

The Unspeakable
TRUTH



*This book is dedicated to
the Tamils who perished waiting for justice*

Preface

This book traces the poignant history of Tamils in Sri Lanka after independence. It catalogues the Sri Lankan Tamils' descent from a once thriving vibrant Nation to one that is today fighting for its very survival. This is a story about how a majority population consumed with religious chauvinism can corrupt a democratic process with untold consequences.

The book is organised into three sections covering the physical harm suffered by the Tamil community, the destruction of their cultural heritage and the attempts at negotiating a settlement which has come to nothing. The book also strikes a hopeful note at the end on how lasting peace can be achieved from the rubble of destruction.

The reader is likely to find some images depicting examples of violence difficult and is left to imagine the suffering endured by not only the victims but also their families and communities over the years. Unlike the usual Sri Lankan state sponsored propaganda material that is normally seen on the international news media, this is refreshingly narrated from a Tamil perspective - one that rarely gets an airing on the world stage. A reader with limited time and interest, used to the democratic system in the Western world with its checks and balances tends to give credibility to a government's statements over any other. In Sri Lanka, the reality is far from the 'truth' claimed by its Government. By systematically documenting the key events, this book is bound to add to the reader's knowledge of what Tamils in Sri Lanka have endured post independence in 1948.

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Introduction

Sri Lanka (formerly known as Ceylon): a beautiful island off the south coast of India, and a land rich with sandy beaches, rolling hills and ancient temples, where hundreds of thousands of tourists visit every year and enjoy the friendly hospitality of the locals. A harmonious nation, where all communities – Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims – live side-by-side participating in the national life as brothers. Perhaps this is the image of Sri Lanka that most people have of the country; at least, this is the image the Sri Lankan government tries to project to the world, spending millions of dollars on public relations.

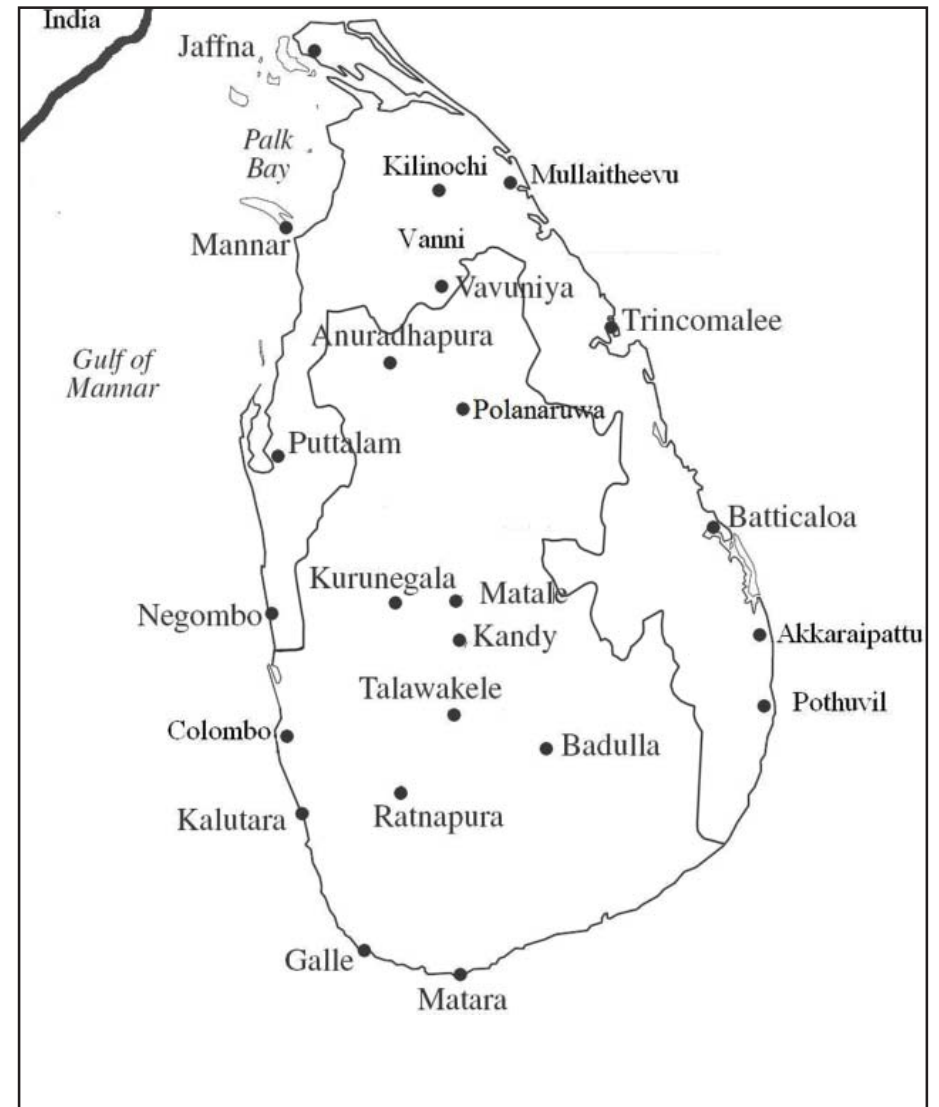
Beneath the veneer of this 'picture postcard' image lies a country that has increasingly become genocidal towards Tamils; a brutal society in which the fundamental rights of some of its people are denied. The judiciary, polity and the armed forces are corrupt and stacked against the Tamils. The brutality and lack of accountability puts the worst dictatorships in the shade. Sri Lanka is widely considered as a failed state and only propped up by international aid.

This work is an illustration of the post-independence history of Sri Lanka from a Tamil perspective. In particular, it deals with the plight endured by the Tamils at the hands of their new colonial masters, the Sinhalese, and how the Sinhala Buddhist hegemony betrayed the trust of the Tamils and pushed them towards the restoration of their nationhood.

The engagement and efforts of the International Community in the resolution of the conflict and the effect this has had on the conflict itself are detailed here. The views of the Tamil nation, the Tamil diaspora, and the Tamils' aspirations for the resolution of conflict are laid out, and a process for reaching lasting peace is suggested.

This work seeks to set the record straight by challenging the myth created by those with vested interests in the failure of the Tamil's quest for nationhood. Authors have taken care to be sensitive with photographic illustrations; however, some readers may find certain images distressing. They have been nevertheless included in order to demonstrate the depth of the suffering of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka.

The Island: Sri Lanka - Tamil Eelam Previously known as Ceylon, Eelam, Lanka, Serendip, Ilankai



Communities

Sinhalese 74%
Tamils 25%
Others 1%

Language

Sinhala 74%
Tamil 25%
Others 1%

Religions

Buddhism - Sinhalese
Hinduism - Tamils
Islam - Tamils
Christianity - Tamils, Sinhalese

1981 census

1. Documented genocide suffered by Tamils in Sri Lanka

1.1 State-aided Sinhala settlements in the Tamil homeland - Ethnic Cleansing



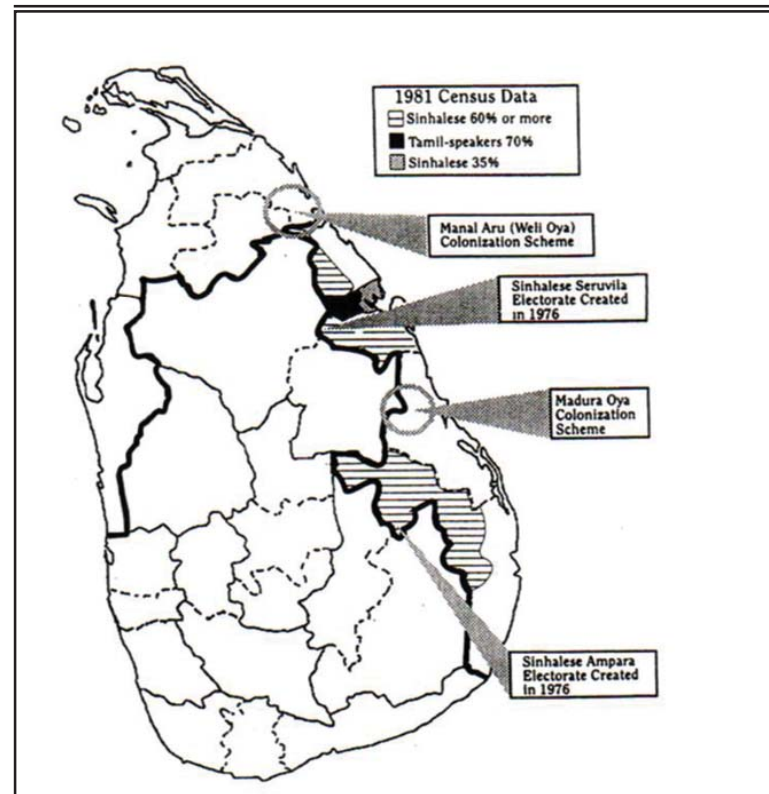
Sinhala thugs and a Buddhist monk with guns at the new settlements

State-aided Sinhala settlements in the Tamil homeland - Ethnic Cleansing

The marginalisation and discrimination of the Tamils, who were 30% of the total population of Sri Lanka, began soon after the country gained independence from Britain. Without wasting any time, the first independent Sri Lankan government moved to deal with the Tamil homeland issue. The State appropriated land in the Tamil homeland, in many cases driving entire Tamil villages out. These ethnically-cleansed villages were then given to Sinhala settlers brought in from other areas of Sri Lanka.

The purpose of such colonisations was to break the geographical continuity of the Tamil homeland and to make parts of it ethnically mixed. This social engineering diluted the ethnicity of the Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts, which were 95% Tamil in the 1930s. While redistributing fertile land in the rural areas, the State again turned its attention to the port town of Trincomalee, nationalising the natural harbour and bringing in Sinhala workers and their families to settle in the town at the expense of the Tamils.

A process camouflaged as land development schemes consumed 30% of the traditional Tamil homeland.



Examples of the colonisation schemes imposed on the Tamil homeland by the Sinhala State

Changes in Ethnic composition of Trincomalee District (1827-1981)

Year	Sinhalese		Tamils		Muslims	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1827	250	1.3	15663	81.8	3245	16.9
1881	935	4.2	14394	64.8	5746	25.9
1891	1109	4.3	17117	66.4	6426	25.0
1901	1203	4.2	17069	60.0	8258	29.0
1911	1138	3.8	17233	57.9	9714	32.6
1921	1501	4.4	18586	54.5	12846	37.7
1946	11606	15.3	33795	44.5	23219	30.6
1953	15296	18.2	37517	44.7	28616	24.1
1963	40950	29.6	54050	39.1	42560	30.8
1971	54744	29.1	71749	38.1	59924	31.8
1981	86341	33.6	93510	36.4	74403	29.0

Source: Census data on Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

Successive Sri Lankan governments have engaged in ethnic cleansing of the Tamil homeland from 1948

1.2 The Disenfranchisement of Tamils of Indian Origin



Tea plantation in Sri Lanka



Indian Tamil workers at a tea plantation in Ceylon.

Representation in the parliament

Community	1947 seats	1952 seats	1956 seats	1960 seats	1960 seats	1978 seats
Sinhalese*	63	73	73	78	77	190
Tamils	20	12	12	11	11	23
Muslims	6	8	7	6	7	12

*Constitutional changes increased the Sinhala representation three fold

The Disenfranchisement of Tamils of Indian Origin

The first independent Sri Lankan Government was also very active in enacting anti-Tamil legislation. One of those early laws was the Citizenship Act of 1948. The main provision of this Act was to make one million Tamils of Indian origin stateless. This segment of the Tamil population had originally been brought to Sri Lanka by the British from India in 1834 and had made Sri Lanka its home for over six generations.

In the following year, the amended Citizenship Act disenfranchised them. Until such time, the Tamils of Indian origin had elected eight Tamil Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent them. The Citizenship Acts of 1948 and 1949 effectively pushed this economically-disadvantaged group of Tamils into a sub-human existence.

For the Tamils, this was the thin end of the wedge, which over time permeated into every segment of the Tamil community in a systematic manner.

"Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality..."-

*Article 15,
Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Tamils of Indian origin living in Sri Lanka over 6 generations were made stateless immediately after independence in 1948

1.3 State-sponsored Riots against Tamils



Devastation of Tamil neighbourhood



▲ Vehicle burnt outside Hindu Temple in Colombo by Sinhalese thugs.



