under a Norwegian backed peace process in February 2002. Rebels over the past two weeks have been claiming that the military was maintaining ties with Karuna and called on them to stop all links with him. Devananda, however, has openly admitted to helping Karuna who was the one time regional military wing leader of the <u>LTTE</u> rebels for the eastern Batticaloa and Ampara districts. dpa ad pw

Load-Date: July 7, 2004



US Fed News

May 14, 2007 Monday 10:26 PM EST

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Length: 3137 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs issued the following Consular Information Sheet:

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Sri Lanka is a presidential parliamentary democracy with a developing economy. Civil war and terrorism have seriously disrupted the country since 1983. On February 22, 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) signed an indefinite cease-fire agreement. Over the past several years, incidents of violence have increased. From December 2005 to January 2007 over 3,700 persons, including combatants and civilians were killed in the conflict and the cease-fire agreement remains at risk. Despite the armed insurgency, Sri Lanka's beaches, hill country, and archeological sites continue to attract thousands of visitors each year from around the world. The capital city of Colombo, the Cultural Triangle (Kandy, Anuradhapura, and Polonnaruwa), and many southern beach towns all have good tourist facilities.

The Asian Tsunami on December 26, 2004 caused severe damage and loss of life to several coastal areas of eastern, southern, and southwestern Sri Lanka. Many affected resorts have completely recovered. Read the Department of State Background Notes on Sri Lanka for additional information.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport and onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds are required. A no-cost visitor visa, valid for 30 days, will be granted to tourists at the time of entry into Sri Lanka. Business travelers are required to have a visa prior to arrival. Individuals traveling to Sri Lanka for purposes other than tourism (i.e. volunteering or working), will need to obtain an entry visa from the nearest Sri Lankan Embassy or Consulate before your arrival in Sri Lanka. Visitors staying more than 30 days for any purpose must pay residency visa fees. Travelers need yellow fever and cholera immunizations if they are arriving from an infected area. All travelers departing Sri Lanka (except diplomats and certain exempted travelers) must pay an airport tax, in cash. Sri Lankan law requires all persons, including foreigners, who are guests in private households, to register in person at the nearest local police station.

Individuals who stay in private households without registering may be temporarily detained for questioning. This requirement does not apply to individuals staying in hotels or guesthouses.

Specific inquiries should be addressed to the Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2148 Wyoming Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 483-4025 through 26, fax numbers (202) 232-7181, e-mail address: consular@slembassyusa.org, home page: http://www.slembassy.org, the Sri Lankan Consulate General in Los Angeles at 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1405, Los Angeles, CA 90010, telephone (213)

387-0210, or the U.N. Mission in New York City, telephone (212) 986-7040. There are several honorary Sri Lankan consuls general and consuls in the United States. They can be located at the Sri Lankan Embassy web site. See our Foreign Entry Requirements brochure for more information on Sri Lanka and other countries. Visit the Embassy of Sri Lanka web site at http://www.slembassyusa.org for the most current visa information.

Find more information about Entry and Exit Requirements pertaining to dual nationality and the prevention of international child abduction. Please refer to our Customs Information to learn more about customs regulations.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Due to the outbreak of hostilities in July 2006, the Department of State issued a Travel Warning for Sri Lanka that strongly advises American citizens not to travel to the north and east of Sri Lanka. Several thousand people have been killed since the fighting began, including over 1,000 security personnel. Since 1997, the State Department has included the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) on its list of foreign terrorist organizations. Terrorist activities such as suicide bombings and targeted assassinations in the capital city of Colombo and other areas of the country remain a serious threat. The *LTTE* have targeted many Tamil moderates, Sri Lankan military and government officials, and the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Sri Lanka. As the conflict continues, the U.S. Embassy expects that targeted assassinations and bombings in the Colombo area will continue. The Department of State strongly advises against all travel to the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Throughout its history, the <u>LTTE</u> have engaged in numerous terrorist acts, including suicide bombings at political rallies, government buildings, and major economic targets. On March 26, 2007, the Katunayake Air Force Base in Colombo came under attack from <u>LTTE</u> aircraft, causing the adjacent Bandaranaike International Airport to briefly curtail operations. On April 29, 2007, the <u>LTTE</u> also attacked two oil facilities in the Colombo area. In response to these incidents, the government announced that, beginning May 10, 2007, the Bandaranaike International Airport will be closed from 10:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. every day. This measure is valid for 90 days and then will be reassessed. In December 2006, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked the motorcade of Defense Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa in downtown Colombo. In June 2006, <u>LTTE</u> frogmen were apprehended north of Colombo; possibly attempting to attack ships in the port of Colombo. More recently, in February 2007, <u>LTTE</u> boats were sunk by Sri Lankan forces while they were attempting to enter Colombo harbor. In 2003, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked several foreign commercial ships in the waters off the north and east coasts of Sri Lanka. Prior to the March 26, 2007 aerial attack, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked the Colombo International Airport in 2001 and destroyed both commercial and military aircraft located at the adjacent military base. Several military personnel were killed, while both military and airport employees were injured. Civilians were also caught in the crossfire. The <u>LTTE</u> have also engaged in political assassinations, including the August 2005 assassination of Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar at his residence in Colombo.

