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DATE: 6TH MAY 1985

TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND TAMILS OF SRI LANKA
INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE LAST REPORT

1.0 JAFFNA

- 1.1 On 19.4.85, the security forces shot 4 persons dead at Myliddy.
- 1.2 On 28.4.85, several army personnel were reported killed in a landmine explosion at Karaveddi.
- 1.3 On 28.4.85, near the Point Pedro police station 4 soldiers were killed in an attack by the Tamil militants.
- 1.4 On 29.4.85, in a landmine explosion 10 soldiers died and several others were injured at Ariyalai.
- 1.5 After the incidents in Karaveddi and Ariyalai the security forces went on a rampage in Karaveddy and Thondamanaru killing over 20 civilians and damaging several shops and houses. The security forces were also involved in looting in these areas. They also fired from the helicopter killing and injuring several civilians. Some of those killed on 30.4.85 are Sinnathurai Chelvanayagam of Karaveddy and Mr & Mrs Navaratnam of Ariyalai.

2.0 MANNAR

- 2.1 On 17.4.85, the Sri Lanka Navy killed 27 Tamils and arrested several others and took them to the Thallady army camp.

3.0 MULLAITIVU

- 3.1 On 22.4.85, in a landmine explosion at Mullaitivu, an army vehicle was damaged and, according to government sources, 4 soldiers were killed. The army personnel in the other vehicles of the convoy fired indiscriminately, killing several civilians.

4.0 TRINCOMALEE

- 4.1 On 27.4.85, 7 soldiers and two militants were killed in a clash, according to government sources, at Kaddaiparichan in Muthur.

5.0 BATTICALOA

- 5.1 On 17.4.85, a Tamil was shot dead in a clash between Muslims and Tamils at Karaithivu.

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- 5.2 On 17.4.85, a Tamil youth was injured in a clash and when he was admitted to the Eravur Hospital, police commandos entered it, disconnected the drip and took him away alleging that he was a "militant".
- 5.3 On 17.4.85, Ministers Devanayagam and Rajadurai and the District Minister Mrs Ranganayaki Pathmanathan visited the troubled areas in the Eastern Province and issued a statement that the Tamil Militants were not involved in the current Muslim-Tamil clash but other subversive forces were behind the incidents.
- 5.4 On 17.4.85, Tamil refugees from Akkaripattu who went to collect food from neighbouring villages were attacked by police commandos and several refugees were killed. The bodies of the refugees were burnt by the commandos on the road-side. Some of the refugees escaped into the nearby jungle.
- 5.5 On 19.4.85, a Muslim house was burnt at Eruthayapuram.
- 5.6 On 19.4.85, 7 Muslims were reported killed in a clash between Muslims and Tamils at Eravur, and several Tamil houses were burnt in this area.
- 5.7 On 20.4.85, 200 Tamil houses were burnt at Kuddieruppu in Eravur.
- 5.8 According to the Tamil daily Virakesari of 21.4.85, the former MP for Kalmunai Mr Ahmed (a Muslim) referring to a poster which alleged that Mossad had instigated the violence in the Eastern Province stated that there was truth in that statement.
- 5.9 According to the Virakesari of 22.4.85, the 2nd MP for Batticaloa Mr Meera Lebbe (a Muslim) has requested the President not to send any more police commandos to Batticaloa as he feared that the incidents which had taken place in Karaithivu would also take place in Batticaloa, thus implying that police commandos were responsible for the incidents in Karaithivu.
- 5.10 On 22.4.85, 100 Tamil houses were burnt and 800 Tamils rendered homeless in Punchanthoduvai.
- 5.11 On 22.4.85 and 23.4.85 the police commandos helped the looters by providing light (from the Armoured Car) to loot the Tamil houses at Kalavanchikkudi.
- 5.12 On 23.4.85, the typewriter, motorcyle and tractor were stolen by unknown persons from the Redd Barna Office at Vellaveli.
- 5.13 On 24.4.85, several Tamil houses were burnt at Navatkuda and 4 Tamils were killed.

