Executive Summary

Decades of systematic state-sponsored persecution and 25 years of war have severely distorted the fabric of the community, strained the family unit and decimated the infrastructure of the Northeast. Family, community and infrastructure are some of the most essential ingredients for the growth of a child, the future of the community the LTTE is attempting to protect. The plight of children under said conditions is an *effect* of the *root causes* of the conflict, a problem neither created nor relished by the LTTE.

The LTTE, which emerged as the only uncorrupt protective armor of the Tamil nation in the Northeast, is motivated and committed to the well-being of Tamil children. In spite of the threat posed by the Sinhala Sri Lankan security forces and their paramilitaries, the LTTE is interested in resolving the humanitarian and human rights problems related to underage children in armed conflict. The international community and the LTTE are together responsible for resolving the root causes of problems which affect children in the Northeast. The LTTE takes very seriously its responsibilities in accordance with international law and local custom to protect and provide for the children in the areas it governs.

This report outlines the due diligence effort pursued by the relevant branches of the LTTE to follow through on the list of names of underage recruits provided by UNICEF. The report identifies the difficulties encountered in the process with the hope of finding and implementing remedies. The following points are explored in detail:

- Known inaccuracies in the list of underage recruits;
- Lack of a communication protocol to refine the name list as errors are found;
- INGOs' inability to commit resources for at risk children;
- Efforts by indigenous organizations and the LTTE to train children with vocational and other skills, and to care for at risk children;
- Methods to locate and release the underage children in question under prevailing ground realities.

The June 26, 2006 version of UNICEF's list of those underage children it believes are in LTTE ranks has 1387 names. Of these, 890 have either been previously released by the LTTE or have reached adulthood. To check on the remaining 497 names, the LTTE has asked UNICEF for identifying details to be able to further reduce this number. The LTTE believes that a high percentage of those remaining on the list never joined their armed forces in the first place and hopes to work with UNICEF on taking them off the list. Those identified as being members of the LTTE will be released through NESOHR to their parents, or, if they refuse this option, to the ESDC, a school and vocational training center.

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Security Council Resolution 1539 lists numerous serious violations of childrens' rights in armed conflict which are of concern to the local and international community. In this report are discussed in detail:

- Recent killings, disappearances and injury of Tamil children; and
- The extent of the destruction of schools and hospitals in Tamil areas.

According to the LTTE's count, 26 children were killed by the Sri Lankan armed forces and their paramilitaries, at least 45 were abducted/disappeared and 102 were injured in the period between December 7, 2005 and June 28, 2006. We trust that the international community will make note of these children's deaths and take action to prevent any further occurrence of this ultimate violation of a child's rights – the right to life itself.

32 hospitals have been destroyed in the war and 33 hospitals and clinics have been damaged. 471 schools have been damaged or destroyed. Almost every institution for children and their families in the Northeast has been affected. Completely inadequate reconstruction has taken place during the four year ceasefire period and children continue to suffer as a result.