Army complicity in the riots

State-sponsored Riots against Tamils

The marginalisation of Tamils, which started with the Government using statutory instruments against them, was now to take a more violent form. This was initially characterised by periodic, brutal, and state-sponsored anti-Tamil riots.

The first of these riots took place in the aftermath of the passing of the 'Sinhala Only Act' in 1956. The Tamil leadership protested by staging a Gandhian-style, non-violent sit-in known as 'Satyagraha'. This peaceful protest was broken up by Sinhala mobs, and violence against the Tamils spread to other parts of the island. Hundreds of Tamils were driven out of their homes, attacked and their houses burned. Tamils were astonished at the inability of the authorities to provide adequate protection against these racially-motivated attacks.

Barely two years passed before the Tamils were put through the same ordeal once again, this time with even more ferocity. In the two preceding years, the political landscape moved decidedly against the Tamils (this will be detailed later). Violence was aimed at the Tamils in almost every town where they lived as a minority in the Sinhala homeland. ►



In 1956, Sinhala was made the only official language in Sri Lanka. Tamil and English were relegated to secondary status.



S W R D Bandaranaike
Prime minister in 1956

Tamils were astonished at the inability of the authorities to provide adequate protection against these racially-motivated attacks

State-sponsored Riots against Tamils



▲ Tamils murdered by Sinhala mobs



▲ Devastation of Tamil neighbourhood

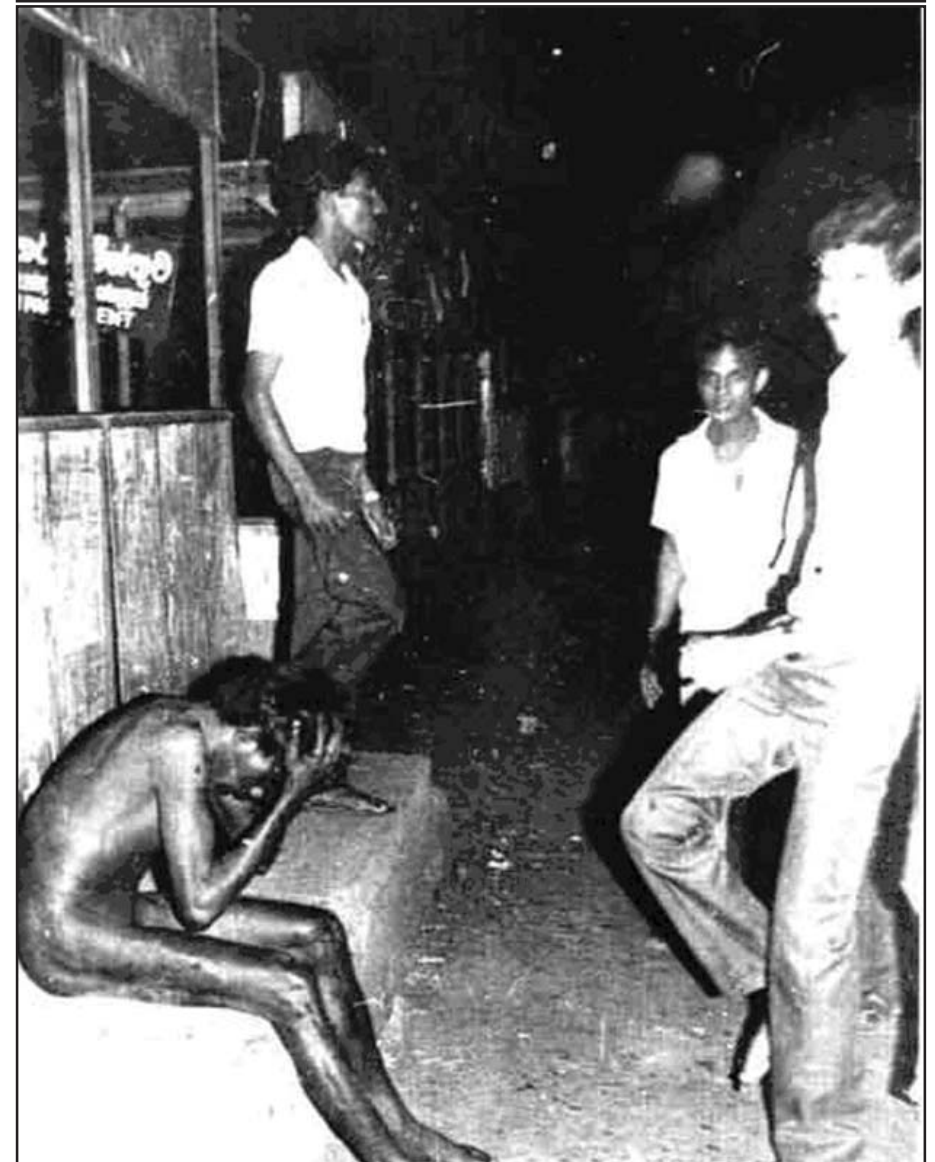


▶ One of the many Tamil businesses torched in Colombo

Houses and businesses owned by Tamils were burned down; women were raped and murdered. A Hindu priest was dragged out of his temple in the middle of prayer and burned alive. Buddhist monks, who were ardent anti-Tamil campaigners, organised and directed the mobs. The police idly stood by, or in some instances actively encouraged the mobs. The Prime Minister refused to declare a state of emergency to check the violence. It had now become clear to the Tamils that they could not rely on the Government, or the law enforcing authorities, for protection.

The anti-Tamil legislation and violence clearly demonstrated to the Tamils that the Sinhala State was out to marginalise them. The Tamil leadership began to advocate the restoration of pre-colonial Tamil statehood and sought a mandate for it from the Tamil people. Tamils gave the mandate, a landslide victory in the 1977 general election. The Sinhala State retaliated with yet further State-sponsored anti-Tamil riots.

The two nationalities became increasingly polarised, with the Sinhala-dominated police and the exclusively Sinhala military becoming the main apparatus in the brutality against the Tamils in the Tamil homeland. The historically passive Tamil youth were forced to retaliate with violence when necessary.



Tamil boy stripped naked and later burnt to death by hate filled Sinhala thugs who danced around him. The mob were never brought to justice.

The anti-Tamil legislation and violence clearly demonstrated to the Tamils that the Sinhala State was out to marginalise them

1.4 The 1983 Pogrom - a Watershed Event



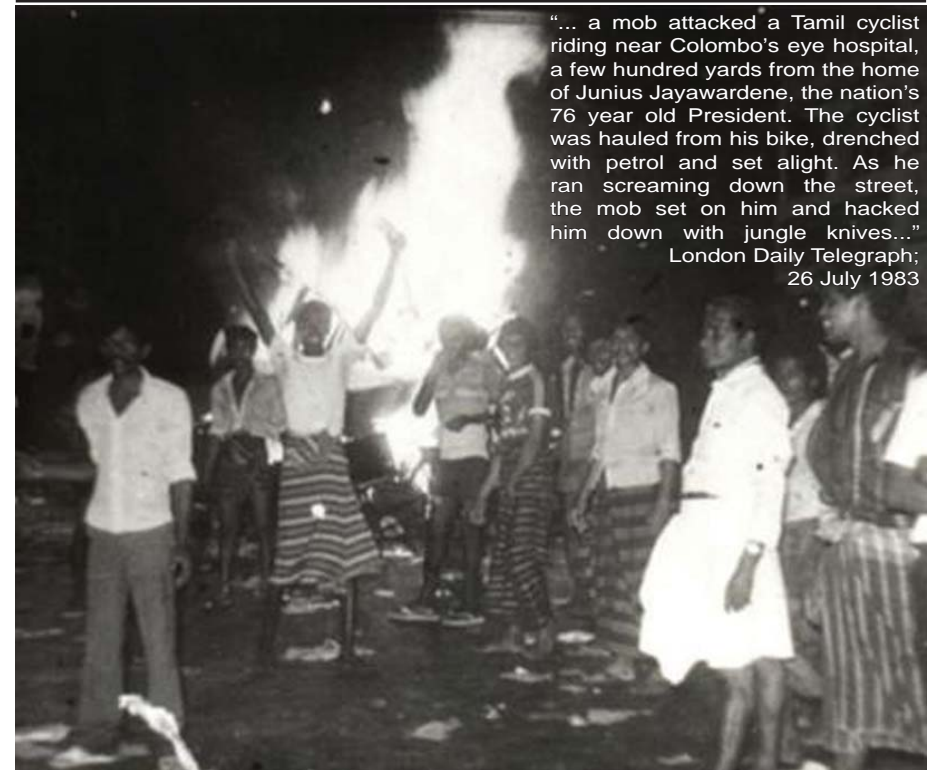
Sinhala mobs seeking out Tamils for beatings and killings

"It is not clear how it was possible for the killings to take place without the connivance of prison officials, and how the assassinations could have been repeated after an interval of two days, since Welikade prison is a high security prison and the Tamil prisoners were kept in separate cells..."

*Ethnic Violence in Sri Lanka,
(1981-83: Staff Report of the International Commission of Jurists, ICJ Review)*

The 1983 Pogrom – a Watershed Event

Then, in July 1983, the Sinhala State unleashed the mother of all riots, a large scale pogrom on the Tamil people. A watershed event; the brutality of which turned even moderate Tamils firmly towards armed struggle in order to restore Tamil nationhood. For the first time, foreign media recorded and publicised the ferocity and horror of events where Tamils remained the targets. The full State apparatus was used against the Tamils. Senior cabinet ministers, armed with electoral lists, directed mobs to Tamil homes and businesses. The Sinhala rioters did not even try to hide their faces in the certain knowledge that no harm would come to them from the law-enforcing authorities. In one of the worst incidents, 35 Tamil political prisoners held in Colombo High Security Prison were massacred by Sinhala prisoners. Two days later, eighteen more were to face the same fate. ▶



"... a mob attacked a Tamil cyclist riding near Colombo's eye hospital, a few hundred yards from the home of Junius Jayawardene, the nation's 76 year old President. The cyclist was hauled from his bike, drenched with petrol and set alight. As he ran screaming down the street, the mob set on him and hacked him down with jungle knives..."
London Daily Telegraph;
26 July 1983

"Eye witnesses and victims reported that on the streets cars were stopped by gangs and the people inside were asked whether they were Sinhalese or Tamil. Some Sinhalese words are extremely difficult for people who do not speak the language fluently to pronounce, people were tested by being made to pronounce these words. The mobs were also demanding to see identity cards to establish whether or not people were Tamils... People identified as Tamils as a result of the questioning were told to get out of their cars and their cars were set alight... In cases where any resistance was offered, killings were likely to take place... It was reported by many people that in some instances students from Buddhist schools followed on behind the first rioters and that some Buddhist monks were seen amongst the gangs"

*- Patricia Hyndman, Senior Lecturer in Law, University of New South Wales
and Secretary, Lawasia Human Rights Standing Committee Report -
Democracy in Peril, June 1985*

The astonishing brutality of the 1983 riots was the tipping point for moderate Tamils to look towards the armed struggle to restore Tamil nationhood

The 1983 Pogrom a Watershed Event



Sinhala daubed on the wall pointing out - 'Tamil family lives here'

State complicity in the July 1983 pogrom was further underlined when the first edition of the State-owned daily newspaper ignored the carnage on its doorstep and instead published an editorial on the destruction of the rain forest in South America and the consequences to the environment! To crown the injury to the Tamils, the President of Sri Lanka addressed the nation, justifying the pogrom as a natural reaction by the Sinhala people to the death of a few soldiers. It was now official that Sri Lanka was a Sinhala, Buddhist country and that he was the President of the Sinhalese only; Tamils need not look in that direction for protection or justice.



▲ Tamil refugees after 1983 riots



2001 riots on Muslim Tamils in Mawanella:

Two mosques, sixty houses, forty shops and two Muslim owned fuel stations were burnt down in Mawanella.



2006 attack on Tamils in Trincomalee:

20 civilians were killed, over 30 shops and 100 homes destroyed. Over 3000 displaced people seeking refuge in schools and places of worship.

2006 attack on Tamils : Galle

In October 2006 a number of Tamil owned shops were damaged or destroyed in mob violence against Tamil merchants in the port city of Galle. Sinhala mob looted around 20 shops owned by Tamils in the Marxist JVP stronghold city.