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- 5.14 On 25.4.85, several Tamil houses in Valaichcheni area were burnt and 5 Tamils injured.
- 5.15 On 25.4.85, the Tamil police officers from the Valaichcheni area were transferred to Colombo by the Sri Lanka government.
- 5.16 On 26.4.85, Dr. Frank Jeyasinghe, a member of the Group for Ethnic Studies, issued a statement to the press that the security forces were involved in the Muslim-Tamil clashes in the Eastern Province.
- 5.17 On 26.4.85, Minister Thondaman issued a statement to the Tamil daily Virakesari that large numbers of persons were transported from Colombo to Batticaloa in government vehicles.
- 5.18 Some Identity Cards discovered at the places of the Muslim-Tamil clash (namely Karithivu and Akkaripathu) were found to belong to persons resident in Colombo.
- 5.19 On 27.4.85, a few Tamils were arrested by the commandos in Kallady and Kalkuddah.
- 5.20 On 29.4.85, at Valachchenai, several Tamil houses and a Muslim market were burnt in the clash.
- 5.21 Over 25,000 Tamils have been rendered refugees owing to the Muslim-Tamil violence. 55 persons have been reported killed. About 3,500 houses (mostly belonging to Tamils) and property estimated at Rs.350 million have been destroyed.
- 5.22 On 29.4.85, the police helicopters belonging to the Sri Lanka government showered leaflets instigating the Muslim against the Tamils.

6.0 REFUGEES

- 6.1 Over 100 refugees fleeing by boat to India were intercepted by the Sri Lankan Navy. They were arrested and handed over to the Thalady army camp. The number of Sri Lankan refugees in India is now estimated at 90,000.

7.0 OTHER DISTRICTS

7.1 KURUNAGALA

On 26.4.85, the Nikavarittiya police station was attacked by Tamil militants and a police personnel was killed.

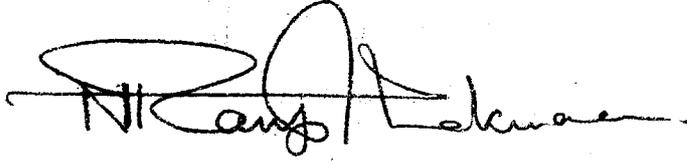
8.0 GENERAL

- 8.1 On his recent visit to Singapore, Mr. Lange the Prime Minister of New Zealand said at a press conference there on 16th April that while India would not want to send troops to Sri Lanka, there could be a role for an independent international "policing" force to oversee military activities on the Island.

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8.2 The Sri Lanka Minister of Information has suggested to the Cabinet recently that the Tamil daily Virakesari must be banned, as it had published a statement by Minister Thondaman stating that government vehicles had been used to transport persons from Colombo to the Eastern Province presumably to attack Tamils and Tamil property.



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NOTE

- 1 A questionnaire on Urgent Notes was sent to you last month. We would be grateful if the questionnaire is returned early, if you have not done so already.
- 2 We have adopted a new system of reference number. Please note the change. The last part of the reference number refers to the serial number of Urgent Notes since inception.

Massacre on beach as Muslim anger turns on Tamils

SRI LANKAN security forces massacred innocent Tamils and helped Muslims to destroy Tamil shops and homes during last week's disturbances in the eastern province of the island, according to eyewitnesses.

On Friday Tamils in the small coastal town of Akkaraipattu, where violence broke out last weekend, said that "commandos" killed 30 local men in cold blood on Sunday afternoon as they were returning from an expedition to find food. Piles of charred corpses hidden near the scene of the alleged massacre seemed to confirm the truth of the story.

The commandos, from a special police task force, the Tamils claim, also encouraged Muslims in the town to burn and loot hundreds of Tamil shops and houses. All of the Tamil commercial quarter and large sections of the residential area have been completely destroyed, leaving 10,000 people homeless.

Until recently, the Muslims, who come from Arab stock, had lived peacefully alongside Tamils in Akkaraipattu. Most of Sri Lanka's 1.1m Muslims live in the eastern province, where they account for 30% of the population. The main conflict on the island until now has been between the Tamils and the Sinhalese majority.

Tension began rising over the weekend because of a three-day *hartal*, or demonstration, during which all shops were closed. Official sources say it was designed to vent Muslim feelings over the death of a local man working in the north. He

was one of three Muslims shot dead in a mosque by Tamil terrorists. According to local Muslims it was also to protest at extortionate demands that terrorists in the area were making on shopkeepers. The Tamils maintain that none of the secessionist guerrilla groups is operating in the area.

