

India accused Jayewardene of going back on his word on granting autonomy to the Tamils. On June 28, the LTTE in a statement said about the TULF, "Ignoring us [LTTE] and having negotiations with the TULF cannot have any impact as the confrontation would continue, if in case, any settlement reached with the TULF is not satisfactory from the point of view of our struggle." On the same day, a powerful bomb planted by EROS exploded in the Lanka Oberoi Hotel, located in Colombo, killing a woman employee.

Amirthalingham was seen as a prisoner of circumstances and could not commit his party towards any form of political solution in the sharply deteriorating political circumstances. In the meanwhile, in a bid to recover lost ground politically, he announced a day of mourning, fasting and prayer to mark the first anniversary of the 1983 July anti-Tamil program. The fast was to be held on July 25, 1984, at Veeramakaliamman temple in Jaffna.

Tamil militants exploded bombs at the proposed venue, on July 25, very early in the morning to scare people away from participating. When Amirthalingham, Sivasithamparam and other TULF stalwarts came to the temple at 7am, there were a handful of volunteers, and the number grew by about 200 as the day went on. But about 300 young men who congregated around the *satyagrahis* began to heckle and abuse the TULF leaders. This was something new to Amirthalingham. Normally, he was the one who organized such heckling campaign to break down the anti-TULF meetings. But now he was the target.

By noon, only 18 people, including the leaders of the TULF, were seen fasting despite the comical circus staged by the Tamil youths. They called off the fast two hours before the schedule when a powerful bomb was detonated in the vicinity.

Meanwhile, the TELO called for a two-day strike to mark the first anniversary of the death of their founding leaders - Thangathurai and Kuttimani. All shops, schools and other institutions were closed in the Tamil-dominated regions of Jaffna, Killinocchchi, Mullaithievu, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The strike paralyzed the life in those regions.

Posters were pasted all over calling for the remembrance of Thangathurai - Tamil Eelam - National Father. Nadarajah Thangathurai was one of the first Tamil freedom fighters to be captured by the Sri Lanka government. He was sentenced to life imprisonment on February 24, 1983. On March 1, 1983, he made a statement from the dock which to this day remains one of the best testaments to Tamil sentiments in Sri Lanka. (The full text of his speech is given at the end of this chapter as an annex.)

In the month of August, violence in the Jaffna district escalated. On August 4, for the first time the LTTE attacked a Sri Lankan naval boat off the coast of Valvetiturai, killing six personnel. On August 5, Tigers (LTTE) attacked a police station at Mullaithievu, killing two policemen. According to a government communique, several LTTE cadres were also killed, but the militants managed to acquire four machine guns and 20 rifles and a large amount of ammunition when they fled after the attack.

On August 8, a group of militants belonging to the TELO faction attacked a police station at Chunnakam. Firing went on until the next day, the 9th. On the 10th, authorities decided to abandon the Chunnakam police station and the policemen there packed their things and left. Curious civilians entered the abandoned the two-storey building on the Jaffna-Kankesanthurai Road. Suddenly, a massive explosion ripped through the building and nearly 20 people died instantaneously, and 30 more were injured. It was later reported that Inspector S Rajalingham, a Tamil, who was the officer in charge of the police station, before abandoning the station, set up a time bomb on the ground floor.

Meanwhile, J Herath, the Superintendent of Police, Vavuniya, was killed by a time bomb and the security forces hit back by killing 22 suspected militants in the Jaffna peninsula

According to an Amnesty International report for 1985, "The government stated on November 17 that between January 1977 to October 31, 1984, 96 members of the armed services and 182 civilians had been killed by the Tamil extremist groups. Dozens more such deaths were reported later in the year."

According to another report, the Tamil militants had murdered 167 civilians, 13 politicians, 55 police personnel, 34 army personnel, three navy personnel and four air force personnel. In August 1984 the orgy of violence continued unabated. On August 11, six army men died in Mannar when their jeep hit a land mine. The soldiers retaliated and the Mannar Roman Catholic Bishop complained, "It is like an army of occupation flattening everything in its path.

Against the killing in the Jaffna peninsula, on August 13 hundreds of students in Madras took to the streets protesting against innocent Tamils being killed in Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu government, sensing the mood, closed down schools for a week. TULF leaders appealed to Indira Gandhi to "intervene and save millions of Tamils in Sri Lanka from total extinction in the hand of the Sri Lankan armed forces

Meanwhile, the LTTE announced that it was switching over its war tactics from hit and run to a new phase of a sustained guerilla campaign. Again, on September 1, 1984, five police commandos died in an explosion at Thikkam, a coastal village in Point Pedro. Enraged army colleagues set fire to shops at the Point Pedro market square, which was located three miles east of Thikkam village, and attacked pedestrians. Two days later, a Sri Lankan Navy patrol shot and killed eight fishermen on a fishing boat off the coast of East Point Pedro. On September 9, nine soldiers were killed and four wounded when their convoy was blasted by a landmine at Kokilai, located nearly 15 kilometers from Mullaithievu.