The President's words left the Tamils in no doubt that Sri Lanka was a Sinhala Buddhist state and that Tamils needed to look elsewhere for justice and protection

1.5 Progress from Pogroms to Aerial Bombings



A mass grave, containing skeletons bearing gunshot wounds, discovered in Paalameenmeadu, 6 km north of Batticaloa - July 2008

Progress from Pogroms to Aerial Bombings

The pattern would be repeated over time whenever the Sinhala nation was confronted with Tamil protests; the government and the armed forces would organise another anti-Tamil pogrom. Keen to avoid international attention lest it jeopardised foreign aid, the Sinhala politicians organised anti-Tamil pogroms well away from Colombo, and far away from the gaze of the international press. Provincial towns would be the scene of these pogroms in the future.

The history of massacres over a period of five decades stands testament to the suffering inflicted upon a proud and peace loving people. The ferocity of the pogrom in 1983 and the unmistakable message given to the Tamils by the Sinhala State persuaded the Tamils that coexistence with dignity and safety with the Sinhalese was impossible. If it was a watershed event in the experience of the Tamils, it was also a watershed event in the tactics thereafter of the Sinhala State.

The State introduced the aerial bombing of Tamil areas. Initially, this was carried out by rolling down explosive-laden barrels from converted, small passenger aircrafts. On occasion the barrels were even laden with human excrement! The civilian casualties of today, however, are caused by aerial bombings from sophisticated, attack aircrafts acquired from overseas, including from Western nations.



The army ordered civilians to take refuge in Navali St Peters church and then bombed the church killing over hundred and injuring 120 including women and children (9th October 1995)



Victims of aerial bombing in Kilinochi (2008). Indiscriminate bombing raids by supersonic fighter jets in the Tamil homeland is a daily occurrence.



The history of massacres over a period of five decades stands testament to the suffering inflicted upon a proud and peace loving people

1.6 The Torture and Murder of Civilians to win Submission



9 killed in Allaipiddy, Jaffna ▲
(14th May 2006)



A school bus was targeted by the Sri Lankan army Deep Penetration Unit (DPU) in Mannar—2007 ▶

The Torture and Murder of Civilians to win Submission

The Military occupied the entire Tamil homeland and abductions in the middle of the night by armed forces, along with civilian disappearance, became commonplace.

Thousands of Tamils, mainly youth, disappeared in this way. Some bodies were later found in ditches or in mass graves, but the parents and relatives of many more were never to know the fate of their loved ones.

The Government resorted to arresting large numbers of people and detaining them without trial. In most cases, families were kept in the dark about the arrest and the whereabouts of the detainees – a tactic in case the torture went terribly wrong.



Carnage at the orphanage: Sencholai children's home at Vallipunam, Vanni on 14th August 2006. 61 children died and 129 were wounded.



The Torture and Murder of Civilians to win Submission



The whole family was brutally tortured and killed by the Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF) personnel in Vankalai, Mannar (9th June 2006). The bodies were exhibited to intimidate the population.



Victims: Father - Moorthy Martin, Mother - Mary Medaline (raped before murder), Children - Ann Nixon 7 and Ann Luxica 9

Documented Major Massacres by Sri Lankan State on Tamils (1956 to 2001)

1. Inginiyakala massacre - 05.06.1956
2. 1958 pogrom
3. Tamil research conference massacre - 10.01.1974
4. 1977 communal pogrom
5. 1981 communal pogrom
6. Burning of the Jaffna library - 01.06.1981
7. 1983 communal pogrom
8. Thirunelveli massacre - 24, 25.07.1983
9. Sampalhoddam massacre - 1984
10. Chunnakam Police station massacre - 08.01.1984
11. Chunnakam market massacre - 28.03.1984
12. Mathawachchi - Rampawa - September 1984
13. Point Pedro - Thikkam massacre - 16.09.1984
14. Othiyamalai massacre - 01.12.1984
15. Kumulamunai massacre - 02.12.1984
16. Cheddikulam massacre - 02.12.1984
17. Manalaru massacre - 03.12.1984
18. Blood soaked Mannar - 04.12.1984
19. Kokkilai -Kokkuthoduvaai massacre - 15.12.1984
20. Vankalai church massacre - 06.01.1986
21. Mulliyavalai massacre - 16.01.1985
22. Vaddakandal massacre - 30.01.1985
23. Puthukkudiyiruppu Iyankovilady massacre - 21.04.1985
24. Trincomalee massacres in 1985
25. Valvai - 85 massacre 10.05.1985
26. Kumuthini Boat massacre 15.05.1985
27. Kiliveddi massacre in 1985
28. Thiriyai massacre - 08.06.1985
29. Sampaltivu - 04 to 09.08.1985
30. Veeramunai massacre - 20.06.1990
31. Nilaveli massacre 16.09.1985
32. Piramanthanaru massacre - 02.10.1985
33. Kanthalai -85 massacre - 09.11.1985
34. Muthur Kadatkarachenai - 08, 09, 10.11.1985
35. Periyapullumalai massacre in 1986
36. Kilinochchi Railway Station massacre - 25.01.1986
37. Udumbankulam massacre - 19.02.1985
38. Vayaloor massacre - 24.08.1985
39. Eeddimurinchin massacre - 19, 20.03.1986
40. Anandapuram shelling - 04.06.1986
41. Kanthalai - 86 massacre - 04, 05.06. 1986
42. Mandaithivu sea massacre - 10.06.1986
43. Seruvila massacre - 12.06.1986
44. Thambalakamam massacres - 1985, 1986
45. Paranthan farmers massacre - 28.06.1986
46. Peruvelli refugee camp massacre - 15.07.1986
47. Thanduvan bus massacre - 17.07.1986
48. Mutur Manalachenai massacre - 18.07. 1986
49. Adampan massacre - 12.10.1986
50. Periyapandivrichchan massacre - 15.10.1986
51. Kokkadichcholai - 87 massacre - 28.01.1987
52. Paddithidal massacre - 26.04.1987
53. Thonithiddamadu massacre - 27.05.1987
54. Alvai temple shelling - 29.05.1987
55. Eastern University massacre - 23.05.1990
56. Sammanthurai massacre - 10.06.1990
57. Xavierpuram massacre - 07.08.1990
58. Siththandy massacre - 20, 27.07.1990
59. Paranthan junction massacre - 24.07.1990
60. Poththuvil massacre - 30.07.1990
61. Tiraikerny massacre - 06.08.1990
62. Kalmunai massacre - 11.08.1990
63. Thuranilavani massacre - 12.08.1990
64. Eravur hospital massacre - 12.08.1990
65. Koraveli massacre 14.08.1990
66. Nelliyadi market bombing - 29.08.1990
67. Eravur massacre - 10.10.1990
68. Saththurukkondan massacre - 09.09.1990
69. Natpiddymunai massacre - 10.09.1990
70. Vantharamullai - 90 massacre - 05, 23.09.1990
71. Mandaithivu disappearances - 23.08.1990, 25.09.1990
72. Oddisuddan bombing - 27.11.1990
73. Puthukkudiyiruppu junction bombing
74. Vankalai massacre - 17.02.1991
75. Vaddakkachchi bombing - 28.02.1991
76. Vantharumoolai - 09.06.1991
77. Kokkadichcholai - 91 massacre - 12.06.1991
78. Pullumalai massacre - 1983 -1990
79. Kinniyadi massacre - 12.07.1991
80. Akkarayan hospital massacre - 15.07.1997
81. Uruthrapuram bombing - 04.02.1991
82. Karapolla - Muthgalla massacre - 29.04.1992
83. Vattrapalai shelling - 18.05.1992
84. Thellipalai temple bombing - 30.05.1992
85. Mailanthai massacre - 09.08.1992
86. Kilali massacre - 1992, 1993
87. Maaththalan bombing - 18.09.1993
88. Chavakachcheri - Sangatthanai bombing - 28.09.1993
89. Kokuvil temple massacre & bombing - 29.09.1993
90. Kurunagar church bombing - 13.11.1993
91. Chundikulam - 94 massacre - 18.02.1994
92. Navalai church massacre - 09.07.1995
93. Nagarkovil bombing - 22.05.1995
94. Chemmani mass graves in 1996
95. Kilinochchi town massacre - 1996 -1998
96. Kumarapuram massacre - 11.02.1996
97. Nachchikuda strafing - 16.03.1996
98. Thambirai market bombing - 17.05.1996
99. Mallavi bombing - 24.07.1996
100. Pannankandy massacre - 05.07.1997
101. Kaitthady Krishanthi massacre - 07.09.1996
102. Vavunikulam massacre - 26.09.1996, 15.08.1997
103. Konavil bombing - 27.09.1996
104. Mullivaikal bombing - 13.05.1997
105. Mankulam shelling - 08.06.1997
106. Thampalakamam - 98 massacre - 01.02.1998
107. Old Vaddakachchi bombing - 26.03.1998
108. Suthanthirapuram massacre - 10.06.1998
109. Visuvamadhu shelling - 25.11.1998
110. Chundikulam - 98 bombing 02.12.1998
111. Manthuvil bombing - 15.09.1999
112. Palinagar bombing and shelling - 03.09.1999
113. Madhu church massacre - 20.11.1999
114. Bindunuwewa massacre
115. Mirusuvil massacre - 19.12.2000

Report by: North East Secretariat on Human Rights (NESOHR)

1.7 Rape as a Means of Suppression



Ilayathamby Tharshini (20), whose body was recovered from an abandoned well. She had been brutally raped and murdered. Her body had been weighed down with a rock.

Rape as a Means of Suppression

This undisciplined army of occupation indulged in the rape and murder of Tamil women and school children. In one incident, a 19-year-old college girl, Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, was raped and murdered by soldiers. The Commanding Officer of these personnel, Brigadier Janaka Perera, later served as the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia. Tamils continued to observe that those responsible for their brutal treatment were later commended and promoted by the Sri Lankan State.

There were countless cases of rape that were never reported; the Krishanthi case was an exception due to the publicity it received. One of the reasons is the shame attached to being a rape victim – often the only complaint route was for these women to make a complaint to the culprits themselves.

Among thousands of incidents, these are a handful that attracted publicity in the media



◀ Krishanthi Kumaraswamy (19), a Tamil school girl raped and murdered by President Mrs. Kumaratunga's army personnel under the command of the then Brigadier Janaka Perera who was later appointed as the High Commissioner for Australia.



Murugesapillai Koneswary (35), a mother of four, was gang-raped and murdered by policemen in Batticaloa. According to the relatives and the husband of the victim, the offenders of this crime had exploded a grenade into her genitalia in order to cover up any evidence after raping her. ▶

Last Updated: Friday, 2 November 2007, 22:15 GMT

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S Lanka troops 'abused Haitians'

The UN is sending home more than 100 of the 950 Sri Lankan peacekeepers in Haiti, accusing them of sexual abuse, including with underage girls.



The UN said the troops had paid for sex and that some of the girls were minors.

Sri Lankan authorities were involved in the investigation

This undisciplined army of occupation indulged in the rape and murder of Tamil women and school children

1.8 The Assassination of Political Leadership and Human Rights Activists

Sri Lanka jets kill Tamil Tiger political head Thamilselvan

Sat Nov 3, 2007 12:46am IST

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REUTERS



By Ranga Sirilal

COLOMBO (Reuters) - Tamil Tiger political wing leader S.P. Thamilselvan was killed in a Sri Lankan air force bombing raid early on Friday, the rebels said, in what analysts warned was a body-blow to any hope of ending the conflict soon.

Thamilselvan was the rebels' main interlocutor at the last round of peace talks with the Sri Lankan government in October 2006, and was the international face of the separatist group.

The Assassination of Political Leadership and Human Rights Activists

The genocidal programme of the Sinhala State moved relentlessly forward. Having cut their teeth on civilians, the Sinhala State now moved against other groups that got in the way of their programme.