Although U.S. citizens have not been specifically targeted, <u>LTTE</u> operations have been planned and executed with the knowledge that Americans and other foreigners might be killed or injured. American citizens traveling or residing in Sri Lanka may be inadvertently caught up in random acts of violence. Travel in restricted areas is dangerous. In the past, the <u>LTTE</u> have detonated bombs near major hotels, a tourist site in Kandy, and have targeted buses and trains. In January 2007, two bombs on public buses outside Colombo killed more than 20 people and injured dozens more. In May 2006, seven people were killed when a jeep carrying Sri Lankan tourists hit a landmine in Wilpattu National Park in the northwest of the country. The park had reopened in 2003, after being closed for 17 years due to the ongoing conflict. While most national parks are quite safe, tourists should be aware that the <u>LTTE</u> have the capability to operate in many national parks located in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Travelers should also be aware that the <u>LTTE</u> have employed vehicle-mounted bombs.

The Department of State strongly advises Americans tourists to stay away from military bases and vehicles in Sri Lanka. In March 2007, the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka sustained a minor injury when a Sri Lankan military helicopter he was traveling in landed at a military base in Batticaloa and came under <u>LTTE</u> mortar fire. The Ambassador was not the specific target of the <u>LTTE</u> attack. In October 2006, the <u>LTTE</u> attacked military targets in Galle and Habarana. On June 6, 2006 a claymore mine exploded 50 meters from the Welisara Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) camp in Ragama, on Colombo-Negombo Road. In April 2006, a <u>female</u> suicide bomber attacked the vehicle of the Commander of the Sri Lankan Army at army headquarters in Colombo, killing several members of his staff and injuring many more bystanders. While these attacks occurred near tourist areas, foreign tourists were not the target of these attacks and none were injured.

American citizens should also be alert to outbreaks of communal violence, such as that which occurred in April 2003 when two hand grenades were detonated in tourist hotels in Arugam Bay. Arugam Bay also experienced communal violence in September 2006 following the murder of 10 Muslim youths. There are also reports of increasing ethnic unrest in the Ampara district.

Americans are advised to avoid entirely political rallies and other mass gatherings, public transportation, and to limit their exposure to government buildings if possible. Non-Sri Lankan citizens of Tamil heritage have occasionally been detained during security operations. U.S. citizens of any ethnic heritage are encouraged to keep their passports with them at all times. In the event of a terrorist attack, Americans should monitor local radio and television, seek cover away from windows, and return to their homes or hotels when it is safe to do so. In light of the recent *LTTE* air attacks, Americans are advised to remain in their homes or hotels away from windows during possible air attacks in order to avoid falling shrapnel or bullets. If traveling, individuals should find a safe location in a building as soon as possible. The Government of Sri Lanka has periodically imposed curfews in Colombo; Americans should strictly observe curfew regulations and monitor local radio and television. Travelers in Colombo are often the subject of searches by the police, as security forces increase their vigilance. U.S. citizens should expect frequent delays in travel due to the deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka. American citizens should comply with instructions from the security forces. Americans are also strongly advised against taking photographs of Sri Lankan military bases, foreign missions in Sri Lanka and government buildings, which could be a violation of the law under current security restrictions in the country.

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For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at httsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: May 15, 2007



Two civilians killed in northern Sri Lanka blast

Indo-Asian News Service September 25, 2007 Tuesday 12:04 PM EST

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Length: 232 words

Byline: Indo-Asian News Service

Dateline: Colombo

Body

Colombo, Sept. 25 -- At least two civilians were killed Tuesday in a roadside bomb explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels in the northern Jaffna peninsula, defence officials said.

The bomb exploded in Jaffna's Sittankerni area at 8.15 a.m. (0245 GMT) targeting an Army patrol, killing two civilians and wounding three soldiers.

A 42-year-old <u>female</u> lecturer at the Jaffna University and a 25-year-old youth were the two killed in the explosion, officials said.

The military blamed the rebels of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) for renewed claymore mine attacks against the troops in Jaffna.

In the northern district of Mannar, the military said four soldiers were injured in the continuation of fierce clashes in the Giant's Tank area early Tuesday.

At least nine *LTTE* cadres were killed and 36 injured in the battle, officials said.

Northern Province saw clashes between the troops and the rebels over the weekend.

Fighting continues in the island despite the Norwegian backed ceasefire and the peace process.

More than 5,000 people have died in the escalating conflict since the end of 2005.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the <u>LTTE</u> has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east.

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Load-Date: September 25, 2007



CONGRESS FLAYS KARUNA POEM

The Pioneer (India)

November 18, 2007 Sunday 5:51 PM EST

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Length: 225 words

Byline: Report from The Pioneer brought to you by HT Syndication.

Dateline: New Delhi

Body

New Delhi, Nov. 18 -- The compulsions of coalition politics might have stopped the Congress and the UPA Government from criticising DMK chief M Karunanidhi's elegy on slain <u>LTTE</u> leader Thamilselvan's death, but the AICC resolution set a different tone.

