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2nd Lead (Adds details)

## 'Denial of rights basis of our struggle'- Thamilchelvan

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**"The denial of our human rights is the basis of our struggle. We have not effectively conveyed this message to the world... We will also bring about greater awareness of human rights and related international conventions among our people," said Mr. S. P Thamilchelvan, head of the Liberation Tigers' political division, addressing the opening of the LTTE's Human Rights Secretariat Friday in Kilinochchi.**

The body, formally titled the NorthEast Secretariat on Human Rights (NESHOR), was launched to "monitor the human rights violations in the northeast and implement actions to strengthen the human rights there," the LTTE said in a statement released on its Peace Secretariat website.

"Human rights related matters were the main issue that was taken up against us at the [2002-2003 peace] talks and during our officials' visits abroad," he said.

"We have not done enough to bring out the truth regarding the manner in which our people were systematically denied their basic rights," he said.

"We are not experts in human rights doctrines and theories. But our actions are always guided by humanitarian interests," Mr. Thamilchelvan said.

The Action Committee of NESHOR, which is headed by Father Karunaratnam, consists of Proctor Sivapalan, Dr. Sivapalan (Medical Faculty University of Jaffna), Mr. Joseph Pararajasingam (MP), Miss. Arulanathan (University of Jaffna), Mr. Puleedevan (Secretary General, Peace Secretariat), Mr. Gajendran (MP), Prof Sriskandaraja (Denmark), and Dr. Malathy (human rights activist, New Zealand).

The secretariat, located on A9 Road, was open at 10.30 AM with the lighting of the lamp. It was followed by a meeting presided by Fr Karunaratnam and attended by the committee and Mr. Tamilselvan, Mr. Thangan (deputy head of the LTTE's political wing), representatives of the Tamil Eelam police service and other LTTE cadres, and many civilians.

The idea of the human rights unit was first unveiled in mid-May when Mr. Thamilchelvan met Mr. Ian Martin who joined Norwegian-brokered peace process early last year as its human rights advisor.

Mr. Thamilchelvan said that the human rights unit, once institutionalised, "would evolve as an integral part of the envisaged Human Rights Commission in the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA)."

Mr. Martin had welcomed the move and extended his support to the project, LTTE news reports said.

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