One of these groups was the democratically-elected parliamentarians from the Tamil homeland. While claiming to observe the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), the Sri Lankan Government embarked upon a programme of assassination of key members of the Tamil political leadership. In the first of these, Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham MP was assassinated in a church during Christmas Eve midnight mass within the High Security Zone (HSZ). Mr. Maheswaran MP of the (mainly Sinhala) United National Party and Mr. Raviraj MP were murdered in broad daylight in the highly secure Colombo city. In 2007, the Chief Peace Negotiator Mr. S. P. Thamilselvan was assassinated in an air raid. The UK All Party Parliamentary Group for Tamils was planning to invite Mr. Thamilselvan to address UK parliamentarians at Westminster. This may explain the Government's need to silence him before he was given a world stage to air the Tamil perspective. Tamils watched in despair as anyone successfully articulating their plight was silenced by the Sinhala State with impunity. ▶



◀ Joseph Pararajasingham MP assassinated in St Mary's church, Batticaloa during Christmas eve mass by Sri Lankan Army—2005. Silenced as his words were beginning to gain attraction internationally

Ariyanayagam Chandra Nehru Killed on 7 February 2005 by the SLA, he was a member of Tamil National Alliance in the Sri Lankan Parliament elected from Amparai ▶



◀ K. Sivanesan MP, was killed in a claymore attack carried out by the Sri Lanka Army Deep Penetration Unit (DPU) - 6 March 2008

Leading Tamil Politician and Ex-Minister T Maheswaran MP assassinated in Kotehena Sivan Kovil (Hindu temple) in the High Security Zone (HSZ) of Colombo on New years Day -2008 ▶



◀ Raviraj MP was assassinated on 10 November 2006, in the Colombo HSZ in broad daylight, 24 hours after this protest outside the UNHCR office.

While claiming to observe the ceasefire, the Sri Lankan Government embarked upon a programme of assassination of key members of the Tamil political leadership

The Assassination of Political Leadership and Human Rights Activists



Kumar Ponnampalam

Assassinated a few days after a critical open letter he wrote to Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga. - 5 January 2000



V Vigneswaran

The assassination of Mr Vigneswaran took place on 7 April 2006, just as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) were preparing to announce his appointment as the national list Parliamentarian to fill the position held by Joseph Pararajasingham MP who had been slain in Batticaloa on Christmas eve.



Rev. Fr. Nicholaspillai Packiyaranjith

Killed in a claymore explosion by SLA on 26th September 2007

“There are fears that a pattern of ‘disappearances’ by state agents is reemerging following the introduction of new Emergency Regulations in August 2005 that granted sweeping powers to the security forces.”

- Amnesty International



▲ **Rev. Father M X Karunaratnam,**

The chairman of the NorthEast Secretariat on Human Rights (NESoHR), killed in a claymore attack by the SLA on 20 April 2008.

With former President of Amnesty International and Human Rights expert, Mr Ian Martin



◀ **Sivasubramaniam Raveendranath,**

The Vice Chancellor of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka (EUSL) who was abducted on 15 December 2006 in Colombo in High Security Zone. He is missing to date.

Another of the targeted groups was comprised of Tamil human rights activists, who worked among the Tamil people. Their independent nature, along with the credibility of their accusations and statements, carried a lot of weight in the International Community, hence the need to silence them. The latest of these victims was Rev. Father M. X. Karunaratnam of the North East Secretariat on Human Rights (NESoHR). He was not the only clergyman to be murdered: several Catholic priests were also abducted and murdered over time.

With the threat of assassinations, Tamil political opposition in Sri Lanka had been silenced

1.9 Suppression and Violence against the Media



Torture of media workers is a common occurrence in Sri Lanka



Burnt down Sunday Leader Press in Colombo

Suppression and Violence against the Media

Successive governments kept the International Community blindsided by restricting access to foreign journalists to the area of conflict. In their absence, Tamil journalists operating from within the Tamil areas brought the real picture of the war torn Tamil homeland to the outside world.

The Government propaganda was often contradicted by these brave men. Many of these media persons were killed by the Government. First of them to meet this fate was the BBC reporter Mr.Nimalarajan.

It must be noted that none of these murders were investigated in any serious manner; let alone bringing the perpetrators to justice.

In 2007 The International Media Watch observed Sri Lanka to be the third most dangerous place in the world for journalists to work in.



▲ Mr. Mylvaganam Nimalarajan:
Contributed to the BBC for over six years.
Shot dead and silenced - 19 October 2000



Mr. Aiyathurai Nadesan
A leading Tamil journalist and political analyst, was shot dead on his way to work - 31 May 2004



► Body of Paranirupasingam Thevakumar,
Jaffna correspondent of Sakthi TV station,
in Jaffna Teaching Hospital mortuary
- 28 May 2008



◀ Reporters Sans Frontières
(Reporters Without Borders)
Describing Mr. Sivaram as a “brilliant journalist”, said that he was targeted because of his “uncompromising coverage of the political and military situation” in Sri Lanka - 29 April 2005



Many journalists were killed by the Government; the first of them to meet this fate was the BBC reporter Mr.Nimalarajan

1.10 The Obstruction and Silencing of Aid Workers



Former US President Bill Clinton meets TRO Director Mr Regi in Colombo—2005

The Obstruction and Silencing of Aid Workers

The Sinhala State now turned its attention to the overseas aid organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). For many Tamil civilians in the embargoed Tamil homeland, these organisations provided a lifeline. The organisations got in the way of the Government's strategy to starve the Tamils out into submission. Furthermore, these organisations were a source of impartial information to the outside world, hence their workers were targeted.

Following the massacre of seventeen of its staff, one such organisation, the French charity 'Action Against Hunger', left Sri Lanka and is still fighting to bring the perpetrators to justice. Several volunteers from the charity 'Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation' (TRO) were abducted, never to return. The final casualty was the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which was in the Tamil homeland to monitor the Ceasefire Agreement.

Last Updated: Wednesday, 30 August 2006, 16:16 GMT 17:16 UK

E-mail this to a friend Printable version **BBC NEWS**

Military 'killed Lanka aid staff'

Truce monitors in Sri Lanka have accused the military of killing 17 local employees of a French charity.

The deaths this month of the Action Against Hunger workers were "a gross violation of the ceasefire accord by the security forces", monitors said.

The aid workers were found shot dead in Muttur in the north-east



Bodies of 17 aid workers belonging to the French charity Action Against Hunger

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TRO volunteers abducted on 30th January 2006 never returned:
 Mr. Kasinathar Ganeshalingam, Mr. Kathirkamar Thangarasa,
 Ms. Thanuskody Premini, Mr. Shanmuganathan Sujendran,
 Mr. Arulthevarasa Satheesharan, Mr. Kailayapillai Ravindran,
 Mr. Thampirasa Vasantharajah Accountant

Following the massacre of seventeen of its staff, the French charity 'Action Against Hunger', left Sri Lanka and is still fighting to bring the perpetrators to justice

2. Structural Genocide Inflicted on the Tamil Nation

2.1 The Destruction of Infrastructure in the Tamil Homeland



Burnt Jaffna Library

During this period hundreds of cultural centers, temples, schools, commercial centers and other public infrastructure were destroyed by the army stationed in the Tamil homelands. The one that left an indelible mark on the Tamil psyche was the wanton destruction of the Jaffna Public Library (housing 95,000 irreplaceable volumes) by the armed forces (now admitted by the present Sri Lankan Government). "...could virtually declare war against a section of its own people, and do it unashamedly, it happened in

Sri Lanka this year. Imagine a rowdy band of reserve policemen being brought all the way from the south to the Tamil capital city of Jaffna, and in the unusual presence in the city of two Cabinet Ministers, setting fire to the biggest cultural possession of the Tamils – the Public Library housing 95,000 volumes, some of them rare manuscripts..."

Prof. Virginia A Leary; Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka; Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists (July-August 1981)

The Destruction of Infrastructure in the Tamil Homeland

Jaffna was the second largest city in Sri Lanka and the ancient cultural capital of the Tamil Kingdom. The city had a bustling commercial district and was home to several boys' and girls' schools. The city of Jaffna and the entire Jaffna peninsula are home to several churches and temples. Tamils lived here in relative safety until the 1970s.

The hand of the Sinhala State reached Jaffna with the occupation of the entire peninsula by the Sinhala military. The occupying forces slowly but systematically destroyed the entire infrastructure of the Jaffna peninsula. Several churches and temples were destroyed in aerial bombardments. These were not just places of worship; from time to time people took refuge in them to escape the local brutality of the occupying Sinhala military. ▶



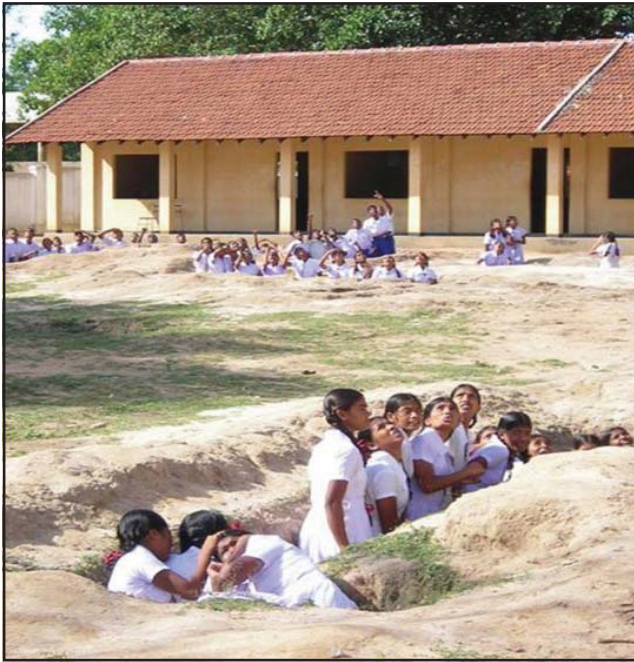
Bombed churches and temples



Jaffna Town Centre and Bus Station devastated by the Sri Lankan military

The occupying forces slowly but systematically destroyed the entire infrastructure of the Jaffna peninsula including temples, churches and even the world famous Jaffna library

The Destruction of Infrastructure in the Tamil Homeland



Many Tamil children were killed in aerial attacks on schools



Classroom devastated as a result of aerial bombing by SLAF



School children killed by the Sri Lankan forces

Several hundred people lost their lives and thousands were hurt when these places of worship were bombed and destroyed. The central bus station, the railway station, the post office building and several other buildings that often held cultural events were destroyed over time. Similar destruction took place in other major cities such as Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Vavuniya and Mannar. Even hospitals were bombed, killing hundreds of civilians including patients, doctors, nurses and other hospital staff.

The Sinhala nation's cruelty in the Tamil homeland was epitomised in 1981 by the destruction of Jaffna Library, which was one of the biggest in Asia and held a unique collection of over 90,000 books and manuscripts. Special police personnel were brought to Jaffna for this mission, and two senior government ministers were also in town to direct the book burning. Even Adolf Hitler had ordered his racist army to spare hospitals, schools, universities and Libraries. Within three days of carnage, the machinery and building of the only Tamil daily newspaper in the Tamil homeland, as well as the home of the then Jaffna MP, were destroyed. Everything that characterised and symbolised the Tamil nation had become a target.



Tamil school children taking cover from aerial bombing

Other major cities in the Tamil homeland, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Vavuniya and Mannar were also not spared by the Sinhala state

2.2 An Economic Embargo leading to Starvation

50,000 Armed Forces

Landmines and barbed wires

No International media allowed

No essential supplies allowed

All land routes are cut-off

Mass graves



Half a Million Tamils are kept in an open prison in the North

An Economic Embargo leading to Starvation

The extent of the brutality imposed upon the Tamil people by the Military was such that in the 1980s, hundreds of thousands of Tamils were forced to flee across the globe. Most of them fled to countries like India, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and other European countries.

However, for those civilians still living in the Tamil homeland, life was a misery due to ongoing military oppression and the economic embargo. This was not an embargo by the International Community on a brutal regime, but an embargo by a brutal regime on its own people.

The movement and supply of food, medicine, fuel, electricity and other essential items were, and still are controlled by the Military. This has become another weapon in their arsenal against civilians. This continues to be true even in the Eastern Province of the Tamil homeland, which the Sri Lankan government claims to have liberated.



Economic embargo on Tamils has continued for decades. Food and medicine are used as weapons of war by the Sri Lankan state



This was not an embargo by the International Community on a brutal regime, but an embargo by a brutal regime on its own people

2.3 Internally Displaced People and Ethnic Cleansing



Internally displaced people as a result of military operation in the Eastern town of Vaharai

Internally Displaced People and Ethnic Cleansing

There are large numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the Military-controlled areas of the Tamil homeland. In contravention of the Geneva Convention, the IDPs are kept in fenced areas, severely curtailing their movement. Again, the Sri Lankan military controls every aspect of their lives, denying them access to aid and NGOs. Arbitrary arrests and disappearances are regular occurrences in these camps. Probably for this reason, there are nearly 230,000 IDPs who have chosen to remain in the Tamil de facto State despite ongoing hardship caused by the embargo on the Tamil State.