Through its resolution on international affairs, Congress made it clear that it had no patience for such remarks. The carefully worded resolution said: "The <u>LTTE</u>, categorised internationally as a terrorist outfit, deliberately assassinated our beloved leader in a brutal manner. The sentiments of all Congressmen and <u>women</u> especially are bound to get hurt if the <u>LTTE</u> is eulogised in any manner."

bNo public comments against colleagues/b

Sonia Gandhi minced no words in telling her partymen to mind what they say and when, especially if it concerns fellow party leaders. Fresh out of the Sethu Samudram affidavit controversy when Sonia had to press a gag order on leaders like Jairam Ramesh and RK Dhawan to stop them from demanding Culture Minister and senior colleague Ambika Soni's resignation, Sonia said the party should speak cohesively. "Like a democratic political party, we have the freedom to discuss and debate. But till the party formulates its opinion, nobody has the right to express their opinions separately," she said.

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Load-Date: May 4, 2008



Politician: Gandhi misled Tamil Tigers

UPI

December 3, 2006 Sunday 10:22 AM EST

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Length: 122 words

Dateline: CHENNAI, India, Dec. 3

Body

Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi knowingly misled <u>Tamil Tigers</u> fighting for nationhood in Sri Lanka, a Tamil Nadu party leader said Sunday.

Prominent politician Vaiko told India's CNN-IBN news channel Gandhi misled the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> before signing a 1989 peace accord that saw the induction of an Indian peacekeeping force in Sri Lanka, the Indo-Asian News Service reported.

The politico-military <u>Tamil Tigers</u> have waged a secessionist campaign against the Sri Lankan government since the 1970s to secure a separate state for the Tamil majority regions in the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Gandhi was assassinated by a *female* Tamil Tiger suicide bomber during an election rally near India's Tamil Nadu capital, Chennai, in 1991.

Load-Date: December 4, 2006



Sri Lanka's injured Army chief moves to military hospital

Xinhua General News Service May 6, 2006 Saturday 10:00 AM EST

Copyright 2006 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Military

Length: 294 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

Sri Lanka's Army Chief Sarath Fonseka who was badly injured late last month in a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber attack was moved Saturday to the military hospital, defense and hospital sources said.

Fonseka had miraculously recovered from the blast on April 25 when a suspected Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) *female* suicide bomber jumped into his motorcade at the Army Headquarters.

At least 11 people, most of them Army personnel died in the blast which also caused injuries to nearly 30.

The Army Headquarters said Saturday in a release that Fonseka was removed from the intensive care unit of the Colombo National Hospital as he had shown recovery from the wounds received at the attack.

The Tigers had targeted Fonseka who has been a tough military commander during its armed conflict with the government in order to try and set up a separate homeland in the northern and eastern regions for the minority Tamil community.

He was appointed to the post of the commander in early December last year which coincided with the stepping up of violence in the regions mostly blamed on the *LTTE* rebels.

Meanwhile, the defense officials said Saturday was marked with low key violence compared to many incidents throughout the week in the Northern Province.

The efforts by the Norwegian peace facilitators to see the two sides meeting in Geneva for the second round of talks on the fragile ceasefire was continuing, officials said.

They added that logistic arrangements for the sea travel of the **LTTE**'s eastern commanders to the north were being made.

Japan's representative for Sri Lanka's peace process Yasushi Akashi is also scheduled to arrive in the island on Saturday in a fresh bid to revive the peace process.

Load-Date: May 7, 2006



SRI LANKA: ACTIVISTS WANT RIGHTS ISSUES HIGHER UP IN TALKS

IPS-Inter Press Service February 3, 2003, Monday

Copyright 2003 IPS-Inter Press Service/Global Information Network

Length: 892 words

Byline: By Feizal Samath

Dateline: COLOMBO, Feb. 3

Body

Sri Lanka's peace talks, now entering its sixth month, could lose credibility unless human rights issues are pushed even higher up at the top of the agenda, rights activists here warn

"Unless human rights issues are discussed the credibility of peace talks would be at stake," says Dr Rohan Edirisinha, director of the Center for Policy Alternatives, a private think tank.

As the fifth round of talks are held this week in Berlin, rights groups are pushing for a separate memorandum of understanding on human rights between the government and Tamil rebels, to be monitored by a committee of foreign and local experts.

The current memorandum between the two sides, in force since early last year, covers the ceasefire and is monitored by a Norway-led committee.

The Feb.7-8 talks will take up the issue of human rights and allegations of large-scale conscription of children by the Tigers - who at the last round of talks said they were "not recruiting" youngsters and would not do so in the future.

This week's talks will have Martin, a former secretary general of Amnesty International, in attendance to provide advice on the human rights perspective and help shape a human rights agenda as part of the peace process.

His role was agreed upon by the government and rebel sides at the January talks in Thailand, and came after pressure to address the issue of rights in the nearly two-decade conflict, under which the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) has been fighting for a homeland for minority Tamils.

During a three-day visit to Sri Lanka last week, U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) executive director Carol Bellamy won the latest assurances from the rebels that they would not recruit children to their ranks.

But she conceded that similar assurances have been given in the past -- and that the Tigers have not always followed up their words with deeds.