Amnesty International in its 1985 annual report rightly pointed out, "During 1984 there were increasing reports of unarmed Tamil civilians being deliberately shot dead in reprisal for attacks by Tamil extremist groups on security forces personnel."

The Sri Lankan security forces began to take cold-blooded revenge on Tamil civilians when, on September 11, a private bus from Colombo on its way to Jaffna, which halted at a tea shop in Vavuniya town, was intercepted by a group of army men from the Vavuniya camp. They hijacked the bus to a lonely jungle spot on the Vavuniya-Mannar road, near Poovarasankulam, and they shot and killed nearly 28 civilians.

The known names of those killed were as follows:

Somalingham Ehathayaparan alias Babu - 28 years old; Ravi Kandasamithurai of Nallur, 23-year-old final year law student; K Sinnathurai from Karaveddy, 60 years old, a driver; N Nazeer of Colombo; Saravanamuthu Thiyagesar of Oddusuddan; M Siva of Colombo; Ratsabapathy Kirupaharan of Vaddukoddi; Mohamed Jaiyavudeen of Colombo; Sebamalai of Kochchikade, Colombo; Veersaingham Murugiah of Chunnakam; Nadesu Murugavel of Chullipuram; Bernard of Naranthanai, Kayts; S Paramanathan of Uduvil; Sinnathamby Jeyaentharan of Kaithady; S Jeyasingham of Vaddukoddi and E Rajendran, 24 years old.

Another noteworthy incident happened on October 21. "The next day [October 21] Colombo was rocked by series of blasts - blamed on EROS - which killed three people. The first explosion around 5am, took place near a church, killing a Tamil young man. It was followed by at least nine other explosions in the next three-and-a-half hours, spreading panic in the city. The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC] went on the air at 10am appealing for calm. Explosions were reported from a Colombo suburb where two people were killed when they opened a box lying on the road, the Fort railway station where scores were injured, near the state-owned SLBC and TV stations, near the Home Ministry office and at four other locations. The main bus station also suffered an explosion, while army experts defused a second bomb at a crowded Fort Railway station." *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas* by M R Narayan Swamy, pages 133 to 134.

According to M R Narayan Swamy, the author of *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*, the Sri Lankan armed forces were happy at the news of the death of Indira Gandhi. He writes that Sri Lankan soldiers danced and were happy that Indira Gandhi was at last dead. "In Jaffna, Sri Lankan soldiers danced in the open on receiving the news of Gandhi's death, taunting Tamil passers-by: Amma Enge? Amma Enge? [Where is your mother? Where is your mother?] Some soldiers also performed *baila*, a dance of Portuguese origin, on the streets. The grief in Tamil areas was real and intense since Gandhi has been widely seen as a savior vis-a-vis the Sri Lankan government. On the day of her funeral, militants detonated an explosive every 30 minutes. Amirthalingham called Gandhi 'the only shield against genocide', while the Tamil Information Center moaned 'Never since the death of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were the Tamils of Sri Lanka sunk in such genuine grief.' At least 12 girls born in Jaffna in the first five days of November were named Indira." Pages 134 to 135.

Meanwhile, on November 19, Colonel A Ariyaperume, the chief of the Northern command, was killed at the Tellipalai junction, Jaffna, when his jeep hit a landmine. On

November 20, TELO successfully attacked a police station at Chavakachcheri. A young boy went to the secured entrance of the police station and told the policeman on duty that he wanted to report the loss of his national identity card. When the unsuspecting policeman opened the gate, nearly 35 men in military fatigues, rushed in from across the road, firing their guns. A second group followed them. Meanwhile, a truck loaded with explosion was driven into the police station compound and when the last of the raiders vacated the compound the detonator was set off, igniting tons of explosives, which brought the concrete structure of two-storey police station crashing to the ground.

Nearly 24 policemen died in the attack, the weapons in the police station was stolen and the entire operation lasted just 15 minutes. After the attack, when army detachments tried to reach Chavakachcheri, the militants set off dozens of land mines, causing huge craters and virtually blocking almost all roads to the devastated police station.

The attack on the police station was followed by an attack on Sinhalese boarder villages by the LTTE on November 24, 1984. They raided a resettlement farm at Padaviya (Pathavikulam in Tamil) on the border of the Mullaithievu - Vavuniya district - killing some 60 Sinhalese. It was told later that those who were killed were civilians, and it was a most gruesome attack. This was followed by another group of gunmen raiding a second resettlement farm eight kilometers away, where 20 Sinhalese villagers were massacred.