Even when localised hostilities were over, these people were not permitted to return to their homes or livelihoods. Under the guise of 'development', the Sri Lankan State has allowed the vast land areas vacated by the IDPs to be colonised by the Sinhalese.



Internally displaced people as a result of military operation in the Eastern town of Batticaloa

"More than 230,000 Internally Displaced Persons in Vanni are facing a great human tragedy, which is calculatedly concealed from the world outside"

Rev. Fr. James Pathinathan
president of the Vanni branch of the Justice
and Peace Commission



Under the guise of 'development', the Sri Lankan State has allowed the vast land areas vacated by the internally displaced people to be colonised by the Sinhalese

2.4 Violation of the Fundamental Rights of Tamils



Tamils have to obtain Police Travel Permits to visit neighbouring districts.

Violation of the Fundamental Rights of Tamils

Every aspect of normal life was affected and became a nightmare for civilians. They had to obtain passes in order to be able to move from one area to the other within the Tamil homeland. After the current regime came to power, the only highway - the A9 - that connected the Jaffna peninsula to the rest of the Tamil nation was permanently closed, thereby trapping nearly half a million Tamil civilians in virtually an open prison camp. A shortage of food and medical supplies has become commonplace. Outsiders are not allowed to enter the Jaffna peninsula, and aid organisations have been barred. The International Community appears to have made no protest to the Sri Lankan authorities. ▶



Under emergency law Tamils must register with local police stations

Half a million people are trapped in virtually an open prison in the Jaffna peninsula

Violation of the Fundamental Rights of Tamils



In the early hours of 07 June 2007 the Sri Lankan Police raided guest houses in the capital Colombo and rounded up all the Tamils residents in them. The Police claimed that since they were Tamils, they had no business to be in Colombo. Those rounded up were transported to the Tamil homeland in the same morning.

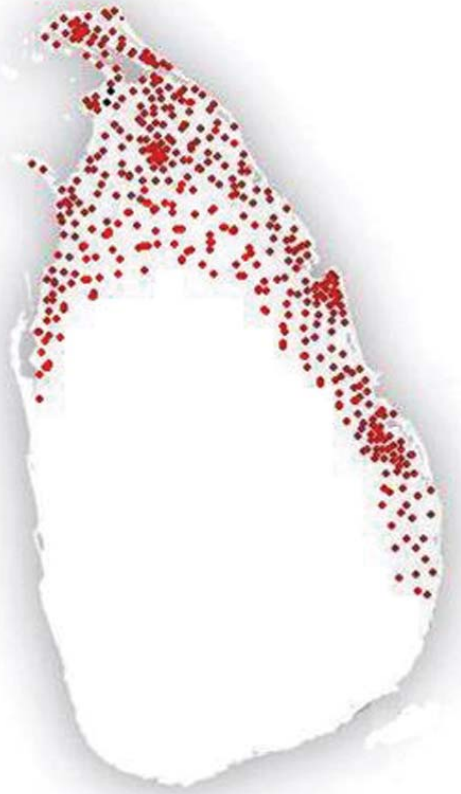
In other parts of the Tamil homeland, where Tamils run their own de facto State, aerial bombardment is a daily event. Aerial bombardment not only kills, maims and destroys property, but does so indiscriminately. This regime has shown no remorse at the death of innocent civilians. With the Sri Lankan Air Force continuing its bombing campaign with little regard for the safety of the innocent, many schools and hospitals have also felt the force. Instead of football pitches and netball courts, the playgrounds of schools are littered with bomb bunkers. Schoolchildren in the Tamil nation face this brutality every day, resulting in long-term psychological damage. Brutal regimes do not discriminate when it comes to bombing; but civilised nations can choose who they arm.

"I was once asked by an Englishman connected with the British Refugee Council: 'You say Tamil Eelam, but where are the boundaries of this Tamil Eelam that you talk about? Show me.' I was taken aback by the directness of the question. I thought for a while, searching for an appropriate response. Then I replied: 'Take a map of the Island. Take a paint brush and paint all the areas where Sri Lanka (Airforce) has bombed and (Army) launched artillery attacks during these past several years. When you have finished, the painted area that you see - that is Tamil Eelam'."

Public address by
Late Mr Sathasivam (Kittu) Krishnakumar
(one of the founder members of the LTTE)
- Zurich
Nov 1990



This regime has shown no remorse for the death of innocent civilians and has continued its bombing campaign



3. The Futility of Brokering Peace with Sri Lanka

3.1 The Historical Background of Sinhala and Tamil Kingdoms



The Aanaikkoaddai Seal

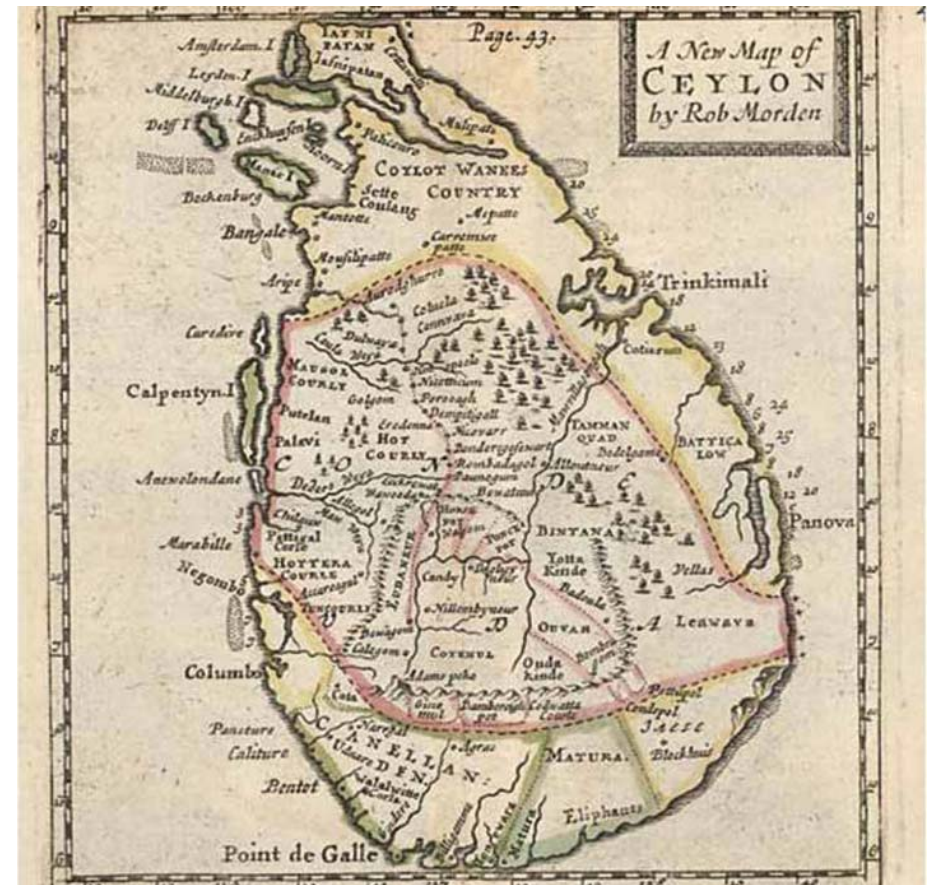
Found in the context of a Megalithic burial at Aanaikkoaddai in the Jaffna peninsula in 1980, the seal, which is inscribed in Megalithic graffiti in the first line and early Brahmi in the second line, is datable to pre-Christian times. The readable Brahmi text 'Koveta' in Tamil/proto-Dravidian means 'the king's'. The steatite seal (1.7 x 1.5 cm) which was found along with traces of copper fragments and kept in a Black and Red Ware bowl at the side of the skeleton, was probably part of a signet ring that belonged to the deceased of noble lineage.

The Historical Background of Sinhala and Tamil Kingdoms

The Tamils are known to have inhabited the Island of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) for over 2500 years. When the Portuguese occupied the Island in 1505, there were separate kingdoms for the Tamils and the Sinhalese; the Portuguese ruled the territories as separate units. Later, the Dutch (1658 - 1796) maintained this status quo. The British occupied the Island from 1796, and in 1833 merged the Tamil and Sinhala nations into one unit for administrative convenience.

On independence, the British left the Island with a Westminster-style political representation, despite protestation from the Tamils who made up almost 30% of the population. This made the Tamils a permanent minority, rendering their parliamentary representation meaningless; thus the seed of today's conflict was sown.

Three Sovereign Regions In The Island of Ceylon 18th Century Map



"Two different nations, from a very ancient period, have divided between them the possession of the Island: the Sinhalese inhabiting the interior in its Southern and western parts from the river Wallouwe to Chilaw, and the Malabars (Tamils) who possess the Northern and Eastern Districts. These two nations differ entirely in their religion, language and manners."

(Sir Hugh Cleghorn, British Colonial Secretary, June 1799)

In 1833 the British merged the Sinhala and Tamil nations into one unit for administrative convenience

3.2 The Inequity of Sri Lankan Independence



Sathyagraha protest outside of Jaffna administrative secretariat (1961) ▲

The Inequity of Sri Lankan Independence

Independence left the Sinhala majority with permanent power and pushed the Tamils into political subservience. Tamils had to rely on the goodwill of this majority and that goodwill was never very forthcoming.

Within months of independence, the Government passed the Citizenship Act, which made more than a million Tamils of Indian Origin stateless. They also lost their right to vote the following year. This group of Tamils was brought to Ceylon from India in 1834 to work on the plantations and made Ceylon their home. The Government action had attacked a vulnerable group of people; a group who had, through hard toil, made tea Ceylon's main export commodity and created a viable economy. Tamils hoped for British intervention in vain.



▲ Non-violent protests by Tamil political leaders brutally crushed by the armed forces and state sponsored thugs - 1961



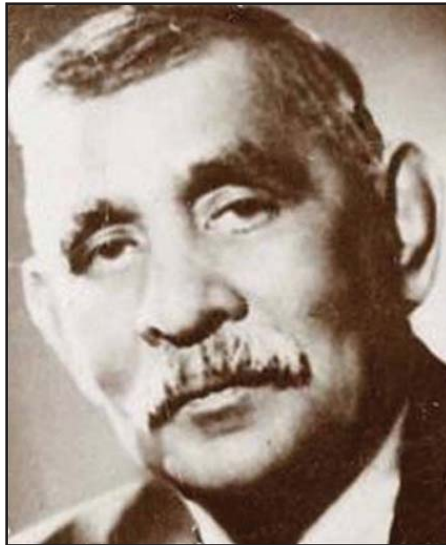
Sathyagraha protest outside Jaffna administrative secretariat (1961) ▶

Since independence successive Sinhala dominated governments have been engaged in taking rights away from Tamils

3.3 Sinhala Leaders and their mono-ethnic mindset

“Today you are brought here and given a plot of land. You have been uprooted from your village. You are like a piece of driftwood in the ocean; but remember that one day the whole country will look up to you. The final battle for the Sinhala people will be fought on the plains of Padaviya. You are men and women who will carry this island’s destiny on your shoulders. Those who are attempting to divide this country will have to reckon with you. The country may forget you for a few years, but one day very soon they will look up to you as the last bastion of the Sinhala.”

Ceylon’s first Prime Minister,
D.S.Senanayake,
address to new Sinhala settlers in
the Tamil area of Padaviya,



“Who attacked you? Sinhalese. who saved you? Sinhalese. It is that we who attacked and protected you. They are bringing an army from India. It will take 14 hours to come from India. In 14 minutes the blood of every Tamil in the country can be sacrifice to the land by us”

Oxford educated Senior Minister
Gamini Dissanayake
soon after the 1983 Riots

“Only way to root out terrorism was to remove the concept of ‘traditional homelands’”

Oxford educated National Security Minister
Lalith Athulathmudali
1985



“Minorities are like creepers clinging to the Sinhala tree.”
President
D B Wijetunge (1993)

“I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna people... now we cannot think of them, not about their lives or their opinion... the more you put pressure in the north, the happier the Sinhala people will be here... Really if I starve the Tamils out, the Sinhala people will be happy.”

