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TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND TAMILS OF SRI LANKA

INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE LAST REPORT

- 1.0 JAFFNA
- 1.1 On 30th and 31st January 1985 at Polikandy Army went on a rampage destroying 62 houses, 5 shops, a rice mill, a library, a trawler, 4 catamarans, an ice factory and large quantities of fishing nets. Total loss is estimated over 3.5 million Sri Lankan rupees.
- 1.2 Four of the Tamils killed during combing operation in Jaffna on 6th February 85 were - M D Emmanuel (Age 48), Felix Anthonypillai (Age 25), Subramaniam Sivakanthan (Age 54) and Pobalasingham (Age 64).
- 1.3 On 10.2.1985 security forces searched the villages Alaveddy, Masiapidly and Sandilipay. Several people were arrested and a house was blasted.
- 1.4 On 12.2.1985 at Kaithady security forces damaged 3 vehicles and assaulted the occupants.
- 1.5 On 13.2.1985 at Thadatheru (Jaffna) army shot and injured Poopalu Yogeswaran.
- 1.6 On 25.2.1985 the army shot and killed four persons in Jaffna.
- 1.7 On 25.2.1985 army entered a private university students hostel, assaulted the students and burnt their books and clothes.
- 1.8 On 25.2.1985 at Kankesanthurai 4 civilians were killed by the army.
- 1.9 On 25.2.1985 at Maviddapuram, army killed four Tamil civilians. They are two brothers Vali and Mohan, Thurairajah and another person aged 15.
- 1.10 On 1.3.1985 at Kallundai, two army trucks were destroyed by landmines. The army in retaliation burnt down 8 houses in Navaly.

1.11 On 6.3.1985, at Karaveddy, Mulli and Thunnalai 30 persons were arrested by the security forces.

1.12 A Canadian tourist was denied entry into Jaffna; he was stopped at Elephant Pass and made to return to Colombo. It should be noted that 3 western journalists were arrested in Jaffna recently.

2.0 KILINCHCHI

2.1 Rev Fr S M Omlo a Dutch priest who has served in Jaffna Diocese for the last 37 years was refused entry into Jaffna Peninsula although the Govt. Agent of Kilinochchi issued a permit under emergency regulations.

2.2 The Citizen Committee of Kilinochchi inquired through the Government Agent the whereabouts of 3 youths arrested two months back and the co-ordinating army officer had informed the Government Agent that the 3 youths were killed when they attempted to escape from custody.

It should be noted that several persons were killed in custody and the reason given by the army is that they attempted to escape.

2.3 On 1.3.1985, at Kilinochchi the police station was attacked by Tamil militants and in reprisal the security forces destroyed 15 houses, 9 shops and damaged a Hindu Temple.

3.0 MANNAR

3.1 Since 4.2.1985, Tamil civilians in Pesalai, Thalaimannar, Thalupadu and other coastal villages had been terrorised by the security forces and they are fleeing in thousands to India by fishing boats.

4.0 MULLAITIVU

4.1 40 Tamil fishermen were arrested and their catch including their boats were seized by security forces. The fishermen had gone out to the sea on a wrong information that the govt. has relaxed the regulation prohibiting them from fishing.

5.0 VAVUNIYA

5.1 On 3.2.1985, at Vavuniya army shot and killed one Tamil.

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5.2 At Puliyankulam security forces shot and killed a 12 year old boy and arrested 8 persons including one woman.

5.3 On 5.2.1985, at Chettikulam two persons were shot and killed by the army and a young boy Karupiah (age 13) is reported missing after the incidents.

5.4 On 9.3.1985 at Kannatti, army shot and killed 8 persons and has damaged a tractor.

6.0 TRINCOMALEE

6.1 On 26.2.1985, at Muthur the police opened fire at random killing 4 persons, Joseph Mariyadas, Srinivasagam, Thenigasalam and Velan.

7.0 BATTICALOA

7.1 On 24.2.1985, at Komari police commandos arrested 15 Tamils.

7.2 On 25.2.1985 at Kiran army burnt several shops and houses of the Tamils.

7.3 On 25.2.1985, at Central Camp (a village in Batticaloa) the police commandos shot and injured Selathamby Ravichandra and Kanapathipillai Kanthasamy.

7.4 On 28.2.1985 at Mankerni 2 persons returning from their paddy fields were shot at by the police commandos and one was killed and another injured.

