



# Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

Head of field office, Mullivaikal, Mullaittivu Sri Lanka

ort.hq@live.com

## **TRO's Relief Activities in Vanni**

Updated on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2009

### **1. Provision of gruel food to IDP population**

TRO is continuing the gruel provision activity at Mullivaikal too. 17 centres are functioning for fulfilling this essential task. From morning 10 to evening 4 they provide gruel to hungry people. People – young and old line up with jugs under hot sun and drink that rice gruel. The ingredients of the rice gruel are rice, water, salt and milk.

After the arrival of food ship on 2<sup>nd</sup> April no more food ship has come to Vanni. That means food ship comes once in a month carrying one week's dry rations. This leads to famine and deaths by hunger. 50,000 people benefit by these gruel centres daily. Children, lactating and pregnant mothers and old people benefit immensely by this provision. If these centres are not functioning in Vanni World Community would have witnessed the repetition of catastrophe in Somalia and Ethiopia.

### **2. IDP emergency relief work**

**Transport:** TRO's tractors, canters and HIACE vans continue to provide transport to people who were moving from Mathalan, Ampalavan Pokkanai and Valaiyarmadam to Mullivaikal. Almost all of them were with few things – 2 or 3 bags and cooking utensils. Boat service is also provided for emergency evacuation. Many have left behind their tarpaulin sheets as they had to leave their shelters in a haste in order to escape from falling shells and racing rifle rounds.

**Water and Sanitation:** Emergency wells and toilets are being built by TRO to cater the needs of the IDP population. The wells are especially for drinking purposes. For bathing and washing purposes separate wells are being built. 10 wells are being built with improvised materials in the sandy coastline. 10 temporary toilets are being built. 10 wells and 10 toilets will be in use in one day's time.

**Shelter:** Many IDPs ask tarpaulin sheets as they moved out in a hurry. TRO provides tarpaulin sheets to the deserved cases. These sheets are in severe shortage as the people move from one place to another without having time to take tarpaulin sheets with them.

### **3. Evacuation of wounded people to hospitals**

About 10,000 people were taken to hospitals by TRO's Emergency Rescue Teams. In each zone TRO's team of 5 members were always ready with a vehicle and two motor cycles. Such teams were functioning in 7 zones. Mullivaikal has now become the centre of this activity. This is a very risky assignment. Immediately after a shell attack the team members should reach the spot with the expectation of further shell attacks in and around the area. Any delay will lead to the death of wounded persons. At any hour of the night the team should be ready to get into action. The wounded persons have to be lifted and placed on the hospital ground for the doctor's check up.

### **4. Burial or cremation of dead bodies**

Dead bodies are being taken by TRO volunteers for burial or cremation. Dead bodies have to be collected from shelters and bunkers. When dead bodies are brought to the hospitals or when the wounded people died in the hospital as the treatment failed they also have to be picked up. Almost all the dead bodies amounting about 6,500 were collected by TRO and buried or cremated.



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## 5. Volunteer Services

TRO's volunteers and social mobilizers work among the population by doing regular home visits and meetings. Their tasks are:

1. Identification of problems and needs of the people.
2. Immediate assistance to famine stricken and vulnerable people.
3. Awareness creation on health habits, psychosocial issues, arresting social degeneration and ways of fighting famine through home visits and group discussions.
4. Helping the people in the construction of shelters, wells and temporary toilets.
5. Establishment of committees for water management, garbage disposal and canalling waste water.
6. Participation in flood rescue operations, salvaging household goods from flood water flowing into the shelters and identification of high lands for settlement.
7. Solving the people's problems by coordination, networking and referral systems.

## 6. Hospital Work

Hospital administrative structure has collapsed with the dispersal of doctors and hospital staff by artillery and aerial attacks and troop intrusions. Only few doctors and health volunteers are working in the Manjolai (Temporary) hospital of Mulliyawalai which is now functioning in a school at Mullivaikal. The work in the hospital is enormous and multi faceted. At Mullivaikal this hospital and a Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC) are functioning. Outdoor patients are treated at this PHCC. The wounded are brought to Manjolai Temporary Hospital. TRO takes the responsibility of most of the work being done in the hospital.

1. Provision of food to the warded patients and staff – about 1,000 at a time. Breakfast, lunch and night meal have to be provided.
2. Morning and evening tea to the above are provided.
3. At 11 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon cool drinks have to be provided to all in the hospital premises.
4. Hospital maintenance and cleaning have to be organized by TRO by employing garbage clearing workers. It's a big problem by the way of massive inflow of wounded and sick persons to the hospital.
5. TRO has to organize the removal of accumulated rubbish and waste by the workers of Pradesia Saba inside and outside of the hospital.
6. Bringing wounded to the hospital from places where the incidents took place.
7. Lifting the wounded carefully from vehicles and placing them on the ground inside and outside of the hospital premises for doctors to diagnose and to do treatment. 5 TRO staff are stationed in the hospital round the clock for this purpose.
8. Removal of dead persons among the injured to a common place. From where the dead bodies have to be taken by tractors for burial or cremation.
9. Provision of transport to wounded, sick and elderly people to ship yard to be taken to Trincomalee by ship.
10. Caring the warded patients – wounded and sick in the hospital by attending the needs of them.
11. Putting up tarpaulin sheets over the hot sandy ground for the patients to be placed under them.
12. Doing first aid to the wounded brought from outside before the check up by a doctor.



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## **7. Children's Home**

Gandhi Ilam and Gurukulam are functioning. Girls and boys are cared in these centres. About 300 children are looked after in these 2 centres. This number is increasing daily due to the reason that children are separated from parents by displacement. The children are orphaned by the deaths of the parents. These children are taken care by TRO with the provision of food, lodging, clothing and protection.

## **8. Home for Elderly persons**

The number of elderly persons to be taken care of are increasing rapidly due to displacement and estrangement. Now about 217 elders are in our Elders' Home. Some children are going into army controlled areas leaving their elderly parents behind. The deaths of children too have left the elderly persons without anyone to care them. They are housed in protective shelters and provided food, clothing and care. The shelters are furnished with wells and toilets. 10 care givers are employed to take care of them. They have to be bathed daily. In some cases they have to be carried by care givers to toilet. Caring old people is not an easy task. Maintenance of elders' home is being done by TRO with dedication and total involvement.

## **9. Registration of deaths by aerial, artillery attacks and firing**

The deaths by aerial and artillery attacks and firing are registered by TRO staff at centres established for this purpose. Over 6500 deaths have been registered so far. Over 2000 close relatives of death persons had been paid Rs.3000 as an initial relief. The work relating to registration and payment is continuing.

## **10. White Pigeon – Prosthesis making**

This work is going on with available materials. Making of crutches and repair of artificial limbs are the main tasks now. With enormous amputations now taking place making of prosthesis in great numbers is the important requirement of the hour. But the bringing in necessary materials is the big problem.

**Laurence Christy**  
**Head of TRO Field Office**  
**"Safe Zone"**

Updated on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2009