- President J.R.Jayawardene, Daily Telegraph, July 1983



“Tamils were not the original people of Sri Lanka”

President
Chandrika Kumarathunga 1999

I strongly believe that this country belongs to the Sinhalese but there are minority communities and we treat them like our people... We being the majority of the country, 75%, we will never give in and we have the right to protect this country... We are also a strong nation ... They can live in this country with us. But they must not try to, under the pretext of being a minority, demand undue things.” (2008)

Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka
Sri Lankan Army Commander



“If we are governing, we must govern. If we are ruling, we must rule. Do not give into the minorities. “

– Mrs. Wimala Kannangara M.P (1981)

3.4 Broken Promises and Torn-up Agreements



Vaddukoddai Resolution was made by
Tamil Democratic Leaders in 1976
Under the Leadership of Mr. Chelvanayagam

Declaration: "This convention resolves that restoration and reconstitution of the Free, Sovereign, Secular, Socialist State of Tamil Eelam, based on the right of self determination inherent to every nation, has become inevitable in order to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil Nation in this Country."

Mission: "This Convention directs the Action Committee of the Tamil United Liberation Front to formulate a plan of action and launch without undue delay the struggle for winning the sovereignty and freedom of the Tamil Nation;"

Call: *"This Convention calls upon the Tamil Nation in general and the Tamil youth in particular to come forward to throw themselves fully into the sacred fight for freedom and to flinch not till the goal of a sovereign state of Tamil Eelam is reached"*.

Broken Promises and Torn-up Agreements

The events of 1948 and 1949 led the Tamils to form the Federal Party (FP) to fight for some form of devolution. However, in 1956, Mr. Bandaranaike came to power with a manifesto to make Sinhala the sole language of administration, which he soon delivered on (Sinhala Only Act 1956). As a result, vast numbers of Tamil civil servants were forced to resign due to lack of fluency in the Sinhala language. In the same election, the FP emerged as the dominant Tamil political party.

As a result of the FP's campaign for devolution, the Prime Minister relented and agreed to limited devolution in the form of Regional Councils. The expectation of the Tamils was high. However, under severe pressure from Buddhist monks, the Prime Minister then tore up the agreement. For the Tamils this was the first experience of betrayal, with many more to follow. A year later, Prime Minister Bandaranaike was shot dead by a Buddhist monk; thus assassinations were introduced into Sri Lankan politics by Buddhist monks.

In 1965, the FP entered into another agreement with the new United National Party (UNP) government who promised devolution in the form of district councils; yet again, this agreement was torn up. ▶

Democratically elected Tamil leaders under the leadership of Mr. Chelvanayagam set out the concept of Tamil Eelam in 1977

1977 TULF election manifesto:

"The Tamil Nation is at a turning point in its history. The unity we have achieved has made the Sinhalese imperialists take a fresh look at the situation. In this background, as a first step towards the realisation of the freedom of the Nation, the unanimous verdict of the Tamil speaking people is indispensable. Hence we appeal to you to set aside your passions for, or prejudices against, individual candidates, to forget differences of caste or religion and, with the one and the only determination of making the Tamil Nation master of its Destiny to VOTE for the Tamil United Liberation Front, for the emancipation of the Tamil Nation, for the Freedom of Tamil Eelam.

TNA Election manifesto 2004(extract)

Find a political solution to the Tamil national problem based on the acceptance of the fundamental proposals regarding (Tamil Nation's) Tamil homeland, Tamil Nation, Tamils' right to self-government.

Accepting LTTE's leadership as the national leadership of the Tamil Eelam Tamils and the Liberation Tigers as the sole and authentic representatives of the Tamil people, let us devote our full cooperation for the ideals of the Liberation Tigers' struggle with honesty and steadfastness.

In the 1977 general elections, the TULF sought and received an overwhelming mandate from Tamils for the establishment of the Tamil nation; Tamil Eelam.

In the 2004 general elections, the TNA which accepted the LTTE as the sole and authentic representatives of Tamils sought and received an overwhelming mandate from the Tamils.

The high expectations of the Tamils were dashed yet again as the Buddhist monks pressured the Prime minister into reneging on the agreement

Broken Promises and Torn-up Agreements



B-C Pact was signed between the Sinhalese Prime Minister SWRD Bandaranaike and the Tamil leader SJV Chelvanayakam in 1957

Mr. Bandaranaike, under pressure from extremist Buddhist monks, unilaterally abrogated the pact soon after



Emboldened by the previous marginalisation of the Tamils and encouraged by the lack of effective protest by the UK, the 1970 SLFP government, led by Mrs. Bandaranaike, went a step further. In 1972, Ceylon introduced a Republican constitution, declaring Ceylon a Buddhist state renamed Sri Lanka. This took away any rights Tamils had to take their grievances to the Privy Council in the UK.

By now, the Tamil leadership had had enough of the betrayals; the Republican constitution was the last straw. Realising the futility of co-existence with the Sinhalese, all the Tamil political parties united under an umbrella political alliance – the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) – and resolved to restore Tamil nationhood. In the 1977 general election, the TULF sought, and received, an overwhelming mandate from Tamils for the establishment of a Tamil nation – known as Tamil Eelam. This development did not go down well with the Sinhala nation, and riots ensued against Tamils in Sinhala areas.

The Sinhala army occupied every inch of the Tamil homeland, unleashing brutal oppression. The Tamil youth responded to calls by the TULF leadership and began to prepare for the liberation struggle.

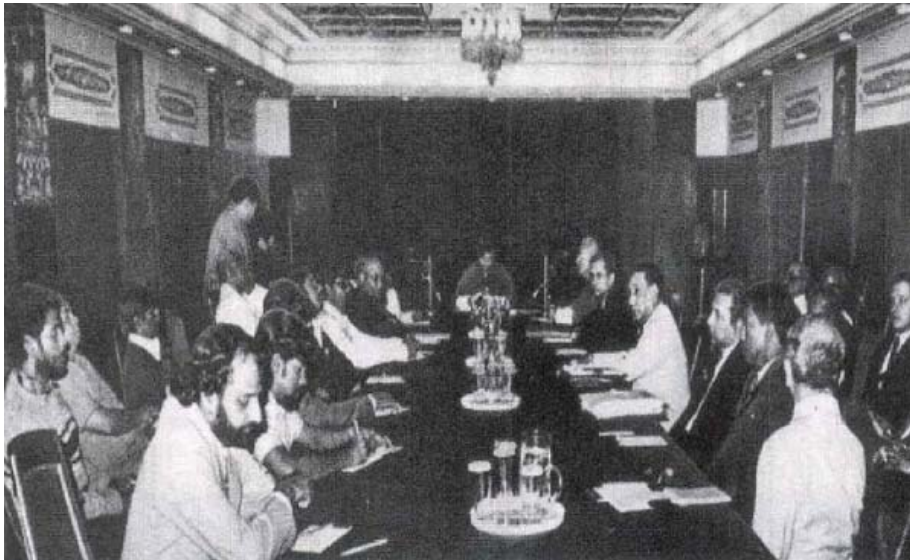
Broken promises and torn up agreements (1957 to 2007)

YEAR	TYPE OF POLITICAL SOLUTION	RESULT
1957	Banda-Chelva pact – Regional Councils	Unilaterally abrogated by GOSL
1965	Dudley-Chelva pact – District Councils	Unilaterally abrogated GOSL
1970	Proposals placed by the Tamil Federal Party (A federal form of government with an autonomous Tamil-Muslims state and three autonomous Sinhala states)	Rejected by the GOSL
1979	Presidential Commission to report on (creation of District Development Councils)	This did not fulfil the Tamils' aspirations. Not intended to provide a different political or administrative structure for any particular part of the country
1983	All Party Conference (Proposals merely extended the scheme of decentralization at District level to the Provincial level with limited co-ordination)	TULF rejected these proposals as it was not the originally formulated set of proposals, known as Annexure – C.
1985	In Thimpu - The devolution proposal by Sri Lanka (District councils without executive power)	Rejected by the Tamil representatives
1985	Thimpu (principle) proposal placed by Tamils (Homeland, Nationhood, Right to self-determination and equal rights)	Rejected by the GOSL Talks collapsed because while the talks take place Sri Lanka renewed its military offensive in the NorthEast
1986	"19 December" proposals by Indian envoys (Formation of a new Eastern Province by excising Sinhalese majority areas and the creation of two Tamil Provincial the reconstituted Eastern Province) Councils in the Northern and	GOSL expressed reservations and eventually rejected this proposal.
1987	Indo-Lanka Accord (Provincial Councils) (North and Eastern Provinces were merged under this accord. 95% Tamils didn't support this accord)	After 18 years, the Sri Lanka Supreme Court rejected this merger 16 October 2006
1989-1990	Premadasa Talks (LTTE formed a political party-PFLT and prepared to contest in the elections)	The holding of fresh elections in North East never took place. Prevented LTTE from demonstrating its support from the people in North East
1992-1993	Parliamentary Select Committee Reports (President D.B.Wijetunga said that there is no 'ethnic problem')	Eyewash to International Community No progress was made
1995	Devolution Package (Refused to recognise the existence of the Tamil homeland, rejected an asymmetric approach, continued to treat all the provinces in the same way)	Rejected by Buddhist Maha Sanga and other Sinhala political parties
2003	ISGA proposal by LTTE (Interim Self-Governing Administration)	Rejected by the GOSL and other extreme Sinhala political parties
2005	Post Tsunami Operational Management Structure – PTOMS	Rejected by the Sri Lanka Supreme Court
2007	All Party Conference Sinhala political parties UNP, JVP, JHU strongly against its proposals	Not ALL political parties invited to participate in its discussions. Tamil National Alliance, especially was kept away.

Compiled by Tamil Centre for Human Rights – TCHR/ CTDH – March 2008

In the 1977 general elections, the TULF sought and received an overwhelming mandate from Tamils for the establishment of the Tamil nation

3.5 A Bi-lateral Agreement to Impose a Solution on Tamils



"Thimpu Talks" -1985 Tamil delegation consisted of Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS), People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) AND Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

While talks were continuing, hundreds of innocent Tamils were massacred by the Sinhala colonists in Trincomalee

A Bi-lateral Agreement to Impose a Solution on Tamils

Facilitated by India, a round of talks was held between the Sinhala and Tamil leaderships in Thimbu, the capital of Bhutan. On the Tamil side, the TULF and all the Tamil groups of freedom fighters were represented by one voice. The talks failed due to the Sri Lankan government's intransigence. However, all the Tamil parties unanimously passed a resolution that demanded recognition of the Tamils as a distinct nation (consisting of the North and East of the Island), the right to self-determination, and the right to citizenship for all Tamils of Ceylon. To this day, all Tamil parties consider this declaration sacrosanct and as the minimum required in order to reach any solution.