7.5 On 28.2.1985 the police commandos arrested 35 persons in Batticaloa town and removed them to unknown destinations.

7.6 On 2.3.1985, at Maduruoya the Sinhalese mobs attacked the Tamils killing one and injuring 10 others.

7.7 On 4.3.1985 at Kiran the Tamil villagers were forcibly moved out by the police commandos.

7.8 On 4.3.1985 in villages near Batticaloa town over 400 youths and students were arrested by the security forces.

7.9 On 4.3.1985 police commandos went on a rampage at Vantharumoolai and Kommadurai assaulted people burnt 46 houses completely and 32 houses partly and at Chithandi 6 houses, 1 tractor and 1 motor cycle were completely

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7.9 burnt. Over 500 families were rendered refugees after the commandos burnt houses at Vantharumoolai and Kommadurai.

7.10 On 6.3.1985 at Punnaikuda security forces burnt a house.

7.11 At Paduvankerni police commandos burnt down 7 stacks of paddy of the farmers worth over rupees 200,000/=.

8.0 OTHER DISTRICTS

8.1 BOOZA : On 16.2.1985, a batch of 50 Tamil detainees were released.

9.0 REFUGEES

9.1 On 26.2.1985, the boats carrying 140 Tamil refugees to India from Jaffna were intercepted by the Sri Lankan navy.

9.2 On the same day 2 families consisting of 17 members fleeing from Mannar were arrested by the army.

9.3 On 1.3.1985, 17 people including two small children were killed by the Sri Lankan navy while they were fleeing to India.

9.4 On 4.3.1985, 247 refugees fleeing to India were arrested by the Sri Lankan navy.

9.5 Tamil refugees have been reaching India by boat from Tamil homelands daily. Total number of refugees who arrived by boat in India since 5.2.1985 is 15,681 as at 8.3.1985.

10.0 GENERAL

10.1 A Portugese cargo plane carried arms to Sri Lanka on 8.2.1985.

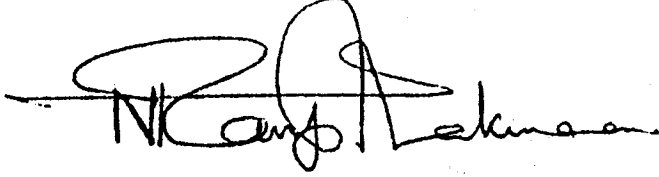
10.2 The United States has made a grant to Sri Lanka for military education and training programme.

10.3 On 21.1.1985 a telegram to the Pope was categorised as objectionable by the Sri Lankan government and refused transmission. The text of the telegram is as follows:-

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10.3

"Deeply distressed by the murder of our Catholic priest Fr Mary Bastian in Mannar diocese, Sri Lanka. We humbly request your Holiness to appeal to the government to respect Human Rights and safe guard the rights of the minorities".
Sender : Chief Pastor & People of God of Jaffna Diocese.



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THE DAILY YOMIURI (ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER IN JAPAN.) OF 6TH MARCH 1985.

Thousands Of Tamils Fleeing Sri Lanka With Horror Tales

By Stephen R. Wilson

RAMESWARAM, India—As dawn breaks over the Palk Strait, small boats wind their way toward this fishing island at the southern tip of India.

Guided by the 38-meter high tower of a 12th-century Hindu temple, the motor-boats quietly land on Rameswaram's palm-fringed shore.

Dozens of wet, weary and seasick families step onto the sand, gather up their belongings on their heads and walk down the beach toward what they hope is a safer life.

This scene has been repeated daily since early February by the world's newest boat people—minority Tamils fleeing violence in northern Sri Lanka. Nearly 7,000 Tamil refugees have made the five-hour boat journey to Rameswaram last month.

Although they have not faced the treacherous waters and plundering pirates that haunted Vietnamese and Haitian refugees, the Tamils bring with them horror stories of indiscriminate killing and torture by Sri Lanka's Sinhalese soldiers.

"We came to escape death," said Lakshmi Subramaniam, 34, holding her three children at a makeshift refugee center in Rameswaram. "What will I do with my children if they shoot my husband? We will not go back until a solution is found. If the Indian Government wants to throw us out, we will die at sea."

The refugees are the latest chapter in Sri Lanka's long-running conflict between the mostly Hindu Tamils, who form about 18 percent of the

island's 15 million population, and the Buddhist Sinhalese majority. They join about 40,000 refugees who fled to south India after the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983.