"I have been involved in these things long enough not to be naive about assurances, whether from the government or from non-state parties," she said. She said the <u>LTTE</u> could prove it is serious about stopping recruitment -- and about returning child combatants to their families -- by developing a concrete action plan.

"We are however hopeful the LTTE will keep to its word," she added.

SRI LANKA: ACTIVISTS WANT RIGHTS ISSUES HIGHER UP IN TALKS

Some 350 children have been returned by the rebels to their families since November 2001, while 730 reported cases of child recruitment yet to be resolved, says UNICEF.

Human rights groups claim that hundreds have been recruited by the rebels during the ceasefire.

The University Teachers for Human Rights, a Colombo-based group comprising Tamil academics opposed to the <u>LTTE</u>, says the rebels have been demanding one child per family in the eastern town of Batticaloa. "The demand of one child per family was aired openly at a public meeting on Human Rights Day (Dec. 10, 2002) by top **LTTE** leaders," it said in a statement.

Analysts say the <u>LTTE</u>'s change into a non-militant force - which it committed in earlier peace talks -- will not happen overnight. In this context, they said, civil society and other groups must put the pressure on the rebels on human rights issues.

The 'Island' newspaper, in a Feb. 1 editorial, accused peace groups of neglecting children's issues in order to be able to keep claiming success for the peace talks.

"The UNICEF director cannot take the easy path of some of the peace-seeking ambassadors in Colombo have done; Save the Peace and Damn the Children. That is exactly what has been happening for the past year," said the paper, which has been critical of Colombo's handling of the peace process.

The Ceasefire Monitoring Mission has said there is evidence of the Tigers conscripting more than 300 children up to November. Save the Children Norway, a child rights group, estimates that the <u>LTTE</u> could have anywhere between 2,000 to 4,000 child combatants.

Jehan Perera, director at the National Peace Council, believes the answer to the human rights issue lies in civil society pressure building up in the north itself - the area most affected by the conflict -- against rights violations.

"There is no other way. Can the local or international community punish the Tigers? What sanctions can they impose?" he asked.

The Non Violent Peace Force, a Canadian-based NGO working on the lines of the Peace Brigade, is sending three volunteers in the next few months to work on building civil society structures in the rebel-dominated north.

"Whether the <u>LTTE</u> will allow them to work there, remains to be seen. But the group wants to help set up peace-building structures in the north," Perera said. The group has worked before in Israel, Palestine and South America.

CPA's Edrisinha, who will be in Berlin as a resource person in a government-rebel subcommittee on political structures, said the proposed human rights agreement would be a kind of charter covering issues like freedom of speech, expression, **women** and children's rights, and right to dissent.

He said similar agreements have been implemented in other war-torn countries like Guatemala and El Salvador.

Meantime, many are also are watching the health of Tiger chief negotiator Anton Balasingham, who is suffering from a kidney ailment that makes traveling long distances difficult. The venue for this week's talks was shifted by Norwegian mediators from Thailand to Berlin, much closer for the London-based Balasingham to travel to.

Load-Date: February 4, 2003



3rd Ld Rebel suicide bomber kills 1, injures 2 in Sri Lankan capital

Xinhua General News Service

November 28, 2007 Wednesday 1:17 AM EST

Copyright 2007 Xinhua News Agency

Section: WORLD NEWS; Science & Technology

Length: 451 words

Dateline: COLOMBO

Body

A <u>female</u> Tamil Tiger suicide bomber killed one people and injured two others after exploding herself Wednesday morning in Colombo, capital of the country, but her main target survived the attack unhurt, said the military.

Military Spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said the attack happened around 08:05 a.m. local time (0235 GMT) near the office of Douglas Devananda, the minister of Social Services and Welfare, adding that Devananda was unhurt in the incident.

Nanayakkara said that of the three people injured in the incident, Coordinating Secretary to the Ministry Stephen Peiris has succumbed to his injuries and two security personnel were still under treatment in hospital.

The spokesman said the 24-year-old suicide attacker, blown into pieces in the explosion, was from the northern Vavuniya district.

"We have found the suicide bomber's identity card and it indicates that she was a resident of Vavuniya," Nanayakkara.

Wednesday is the weekly public day for the minister and the bomber said to have blown herself upon being checked at the security check point near the minister's office in downtown Colombo.

Hector Weerasinghe, the chief of the Colombo National Hospital said that at least three people were admitted to the emergency ward after the blast.

"One of them who was critical at the time died upon admission," Weerasinghe said, adding that another with serious injuries are being treated and the condition of the third victim was stable.

Originally a Tamil militant, Devananda gave up violence and turned to a bitter opponent of the rebels. He is currently the leader of the pro-government Eelam People's Democratic Party.

Due to his strong opposition to the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*), the rebel organization has unsuccessfully tried to assassinate him over 10 times and he remains high up on its list of targets for assassination.

Fifty-year-old Devananda was seriously wounded in many of the attacks but survived after long periods of medical treatment.

3rd Ld Rebel suicide bomber kills 1, injures 2 in Sri Lankan capital

The suicide attack came just one day after the <u>LTTE</u> supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran delivered his annual policy speech.