In 1987, the Sri Lankan government blockaded the north of the Tamil homeland, driving 850,000 people into starvation and using them as human shields. Under pressure from 60 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu, the Indian Air Force infiltrated Sri Lankan airspace and defied its sovereignty to air drop food supplies to Jaffna. The Sri Lankan President relented and signed an accord that became known as the 'Indo-Lanka Accord' between India and Sri Lanka. ▶

President Chandrika Kumaratunga - LTTE Peace Talks: 1994/1995



Peace talks with Chandrika Kumaratunga were not effective as the delegation did not have any Executive decision making authority. The GOSL failed to create normalcy to the people of the Tamil homeland and did not lift the economic embargo on the Tamils. Chandrika was not able to put forward an appropriate devolution package and the one she proposed later was watered down even before it was submitted to Parliament

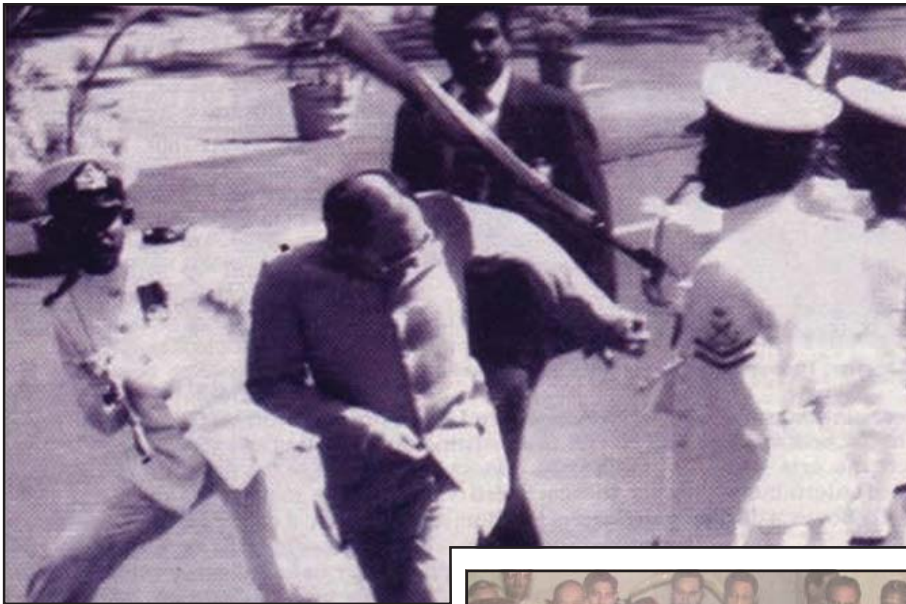
Joint statement made by the Tamil delegation on the concluding day of Phase I of the Thimpu talks on the 13th of July 1985 It is our considered view that any meaningful solution to the Tamil national question must be based on the following four cardinal principles:

The Thimpu Declaration

- 1) Recognition of the Tamils of Ceylon as a nation
- 2) Recognition of the existence of an identified homeland for the Tamils in Ceylon
- 3) Recognition of the right of self determination of the Tamil nation
- 4) Recognition of the right to citizenship and the fundamental rights of all Tamils in Ceylon

The agreements recognised Tamils as a distinct nation, consisting of the North and the East of the island

A Bi-lateral Agreement to Impose a Solution on Tamils



▲ Prime Minister Gandhi is attacked by a Sri Lankan naval rating from the guard of honour.

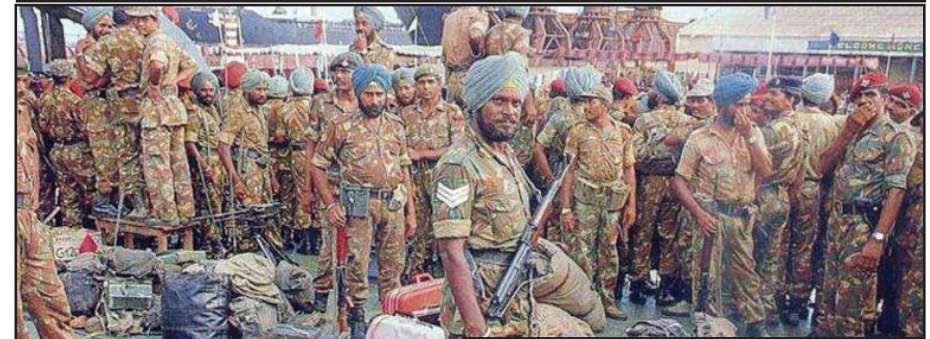
THE 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord : President J.R. Jayawardene with his political guile managed to lure India to be involved in the Tamil struggle, by assuring its regional and strategic interest. ▶



The Tamil leadership was neither consulted nor a party to this Accord; it was a fait accompli. The largest of the liberation movements, the LTTE, despite their misgivings, were powerless to oppose. Under the Accord a Provincial Council was set up and elections were held. But the Sri Lankan government failed to devolve any powers to the provincial council.

The Sri Lankan government cynically used the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to fight its war against the Tamils. After two years of unleashing death and destruction on the Tamil people, the IPKF left the Tamil homeland.

Two more futile rounds of talks took place between the LTTE and two subsequent Presidents of Sri Lanka.



▲ Indian Forces in Sri Lanka ▶



Doctors and hospital staff killed in Jaffna Hospital by the Indian Army

Sri Lankan government failed to devolve any powers to the provincial council

3.6 The Evolution of the LTTE and Who They Represent



Tamil Eelam defence forces with land, sea and air capability

The Evolution of the LTTE and Who They Represent

The LTTE was formed in 1972 in response to requests by the democratically-elected TULF leadership, with the aim of fighting for Tamil nationhood. The LTTE was the sole representative of the Tamils at the last failed peace talks - the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) with the Sri Lankan government. Apart from defending the territory under its control, the LTTE has over time developed an efficient civil administration for the de facto State. This includes a judiciary, police force, central bank, and research and development units in the fields of agriculture, industry and infrastructure development. Through education and discipline, the LTTE administration has been successful in wiping out bribery and corruption. In the social field, they have made in-roads to dismantling the caste system and eradicating discrimination against women. Several Western parliamentarians, academics and professionals who had the opportunity to visit the Tamil nation have commended the efficiency, ethos and the secular nature of the administration. ▶



▲ Self-sufficient food security



▲ Tamil Eelam Police



▲ Tamil Eelam Court of Appeal



▲ Bank of Tamil Eelam.



▲ Social welfare services



▲ Tamil Eelam transport service

Apart from defending the territory under its control, the LTTE has over time developed an efficient civil administration for the de facto state

The Evolution of the LTTE and Who They Represent



Maveerar Thuyilumillam - Fallen Heros of Tamil Elleam

At every stage of negotiation with the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE had put forward proposals to obtain a democratic mandate from the Tamil people. Time and time again, the LTTE expressed its willingness to engage in democratic politics. Yet every single government prevented this by enforcing the Sixth Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which prevents political parties challenging the unitary nature of Sri Lanka. Therefore, any discussion of self-determination had to be held outside of the Sri Lankan democratic system.

However, the LTTE continues to represent the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Tamils both within and outside Sri Lanka. The reason is simple: the LTTE remains the sole protector of the Tamil homeland, of the Tamils who live within it and of Tamil heritage. In the 2004 Sri Lankan general elections, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which accepted the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamils, won a landslide victory in the Tamil homeland.



▲ Law College

◀ Police Head Quarters

“The 21st century began as the ‘Asian century’ and the world is looking towards Asia. Many countries in our region have grown in leaps and bounds in social, economical and scientific fields. They are researching space, moon and atom. The whole human race is taking up new challenges and has embarked on a united path, seeking answers to many of nature’s mysteries and looking for remedies to incurable diseases. It is seeking to protect the entire globe and its plant and animal lives. Sadly, the Sinhala nation is moving in exactly the opposite direction, on a path of destruction. It is trying to destroy the Tamil nation and, in the process, it is destroying itself. This beautiful island continues to soak in blood.....We know very well that the military, economic and geo-political interests of the world’s powers are embedded in our region. We understand their concern to take forward their interests. We also recognize the concerns of the international community to bring about stability and good governance to this island for these reasons. At the same time the chauvinistic Sinhala State is attempting to exploit this interest in our region of the international powers. It is trapping the international community in its chauvinistic project and turning the international community against the Tamil freedom struggle. Our people are dismayed and disappointed that these countries, trapped in the deceptive net of the Sinhala State, are being unhelpful in their involvement to resolve our problem.”



V Pirapaharan

The leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
in his annual policy statement 2007

The LTTE remains the sole protector of the Tamil homeland, the Tamils who live in it and Tamil heritage

3.7 An Agreement under International Community Facilitation



LTTE leader Mr. Velupillai Pirabakaran Signing the CFA

An Agreement under International Community Facilitation

In 2002, the LTTE declared a unilateral ceasefire and invited the Sri Lankan government for peace talks. With mediation by Norway, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe and LTTE leader Mr. Velupillai Pirabakaran signed the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA). The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), comprised of Nordic countries, was sent to Sri Lanka to monitor this ceasefire. The United States of America, the European Union and Japan, along with Norway, appointed themselves as Co-Chairs to drive the CFA forward.

The LTTE submitted a proposal for an Interim Self-Government Authority (ISGA) to administer the Tamil homeland, pending final agreement and elections. For a while, it appeared that Tamils would receive justice. Many proposals with democratic norms followed from the LTTE. While speaking of peace, Mr. Wickremasinghe embarked upon an exercise to marginalise the LTTE within the international arena and especially distance it from the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs appeared to oblige and pushed the LTTE aside to a spectator position. Later, during the 2005 presidential election campaign, Mr. Wickremasinghe's party was to claim credit for using the CFA as a cover to split the LTTE and weaken them militarily. ▶



Agreement on a ceasefire between the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the 22nd February 2002 was mediated by the Norwegian Government.

* Forward defence lines (borders) have been established. The Sri Lankan armed forces and the Liberation Tigers' fighting formations shall hold their ground positions.

* Neither party shall engage in any offensive military operation nor shall move munitions, explosives or military equipment into the area controlled by the other party.



LTTE Leader Mr Pirabaharan with the Norwegian government delegation led by its Foreign Minister Mr. Jan Petersen

With mediation by Norway, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr. Ranil Wickremasinghe and LTTE leader Mr. Velupillai Pirabakaran signed the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA)

An Agreement under International Community Facilitation



President Mahinda Rajapakse inspecting a fighter jet of Sri Lankan Air Force (SLAF)

Now that Mr. Wickremesinghe's mask had slipped, the Tamils looked to the other presidential candidate, Mr. Rajapakse. Supported by the extremists, he stood on a platform to effectively abrogate the CFA and to not give an inch to the Tamils. For the Tamils, it was Hobson's choice. The Tamils thought long and hard and decided to leave the presidential election to the Sinhalese; for there was nothing in it for the Tamils. The Sinhalese made their choice in the form of Mr. Rajapakse and for the abrogation of the CFA. Yet again, it was clearly demonstrated that it was not just the leaders but also the Sinhala people and their mindset that will never allow justice for the Tamils.



LTTE Political Leader with MEP Robert Evans



LTTE Northern commander Colonel Theepan and the then Sri Lankan Northern commander



LTTE delegation in the Netherlands



LTTE delegation meets German Foreign Ministry officials

The Sri Lankan Prime Minister's party was later to claim credit for using the CFA as a cover to split the LTTE and weaken them militarily

3.8 Sinhala Hegemony Against any Solution



Buddhist monks violently disrupt a peace rally in Colombo (17 August 2006)

Sinhala Hegemony Against any Solution

In the 2005 Presidential election, Mr. Rajapakse was supported by the extremist parties and the Buddhist monks, who by then had formed a political party of their own. Whenever it appeared that the Tamils might get some rights, it was the Buddhist monks who were instrumental in orchestrating opposition. Using their status within the Sinhala, Buddhist society, they succeeded in gradually converting this entire society into a state of permanent, anti-Tamil thinking. The Buddhist clergy make no secret of their intention to create a mono-ethnic Sinhala, Buddhist state. The clergy were instrumental in bringing Sinhala settlers to the Tamil homeland, and in creating Sinhala majorities in many areas of the Eastern Province.

To the Sinhala Buddhist leadership in the South, the distinctiveness of the Sri Lankan Tamils is an inconvenience that blots their image of Sri Lanka as all theirs. They often talk in denial about the centuries old history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the pre colonial Tamil Kingdoms and the great contribution of Tamil culture to the rest of Sri Lanka. The pogroms, the military operations, the dismantling of societal infrastructure and the cultural undermining has to be seen in the context of the ultimate vision of the Sinhala leadership – ethnic cleansing.



▲ Extremist Buddhist monks burn the Royal Norwegian flag - 2006



JVP celebrates the independence day anniversary

To the Sinhala Buddhist leadership in the South, the distinctiveness of the Sri Lankan Tamils is an inconvenience that blots their image of Sri Lanka as all theirs

3.9 The International Community's Vested Interests



Desecrating the Union Jack while Sri Lankan parliamentarians look on

The International Community's Vested Interests

Over the years, the International Community has sought to help bring about a resolution to the conflict – a resolution through which its vested interests are also enhanced. Firstly, the default position of the International Community in a conflict situation has been to support the status quo, which in this case was the pre-eminence of the Sri Lankan State. Secondly, as a large arms buyer, Sri Lanka has leverage with certain countries, which in turn have been prepared to help its war efforts in kind. And finally, geopolitics too have gone in the Sinhala State's favour. The regional powers, namely India and China, have been anxious about how the potential birth of a new nation, Tamil Eelam, would play out in the context of separatist tendencies in their own internal politics. The West, which had been even-handed in its approach to the conflict until 2001, turned against rebel groups all over the world following the events of 9/11, regardless of the merits of the protagonists. Despite the Tamil liberation movement not having harmed any Western interests, the LTTE was proscribed by the West, thereby altering the balance of power in favour of the Sinhala State. The legitimate rights of the Tamils to seek self-determination had thus been tossed aside in order to enhance the vested interests of the International Community.