Why the violence broke out is unclear. Official sources say the Muslims were provoked by stone-throwing Tamils. The Tamil version is that the Muslims, emboldened by the arrival of the army, attacked without reason. Both sides agree that most of the destruction that immediately followed was caused by the Muslims.

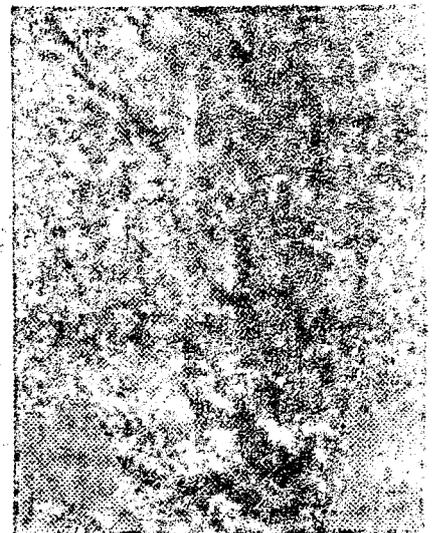
According to numerous eyewitnesses the mob began by throwing petrol bombs into Tamil-owned grocery "boutiques" in the market on the south side of the town. They moved on to the Tamil houses near by, looting and burning.

One 26-year-old Tamil man said: "I was standing outside the Saratha (a cinema) at about 10.30 in the morning when the commandos came up on a truck and started firing. I began running and I was shot in the foot. Then the Muslims caught up with me and shot me again in the shoulder."

With six other casualties he was taken by van to a small hospital at the village of Thrukobil near by, where they were given superficial treatment and sent by lorry back to Akkaraipattu. On Friday three of them were lying in an open-sided hut, without any medical

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by Patrick Bishop,
Akkaraipattu,
Eastern Sri Lanka



President Jayawardene

supplies or attention. An electric fan lay between them in a vain attempt to keep the flies off their wounds. They were too frightened to go to hospital, for fear of reprisals.

All the Tamil accounts agree that throughout the day the army allowed the destruction and violence to continue without interference. By late afternoon the initial rioting was over. The destruction of their shops meant that the Tamils had nothing to eat.

A Tamil said: "About 45 people decided to go to Thrukobil to buy the vegetables". When they were walking back, four jeeps full of commandos stopped them about two miles out of town, by a government rest-house. "Then a helicopter flew along and they all started shooting."

The Tamils claim that 15 people escaped back to the village and that the remaining 30, all men, were killed. When no one came to collect the bodies from the roadside, they said, the army dragged them away and burned them.

On Friday afternoon I drove a few miles south of Akkarai-pattu to the place where the massacre is alleged to have happened. A short way past the government rest house there is a gap in the trees which opens on to a wide stretch of sandy beach. There I found at least five bamboo pyres. Each contained the charred corpses of what appeared to be grown men. It was impossible to see how many dead there were in all, because of the effects of the fire, but I counted at least six bodies in the pyres nearest the road.

Groups of soldiers, believed to be from the Sri Lankan army's armour corps artillery and commando corps were still patrolling Akkaraiattu on Friday and army helicopters flew overhead. The town is one of several in the eastern province that have been hit by Muslim-Tamil violence in the past 10 days.

At Karaitivu, five miles to the north, thousands were made

homeless and an unknown number killed when a Muslim mob burned homes and attacked a Hindu temple last weekend. Smaller clashes continued through the week.

On Thursday, eye-witnesses said, the army looked on while a Muslim crowd attacked Tamils, killing four, in the town of Eravur, just north of the provincial capital of Batticaloa.

The Sri Lankan government, led by President J. R. Jayawardene, claims that the disturbances stem from spontaneous Muslim anger over murder and intimidation practised by Tamil guerrillas. However, leading Tamil politicians, including the Sri Lankan home minister, K. W. Devanayagam, claimed last week that "police commando" agents *provocateurs* have been behind some of the attacks.

Independent observers in the region say that the government has a vested interest in damaging the traditional harmonious relationship between Muslims and Tamils in the eastern province because it would prevent Muslims being attracted to the prospect of an autonomous Tamil state.

The five main Tamil guerrilla groups operating in Sri Lanka all have as their main political objective the creation of a socialist Tamil state, which would include the present east and northern provinces. Recently they have emphasised their friendly attitude towards the Muslims, with whom they have a common language and have drawn attention to the number of Muslim recruits within their ranks.