"Thousands of our fighters are standing ready to fight with determination for our just goal of freedom and we will overcome the hurdles before us and liberate our motherland," the *LTTE* leader said on Tuesday.

Claiming discrimination at the hands of the Sinhala majority, the <u>LTTE</u> has been fighting the government since the mid-1980s to establish a separate homeland for the minority Tamils in the north and east.

More than 5,000 people have been killed in the new wave of violence since the end of 2005.

Load-Date: November 30, 2007



Sri Lanka on alert after weekend of battles with rebels

The Irish Times

June 19, 2006 Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 570 words

Byline: Rahul Bedi in New Delhi

Body

Sri Lanka: A national security alert was declared in Sri Lanka yesterday after a mine attack, blamed on Tamil Tiger rebels fighting for an independent homeland, killed three policemen following a weekend of fierce land and sea battles that left more than 50 people dead.

Weeks of continuing hostilities between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) and government forces is severely straining the 2002 ceasefire, threatening to plunge the island republic back into civil war that has claimed almost 70,000 lives since the early 1980s.

The Tamils, who constitute about 12 per cent of the island's population of 20 million, claim discrimination at the hands of the majority Sinhalese.

Officials in the capital, Colombo, said the constables died when a police water tanker was blown up by a Claymore mine in the north-central district of Anuradhapura yesterday.

Tamil Tiger rebels had vowed to retaliate against government forces who mounted a massive offensive against them on Saturday, even using helicopter gunships in the firefight spread some 185km (115 miles) along the northwest coast.

The defence ministry said the navy and the air force beat back the Tiger offensive by sinking eight Tiger craft and killing 30 cadres. The **LTTE** has a fiercely professional naval force called the Sea Tigers.

The rebels, however, denied government assertions, claiming that only two <u>LTTE</u> members had been wounded in the fight.

Independent verification of casualties in Sri Lanka's conflict has been difficult, if not impossible, for decades. Both sides tend to minimize their losses while exaggerating those of their rivals.

Six civilians were also killed in the crossfire on Saturday while 28 were admitted to hospital with gunshot and shrapnel injuries. Three more sailors were killed when their boat capsized while rushing to the aid of colleagues.

Earlier, fighter jets bombed Tiger positions on Thursday and Friday as a "deterrent" against more attacks following the bombing of an overcrowded bus by the rebels in northern Sri Lanka in which 64 people, many of them <u>women</u> and children, were killed.

Sri Lanka on alert after weekend of battles with rebels

The leader of the <u>LTTE</u>'s political wing, SP Thamilselvan, has denied government charges of being involved in the bus attack.

But in the unending tit-for-tat allegations and counter-allegations, the military has brushed aside rebel denials and executed air and artillery strikes against their positions in the north and east of the island which they control.

The Tigers accused the military of lobbing a grenade inside a Catholic church on Saturday, killing an elderly woman and wounding 45 in the northwestern Mannar district. The defence ministry denied the allegation.

International condemnation of last week's bus attack followed calls for both the Tigers and the Sri Lankan government to return to the negotiating table but neither side is listening, holding the other responsible for fomenting hostilities.

The European Union, which last month banned the <u>LTTE</u> as a terrorist organisation, has called on both sides to negotiate a settlement before the war of attrition exacerbates into full-blown hostilities.

More than 500 people including rebels and soldiers have died since April in what many diplomats refer to as the island's "undeclared war".

Norway, engaged for years in trying to broker a peace agreement, failed last week to persuade the sides to kickstart negotiations after talks in Geneva were called off a few months ago.

Load-Date: June 19, 2006



Relations between Tigers and Government collapse as mistrust rules; TSUNAMI: THE RECOVERY - Correction Appended

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 14, 2005 Friday

First Edition



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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 10

Length: 506 words

Byline: Fergus Shiel in Killinochi, Sri Lanka

Body

When the world thinks of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam it is mostly of suicide bombings, boy and girl fighters and assassination attempts in support of their quest for a separate homeland within Sri Lanka.

However, behind the barbed wire, the minefields and the military checkpoints in <u>LTTE</u> country is a polite, old-fashioned society with its own quasi-departments, police force, judicial system, navy and media.

Men wear pressed shirts and slacks. <u>Women</u> cycle by in jaunty hats. Phones are few. <u>LTTE</u> officials offer sweet tea to visitors and arrange accommodation, as there is no tourism infrastructure.

Tigers and lady Tigers are spotted rarely, but their leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, beams from photographs in every office.

In the wake of the tsunami the great hope was that the scale of the loss would provide fresh impetus for an end to more than 20 years of civil conflict that has cost 65,000 lives.

The Sri Lankan Army and the <u>LTTE</u> were thrown together by the urgency to deliver aid to close to 1 million displaced people, to recover thousands of bodies and to clear the debris.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who survived a Tiger assassination attempt in 1999, was pictured shaking hands with rebel commanders. But this week she sparked Tamil outrage by blocking a visit by the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, to areas under Tigers control.

The rebels have accused the Government of discriminating against them in distributing aid, and the Government was angry when an Italian official delivered aid directly to Tamils.