Tamil extremists, claiming persecution by the Sinhalese, are waging a guerrilla campaign for an independent state in the north and east of Sri Lanka. According to official count, more than 500 people have died since late November in clashes involving rebels, army troops, police and civilians.

Dozens of refugees interviewed in Rameswaram and at a government relief camp in nearby Mandapam said the Sinhalese-dominated army has let loose a reign of terror against all Tamils in an attempt to wipe out the guerrillas, known as "tigers."

Some of their accounts have been corroborated by citizen's groups, clergymen, journalists and government sources in Sri Lanka.

Western diplomats have described Sri Lanka's young 11,000-man army as one of the world's most undisciplined military forces. President Junius R. Jayewardene conceded in an interview with a U.S. magazine in January that the troops had committed "excesses."

Nearly all the refugees are fishermen from the north-west Mannar district, especially Thalaimannar Island and Pesalai town. It was in Mannar where more than 100 people were shot dead in early December when army troops went on a rampage after their jeep hit a rebel-planted land mine.

Some refugees said they were evacuating because they were warned that a major army or guerrilla operation in the area was imminent.

Thalaimannar is an easy departure point for the refugees. It is only about 30 kilometers from Rameswaram and the waters are too shallow for Sri Lankan naval boats to patrol.

The refugees said they paid from 100 to 500 rupees (\$4 to \$20) per family to local boat operators for the trip. They told of leaving late at night to avoid detection but said the armed forces did not try to stop them and seemed happy to see them leave.

regularly rounded up on suspicion of being guerrillas and tortured or killed, the refugees said.

"We were stripped and hung upside down from a pipe with our hands tied behind our back," recounted S. Dinakaran, 22, who said he was held for three days at the Thalady army camp in Mannar.

"They stuffed our mouths with paper and beat us with pipes," he said, untying his wrap-around sarong to reveal the marks on his buttocks.

Lakshmi Subramaniam, said troops raided her town in Mannar district in January,

Francis, a 28-year-old philosophy student from Pesalai who would not give his surname, said more than 1,000 people have been killed in Mannar district in the past five months and most of the bodies set on fire with burning tires.

He gave details on earlier published reports from Sri Lanka that a Catholic priest, Father Mary Bastian, was killed by troops in Mannar on Jan. 6. According to his account, about 200 soldiers surrounded the church complex and opened fire, killing 12 people, including an 85-year-old woman, in a schoolhouse.

The troops then entered the church and knocked on the priest's door. He put on his cassock and opened the door. "They shot him on the spot," Francis said.

Sri Lankan and Indian Tamil leaders have called for Indian military intervention to "liberate" the Tamil areas and stop the "genocide," but Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi last month ruled out an invasion. He has called for a negotiated solution that grants "credible autonomy" to the Tamils and paves the way for the return of the refugees.

But talks between the government and the Tamil's main political party, the Tamil United Liberation Front, collapsed in December and there is no sign they will be resumed soon.

Most of the refugees said they are in no hurry to return and feel safe among India's 50 million Tamils in Tamil Nadu State. The Mandapam camp is clean and spacious, and they are provided with food, clothes and medical treatment.—AP.



SRI LANKAN Tamil family in a refugee camp in Rameswaram, southern India. They crossed the Palk Strait by motorboat to Rameswaram to avoid being tortured or shot by Sri Lanka's Sinhalese soldiers.—AP.

Some of the refugees bear scars and wounds they said were inflicted by the army. Sunder Subramaniam, a 28-year-old farmhand who said he was shot during the Dec. 4 Mannar rampage, wears a scarf around his face to cover his mouth, which was virtually blown off, leaving only a few upper teeth.

"About five jeeps came and the soldiers just got off and started shooting," he said. "They then set fire to a whole row of shops. They took away some of the bodies to be burned."

Subramaniam said he was running away when a bullet pierced his left shoulder and crashed through his jaw.

The main target of the troops, the refugees said, are men and boys between the ages of 15 and 30. They are

sending people fleeing into the forests.

She said men were lined up on the road.

"They were told to put their hands up and run down the paddy fields screaming 'kotia' (the Sinhalese word for tiger). The army men then opened fire. I think seven men died. They had nothing to do with the tigers and each had four or five children."

The refugees, mostly Hindus and Christians, said the army was sparing Tamil Muslims, who wield influence in the government. When the army searches their areas, they are asked to raise the Muslim flag over their houses for their own protection or forced to strip to prove they are circumcised, the refugees said.