Sri Lanka President Rajapakse with Pakistan President Musharraf



Sri Lanka President Rajapakse with Iran President Ahmadinejad

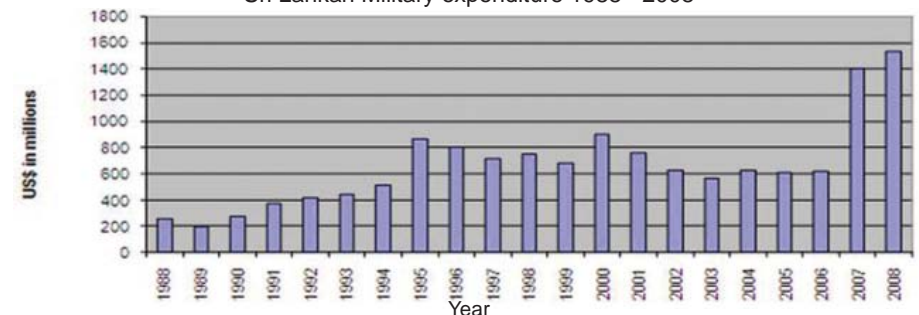
Sri Lanka is slowly turning towards Asian countries which offer more donor money than traditional Western allies as well as less criticism over human rights. Foreign Secretary Dr Palitha Kohona told the BBC: *"Asians don't hector each other from public pulpits. They're more ready with assistance and less ready with gratuitous advice."*

BBC online 29/04/2008



Sri Lanka President Rajapakse with China President Hu Jintao

Sri Lankan Military expenditure 1988 - 2008



Rising military expenditure of Sri Lanka: Source SIPRI military database

Over the years, the International Community has sought to help bring about a resolution to the conflict – a resolution through which its vested interests are also enhanced

3.10 Enlightened Approach to Overcome Structural Impediments

“It was not easy,” said the first elected and internationally recognised post-war Prime Minister of Kosovo, adding that “we will show solidarity and support for your struggle.”

Dr Bajram Rexhepi,
First Prime Minister of Kosovo
and current Mayor of Mitrovica



“Well, I believe that terrorism is a tool that has been utilized throughout history to achieve certain objectives. Some have been ideological, others territorial. There are personality-driven terroristic objectives.” “The bottom line is, you can’t lump all terrorists together. And I think we’ve got to do a much better job of clarifying what are the motivations, the raisons d’être of terrorists.” “I mean, what the Tamil Tigers are fighting for in Sri Lanka, or the Basque separatists in Spain, or the insurgents in al-Anbar province may only be connected by tactics. They may not share all that much in terms of what is the philosophical or ideological underpinning.”

Hillary Clinton,
Senator from New York

Enlightened Approach to Overcome Structural Impediments

The anatomy of the conflict demonstrates why this has become one of the longest-running conflict in the world. The three main protagonists are the Sri Lankan State, the International Community and the Tamil liberation movement as represented by the LTTE. The belief, that the island of Sri Lanka belongs exclusively to the Sinhala Buddhists runs deep in Sri Lanka. This is easily observed in both the words and deeds of successive Sri Lankan governments, as well as opinion makers such as the highly-politicised Buddhist clergy and the Sinhala media. The International Community in general and India in particular has pushed for a solution that maintains the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka in order to enhance their self interests, as previously described. The third leg of the anatomy, the Tamil liberation movement, is seeking the right to self-determination: a set of basic rights enshrined in the UN Charter that many people around the world take for granted. It is clear that without accommodation by either, or all, of the protagonists, this conflict cannot be resolved. Yet the reality being played out today shows the Sri Lankan State, in consort with the International Community, seeking to prevail by sacrificing the basic rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka.



“One-man one-vote led to the domination of the Sinhalese majority over the minority Tamils who were the active and intelligent fellows who worked hard and got themselves penalised. And English was out. They were educated in English. Sinhalese was in. They got quotas in two universities and now they have become fanatical Tigers. And the country will never be put together again.” - 1998

Lee Kuan Yew
The founding father of Singapore

“I think the Tamils have a de jure State: they have the right to self-determination, the Tamil lands are those lands attached to that right, they are present in their land and they have a Tamil civil administration governing it. This is a de jure State. The Tamil people, of course, also have a de jure right to the Tamil lands under control of the government, but they are not now in control of them.”

Karen Parker, J.D.
Chief delegate for International Educational
Development - Humanitarian Law Project



“There can be no solution without the involvement of the two principle parties and that no solution can be imposed from outside. The Liberation Tigers are engaged in an armed struggle as a response to structural failures”

Professor Thiyagaraj Dasaratha Chetty,
Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Qwazulu Natal and ANC Member
Delivering his message on behalf of the South African Government

“I think when you force a minority to live under a brutal regime; it continues a convulsed state of affairs. And with Sri Lanka in particular, with which I’m familiar, we’ve had almost 50 years of oppressions of a Tamil minority at the hands of a Sinhalese majority.

Bruce Fein
Attorney & Chairman of the American Freedom Agenda



“UN supervised two-states to avoid possible genocide”
Prof. Peter Schalk

The ground reality as it being played out today shows the Sri Lankan State, in consort with the International Community, seeking to prevail by sacrificing the basic rights of Tamils in Sri Lanka

3.11 'Pongu Thamil' a Global Resurrection of Tamil Pride



▲ Pongu Thamil uprising in Tamil Eelam 2004

▼ 40,000 Tamils at the Pongu Thamil in London 2008



'Pongu Thamil' – a Global Resurrection of Tamil Pride

The Tamil diaspora who escaped the brutality of Sinhala chauvinism settled mainly in Canada, Australia, the USA and Western European countries. While integrating themselves as law-abiding citizens in these countries, they continue to support the idea of freedom for the kith and kin they left behind. They celebrate their nationhood, culture and their right to self-determination through festivals like 'Pongu Thamil'.

Increasing brutality at home, and the continued injustice faced by the Tamils, has in recent times swelled the numbers attending such events. Pongu Thamil is celebrated in over 15 countries where Tamils live. For the vast majority of them, the desire for Tamils to achieve peace through self-determination remains the primary political issue.



▲ Tamil Nadu, India: Tamils of all political parties showing their solidarity with Eelam Tamils

Over 100,000 Tamils at the Pongu Thamil (Tamil uprising) in Canada



For the vast majority of the Tamils living outside Sri Lanka the desire for the Tamils of Sri Lanka to achieve peace through self determination remains the primary political issue

This page is for the International Community - the UK, the UN, the EU, India and the US to write the next chapter of this book



This boy lost his leg and his 4 year old brother was killed by Kfir fast attack aircrafts of the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF)

What might be going on in his mind?

Will he understand the reasons for the carnage around him?

Does he have hope?

Who will he look up to for protection?

Will anyone come to help?

Will he still believe in justice and fair play?

If not what is he going to grow up into?

Will calling him a terrorist become a self fulfilling prophecy?



“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” - Edmund Burke

4. Concept of Peace Through Self-Determination

4.1 Representation of Tamil Aspirations

Tamils have come through a sixty-year journey of oppression and brutality at the hands of every post-independence Sri Lankan government. For the first thirty years, they struggled for their rights through non-violent agitation. Having tried all other avenues, these peace-loving people were forced to take up arms to fight for their freedom. With the loss of over hundred thousand civilians and over twenty one thousand freedom fighters, legitimate calls for Tamil nationhood continue to grow.

The bitter lessons of history have left the Tamils in no doubt that if the LTTE were to be militarily defeated, ethnic cleansing on a grand scale would follow, wiping out Tamil identity from the island of Sri Lanka. It is therefore of no surprise that the vast majority of Tamils, both in Sri Lanka and around the world, see the LTTE as the sole protectors of their identity and heritage. It therefore follows that the actions of the International Community to constrain and weaken the LTTE contribute to the demise of Tamil identity and heritage.

4.2 Greatest Impediment to Accommodation

The once thriving centuries old Tamil nation now fighting for its very identity is a testament to how far successive Sri Lankan governments have dispossessed it of its rights. The Sinhala Buddhist mono-ethnic vision of Sri Lanka as all theirs has been the driving force behind this systematic process over the past 60 years. The nationalistic tendencies gripping the Sinhala state today aided and abetted by the highly politicised Buddhist clergy makes accommodation impossible in Sri Lanka without external influence.

4.3 Conflict Resolution and the International Community's Self-Interest

Given Tamil history, it would be hard to bemoan the peace and freedom the Tamils seek - a status taken for granted by people around the world. Yet, the people of civilised, democratic nations have unwittingly allowed their governments to contribute - and in some instances actively assist and participate in - the genocide of an entire people. Tamils have not only faced a brutal oppressor at home, but have hitherto also faced an unprincipled International Community too consumed by its own self-interest, albeit minimal, to act in an even-handed fashion in the resolution of this conflict.

The protracted nature of the conflict can be partly attributed to the International Community viewing it through the prism of its self-interest. India and China, anxious how the birth of a new nation in their region would play out in their internal politics, have instead been prepared to sacrifice the Tamils' right to self-determination. The West, following 9/11, perversely linked the LTTE with the 'War on Terror', even though the LTTE had not harmed any interests of the West.

4.4 Miscalculation by the International Community

Despite the objections of the Norwegian government (facilitator of the Ceasefire Agreement), governments in the West proceeded to proscribe the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. The perversity of this proscription, and the draconian terrorism laws that accompany it, not only make a negotiated solution to the long-running conflict more difficult, but also vilify the humanitarian efforts undertaken by Tamils in the West to alleviate the suffering of Tamils in Sri Lanka. It is widely accepted that the West's proscription of the LTTE was the catalyst for the Sri Lankan government abrogating the 2002 Ceasefire Agreement and pursuing the current brutal military operation against the Tamils in Sri Lanka. This has resulted in thousands being killed and several thousand being made homeless.

4.5 Primary Political Issue for Tamils Living Abroad

Over one million Sri Lankan Tamils live outside of Sri Lanka - a consequence of the brutality they have faced in Sri Lanka over the years. The majority of these Tamils live in the West and contribute immensely to the fabric of the societies in which they live. They feel betrayed by their respective governments whose foreign policies have hurt them and instead helped their tormentors - the Sri Lankan regime. The suffering of their brethren in Sri Lanka and the risk of loss of heritage remain the primary political issues for the vast majority of Tamils around the world.

4.6 A Proposal for a Process to achieve Lasting Peace

Given the years of brutality and betrayal by successive Sri Lankan governments, it is unrealistic to expect Tamils to now accept political accommodation within Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has demonstrated over the past sixty years that it is structurally incapable of bringing about a peaceful resolution to this conflict. Peace in Sri Lanka can be best achieved through self-determination and the resurrection of the historic Tamil homeland, i.e. the recognition of Tamil Eelam.

The International Community should cast aside the minimal vested interests it has in Sri Lanka and take a moral stand on bringing about an equitable resolution to the conflict. By taking decisive action to stop the genocide in Sri Lanka, recognizing the legitimate rights of the Tamils and deproscribing the LTTE, they can restore the moral equivalence necessary to achieving lasting peace in Sri Lanka. Perversely, such a stand may well serve the International Community's interests by bringing stability to the region and restoring its moral authority on this issue in the eyes of the world.

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Genocides and other mass atrocities are consequences of complex political actions not, as they are often characterised, as simply senseless slaughter based mainly on identity or cultural difference. This means that besides the humanitarian actions to stop or minimise killings, torture and rape of civilians, especially women and children, the crucial challenge to managing or solving them requires political solutions, rooted in participation of all affected persons, truth, power restructuring and reconciliation.

The Voksenaasen Statement

"First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me"

- German philosopher Martin Niemoller



All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 1, the United Nations international covenant on civil and political rights

About BTF: *British Tamils Forum ("BTF") is an umbrella organisation bringing together individuals and Tamil community organisations to highlight the humanitarian crises and human rights violations perpetrated by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL), and to advance the Tamil national cause through democratic means.*

www.tamilsforum.com