A Colombo political scientist, Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda, has already declared that any fresh hope for reconciliation has been squandered. "There is no trust between the leadership on both sides," he said.

The fear on either side of the sectarian divide now is that the flood of international aid could be used to steel resolves and, potentially, lead to further warfare.

Relations between Tigers and Government collapse as mistrust rules TSUNAMI: THE RECOVERY

Tamil community leaders say that there has been a huge donor response from the more than 1 million Sri Lankan Tamils living in Australia. In the 1990s tens of thousands of Tamils fled Jaffna as the Sri Lankan Army and the <u>LTTE</u> battled for control of the northern city. Many others left because they believed they were being racially discriminated against.

Financial and other assistance is said to be coming from India's 10 million Tamils, too, allowing the non-government Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) to execute a very impressive relief operation.

Government officials are adamant relief is being provided equitably and remain wary of efforts that could promote Tamil autonomy. In the east and north-east, where the majority of casualties are, Government, army, TRO and *LTTE* organisers have been co-operating in relief efforts with few public clashes.

But now, according to the TRO planning director, Lawrence Christy, the goodwill is being tested because the Government has decided to channel all international aid through centralised agencies.

The final Sri Lankan tsunami death toll is expected to be close to 38,000.

Correction

Friday's story "Relations between Tigers and Government collapse as mistrust rules" incorrectly said more than 1 million Sri Lankan Tamils live in Australia. The 2001 census reported there were just under 25,000 Tamil speakers living in Australia.

Correction-Date: January 18, 2005

Graphic

PHOTO: Dark days ... men play cards in a refugee camp in Mulliyawali, in northern Sri Lanka. Photo: Wayne Taylor

Load-Date: July 17, 2007



Tamils in France demonstrate over Sri Lanka children massacre

Agence France Presse -- English
August 17, 2006 Thursday 2:50 PM GMT

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Length: 288 words

Dateline: PARIS, Aug 17 2006

Body

More than 700 Tamils demonstrated in Paris Thursday against the "massacre" of dozens of children in a bombing raid by the Sri Lankan air force this week.

Protesters, many holding aloft placards with gruesome photos of dead children lying in pools of blood, accused the Sri Lankan government of carrying out the attack in the name of "state terrorism".

Tamil organisations say 61 children were killed and 150 wounded in Monday's air force bombing on what they described as an orphanage in rebel-held northern Mullaitivu district.

UNICEF and international observers in the area have rejected Sri Lankan claims that the building hit was a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) rebel training facility and that those killed were child soldiers.

The Sri Lankan military is locked in a struggle with the <u>LTTE</u> over the latter's separatist campaign. More than 60,000 people have been killed in the drawn out conflict since the start of the <u>LTTE</u> in 1972.

At the Paris demonstration, held in front of a major railway station in the south of the capital, organisers made impassioned speeches in Tamil while participants lined up to light candles for the child victims in a tent.

Many wore black armbands, and some held signs reading "EU rewards Sri Lankan state terrorism" and "The Tamils are not terrorists, just **women** and men who want to live in peace".

Dozens of people held black balloons representing those killed.

One protester, Sivanuban Nadarajah, said he was taking part because the killing of the children was "unacceptable" and "inhuman".

One of the groups organising the protest, the Organisation of Young Tamils in France, called on France and the international community "to react quickly against these massacres of Tamil civilians."

Load-Date: August 18, 2006



Police crack down on Tamil lodges in Sri Lanka's capital

Japan Economic Newswire

June 7, 2007 Thursday 12:36 PM GMT

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Section: INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Length: 283 words

Dateline: COLOMBO June 7

Body

Hundreds of Tamils from Sri Lanka's Northern and Eastern Provinces living in cheap lodges in Colombo were bused Thursday back to their home villages for security reasons, provoking angry protests in parliament.

The Defense Ministry said on its website that 376 people, including 85 <u>women</u>, had been sent back to their homes in the northern Jaffna and Vavuniya districts and eastern Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

But police sources said on condition of anonymity that more than 40 buses were used in Thursday's predawn operation, suggesting that at least 1,000 Tamils have been sent back to their home villages.

Tamil lawmakers, led by members of the Tamil National Alliance that is widely regarded as a proxy for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, protested noisily in parliament over the police action, disrupting proceeding for more than an hour.

The government agreed to a debate on the police action later in the day.

Police Chief Victor Perera claimed last week that Tamils from the war-torn north and east were spending long period of time in Colombo without employment and he branded them a threat to national security.

The Defense Ministry said Thursday that the police "without communal consideration" would investigate residents of lodges or others temporarily in the Colombo area "without valid reasons" for their presence.

Citing recent bomb attacks blamed on the <u>LTTE</u>, the ministry said that police action was "required by security demands."

A Colombo-based diplomat said on condition of anonymity that it was well known the <u>LTTE</u> has infiltrated the city and while some innocent Tamils would have been victimized by the crackdown, <u>LTTE</u> operatives too would "have been surely caught" in the net.

Load-Date: June 8, 2007



SRI LANKA: STRONG INTERNATIONAL ROLE NEEDED IN INQUIRY ON AID WORKER KILLINGS

US Fed News

August 11, 2006 Friday 6:55 AM EST

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Length: 714 words

Byline: US Fed News

Dateline: NEW YORK

Body

Human Rights Watch issued the following news release:

The Sri Lankan government should appoint an independent commission with international participants to investigate the brutal killing of 17 aid workers in the northeast town of Mutur, Human Rights Watch said today.

Human Rights Watch welcomed the government's decision to allow an Australian forensic expert to participate in the investigation, but urged that the expert be empowered to present his or her findings to an independent commission.

"While government condemnation of the killing of the aid workers is welcome, the true test will be whether it brings those responsible to justice," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "There have been far too many cases where the government said it would bring perpetrators to justice and then the process stalled. This time it must be different."

The aid workers were Sri Lankan staff of the international network of humanitarian organizations Action Against Hunger (Action Contre La Faim or ACF), which has been providing post-tsunami relief and reconstruction assistance.

The bodies of 15 of the aid workers, including four <u>women</u>, were discovered on Saturday, August 5. Most were reportedly found with gunshot wounds to the head, suggesting execution-style murders. All the victims were found wearing ACF T-shirts. The bodies of two additional workers were reportedly found in a car nearby. Sixteen of those killed were ethnic Tamil, one was Muslim.

The killings occurred during a lull in the fighting between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the armed opposition Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) in the northeast district of Trincomalee.

According to local sources, about two dozen <u>LTTE</u> fighters who were seen moving about Mutur town left around noon on Friday, August 4. Sri Lankan army forces entered the town that evening. Local residents reportedly saw the ACF workers alive on Friday morning and found their bodies the following morning.

Under international humanitarian law applicable in the current hostilities in Sri Lanka, the summary execution of any person is a war crime. Humanitarian relief workers and their facilities are entitled to special protections against attack.

SRI LANKA: STRONG INTERNATIONAL ROLE NEEDED IN INQUIRY ON AID WORKER KILLINGS

"The horrific killing of the aid workers will inflict harm far beyond the town of Mutur," said Adams. "With more people at risk each day, this attack on the humanitarian community will make survival more difficult for an untold number of people."

On July 20, the <u>LTTE</u> had closed a reservoir sluice gate, cutting the water supply to between 16,000 and 30,000 people in government-controlled territory. In response, Sri Lankan armed forces began air strikes against <u>LTTE</u> positions in the area and on July 30 launched a major ground offensive. <u>LTTE</u> counterattacks in early August resulted in a fight for control of Mutur town.

Widespread impunity for serious human rights abuses committed by both the security forces and the <u>LTTE</u> is a major, longstanding problem in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government has a poor record of investigating and successfully prosecuting serious violations of human rights and the laws of war, particularly when members of the security forces are implicated.

These concerns were highlighted in court proceedings this year in the prosecution of members of the state security forces for the summary execution of five Tamil youths in Trincomalee in December. The only witness willing to testify for the prosecution has been repeatedly threatened and harassed, including very recently.

Human Rights Watch called for an independent investigation into the killings of the ACF relief workers that includes impartial international participants of high standing. A successful prosecution of the ACF killings will also require meaningful and proactive witness protection measures, Human Rights Watch said. The government must take necessary steps both to protect all persons and their families who have agreed to testify, and to create an environment where other witnesses will be willing to come forward.

"International participation is crucial for the investigation to be considered credible," said Adams. "If the Sri Lankan government is serious, it will establish an independent commission to make sure such atrocities don't happen again."

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at httsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 12, 2006



Sri Lanka's dirty war sullies boutique hotel business

Agence France Presse -- English
July 1, 2007 Sunday 2:22 AM GMT

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Length: 826 words

Byline: Mel Gunasekera

Dateline: SIGIRIYA, Sri Lanka, July 1 2007

Body

Britney Spears, Paul McCartney, Sting and Paul Simon have all travelled to Sri Lanka for a big-bucks taste of tropical luxury.

But an escalating war with Tamil Tiger rebels and increasingly gruesome headlines on the human rights situation means that the rich or famous are now staying away -- and rooms in the island's boutique hotels are going for a song.

"They (tourists) have known for years that terrorism here is centred around military targets," said Gehan Wijeratne, director of Jetwing Group which runs a chain of 10 hotels, including three properties catering to the deep-pocketed visitor.

"But travellers don't like lawlessness, where there are extra-judicial killings, abductions. It sends shivers down their spine. Human rights are emerging as a bigger concern, people starting to brand us as a dirty destination."

One example of luxury rooms going cheap is at Jetwing's Vil Uyana, or Water World -- a resort built over a wetland in Sigiriya, 170 kilometres (106 miles) north of Colombo.

From the outside, the 25 thatched roof huts built over lush green rice paddy fields are a throw-back to an early civilisation, but the interiors are designed to pamper to every whim of the most discerning traveller.

"It's like living in a private nature reserve," said British banker Michael Maillou as he worked on his tan, sipped fresh mango juice and took in a view of lakes and reed beds populated by monkeys and wild elephants.

"This is paradise, to relax among hundreds of birds, butterflies, two crocodiles and get a piece of history," he said waving to the nearby fifth-century Sigiriya rock fortress, a world heritage site.

Near the stunning fortress, once the seat of a playboy king, are frescoes of half-naked <u>women</u> and a spread of ruins of the island's ancient royal kingdoms.

Sri Lanka 's dirty war sullies boutique hotel business

And thanks to the mostly grim headlines on Sri Lanka putting off many potential visitors, Maillou can also savour one of the best buys in the tropics: rather than the usual daily rate of 400 dollars, the picture-postcard eco-lodges are going for 125.

-- Frontline not far away --

Famed for its hills of tea plantations, golden beaches, abundance of wildlife and ancient religious sites, the teardrop island of Sri Lanka is now crying out for tourists.

The problem is that as the <u>Tamil Tigers</u> once again step up their fight for an independent ethnic homeland in the north and east, and as government forces respond with equal veracity, the frontline is never far away.

After an all-too brief lull in fighting following a 2002 ceasefire agreement and the 2004 Asian tsunami, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*LTTE*) have attacked in Colombo, the south, the east -- almost everywhere on the tiny island.

The Tigers have even managed to smuggle light aircraft into their northern mini-state, adding air power to their deadly arsenal of suicide bombers and forcing Sri Lanka's sole international airport to shut up shop at night for fear of more nocturnal raids.

Mounting "disappearances" have also been reported, with mutilated bodies turning up on a regular basis.

"Tourists with deep pockets are our mainstay, but we can't attract enough because of the macro situation in the country," Vil Uyana's manager, Tissa Wickramasuriya, said of the fighting.

Hotels as a whole are now reporting only 30 to 40 percent occupancy, as even aid workers -- who packed rooms following the tsunami -- are rare thanks increasing donor fatigue with the intractable conflict.

Places like Vil Uyana can still manage to pull in the odd guest, but similar boutique resorts stand empty.

-- More troubles ahead --

For Geoffrey Dobbs, a British national who worked in Sri Lanka's hospitality industry for 12 years, things have never looked so bleak.

"Things are really bad. We attract the high-end clientele who can have a peaceful holiday in any part of the world," said Dobbs, who runs five small luxury hotels, including a private island in the south.

"I see a lot of bankruptcy," says Dobbs. "Sadly it's going to get worse before it gets better."

At present, hotel industry workers say the luxury sector is struggling to score the 40 percent occupancy rates needed to cover operating costs.

But even that is no longer good enough, as owners of boutique hotels -- including tea plantation mansions and colonial-era homes converted into expensive villas -- need to pay off debts and retain bored staff.

Falling prices also threaten to damage the image of Sri Lanka's luxury resorts, which have been marketed on the premise that the high tariffs at least guarantee the rich -- and possibly very famous -- a bit of peace and quiet.

At the same time, keeping prices too high means no visitors.

Feeling the pinch on this is Lalin Jinasena, who owns the 12-room retro-chic Casa Colombo villa in the capital -- a 200-year-old Moorish mansion where a room currently costs 155 dollars a night instead of the hoped-for 600 dollars.

"The rich will not want to come if Sri Lanka has an image of a cheap destination," Jinasena said.

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Sri Lanka rebels hit air base in 1st combined air, ground attack

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Body

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels, in their first combined air and ground attack, targeted an air force base in northern Sri Lanka on Monday morning, according to information from both sides.

The army said the government side suffered at least six dead including two air force pilots and two gunners whose helicopter crash-landed amid the attack on Anuradhapura air base, located in North Central Province, about 170 kilometers northeast of Colombo.

In addition, ground fighting between the rebels and government troops resulted in the death of an air force officer and an army soldier, it said in a statement on its website, in which it also acknowledged 18 injuries.

The army cited unconfirmed reports of 10 rebels being killed.

Two Russian-made MI-24 gunships that had been parked in a hanger were damaged, it said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam said through the TamilNet website that a 21-member team of elite Black Tiger commandos penetrated into the heart of the air base, set ablaze eight aircraft -- including helicopter gunships, reconnaissance aircraft and a training aircraft -- and seized control of the base.

It said the attack was supported from the air by "Air Tiger aircrafts" which safely returned to their bases in rebel-held Vanni.

The <u>LTTE</u> released photos of the 21-member Black Tiger attack team that included <u>female</u> commandoes and the photos of the Air Tiger personnel who took part in the attack.

The first news of the early morning air strike stunned Sri Lankans fed in recent weeks by government propaganda on military successes in the wake of the eviction of the separatist rebels from the multiethnic Eastern Province earlier this year.

"Tiger terrorists in a predawn ground attack tried to overrun the air force base with the support of two **LTTE** light aircraft," the army said in the statement.

"Two shells were dropped immediately after the ground attack by the infiltrators," it said.

The Sri Lanka Air Force has in recent weeks been bombing <u>LTTE</u> positions almost on a daily basis, with government air power posing a major threat to the rebels.

Sri Lanka rebels hit air base in 1st combined air, ground attack

The <u>LTTE</u>, using what the government says are small Czech-made light aircraft powered by a single engine, first demonstrated air capability by bombing the main air force base adjoining the country's only international airport in March this year.

The government beefed up its air defenses following that attack, which was followed by two more that caused little damage.

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