Those two farms, called Dollar and Kent, had been Tamil-owned before being procured by the Prison Department for the rehabilitation of prisoners. Earlier, after the 1977 riots, plantation workers who were Tamils of Indian origin had settled on the two farms. After the procurement of the farms the government arranged to get rid of the Tamils and settled some 450 Sinhalese ex-convicts on the two farms. It was also later brought out that other than the prisoners to be rehabilitated, there were some Sinhalese settlers from the dry zone. The Tamil militants position was that that these were the places where trained Sinhala ex-convicts were settled to eject the Tamil villagers from the are. The Pathavikulam is considered the heartland of the Tamil Vanni region.

On November 25, LTTE guerrillas, including women fighters, attacked the two fishing villages of Nayaru and Kokilai in Mullaithievu district, killing 59 Sinhalese civilians. The killing of nearly 120 Sinhalese civilians led to an unprecedented exodus of Sinhalese settlers from areas bordering the embattled northeast, leading to a Sinhalese refugee problem for the first time in Sri Lanka. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam claimed responsibility for the attacks on Kent and Dollar farms.

Subsequently on December 2, nearly 30 armed soldiers from the Padaviya army camp went to the village of Othiyamalai where they reportedly rounded up and shot 27 Tamils early in the morning in a reprisal for the attack on the Kent and Dollar farms. Othiyamalai is a Tamil village in Nedunkerny in the Mullaithievu district. After the attack the Sri Lankan soldiers took away with them five Tamil men who are still missing.

According to an Amnesty International Report, it has received detailed accounts from persons who have made statement about the killings. Witness have stated that on the

night of December 1, 1984, between 30 and 40 soldiers came to the village, camped for the night at Malaikadu Temple, and early in the morning of December 2 entered the village houses and took away one or more men from each, most of them in the 15-35 age group. According to these reports, many had their hands tied behind their backs and were taken, some of them in the trailer of a tractor, to village community centre hall, where 27 male villagers were shortly afterwards shot dead. Five others, all around 50 years of age were said to have been kept apart, put on a trailer of a tractor bearing No: 25 Sri 6511 and are believed to have been shot dead by the same army personnel near the Dollar and Kent farms after having been taken outside the village. Burned bodies have been found, leading to the tentative identification of two of the five men by their clothing.

The names of those who were shot dead at the Village Community Center, Othiyamalai are as follows:

Kanapathipillai Chinniah, a 32-year-old farmer with four dependents.  
Kanapathipillai Sivapatham, a 29-year-old farmer with five dependents.  
Kandiah Sivasithamparam, a 34-year-old farmer with five dependents.  
Kandiah Tharmalingham, a 36-year-old farmer with four dependents.  
Kasipillai Selvarasa, a 38-year-old farmer with four dependents.  
Krishnapillai Rajalingham, a 28-year-old farmer with two dependents.  
Krishnapillai Paramalingham, a 30-year-old farmer with six dependents.  
Manickan Mohanadas, a 32-year-old farmer with five dependents.  
Naharatnam Kartheeswaran, a 22-year-old farmer with 1 dependent.  
Nalliah Navaratnam, an 18-year-old farmer with 11 dependents.  
Ponniah Thavarasa, a 23-year-old farmer with three dependents.  
S.Alagaiya Yogarasa, a 16-year-old washer-man with five dependents.  
S. Nadarasa, a 29-year-old farmer with one dependent.  
Sangarapillai Sabaratnam, a 35-year-old farmer with six dependents.  
Sangarapillai Shanmugasundaram, a 28-year-old farmer with one dependent.  
Shanmurasa Raveendran, a 19-year-old farmer with six dependents.  
Sinniah Rajendran, an 18-year-old farmer with ten dependents.  
Sithamparapillai Rasiah, a 35 year old farmer with two dependents.  
Suppiah Gengatharam, a 25-year-old farmer with three dependents.  
Thambaiyah Kassipillai, , a 42-year-old farmer with eight dependents.  
Thambaiyah Sivangnanam, a 20-year-old farmer with four dependents.  
Thambaiyah Subramaniam, a 27-year-old farmer with three dependents.  
Thambaiyah Velupillai, a 37-year-old farmer with seven dependents.  
Thamothari Sathasivam, a 45-year-old farmer with thirteen dependents.  
Veerakathy Thillainadarasa, a 29-year-old farmer with two dependents.  
Velupillai Chandran, a 22-year-old farmer with six dependents.  
Velupillai Sithamparapillai, a 36-year-old farmer with six dependents.

The five men who are missing are: Thamothary Kanapathipillai - 52 years; Kandiah Ponnampalam - 45 years; Kandiah Kanagaiah - 55 years; Govintha Kanapathipillai - 53 years (a snakebite doctor); Nagamany Sinnaiyar - 58 years. All are farmers.

There was no stopping the violence. On December 18, eight policemen and a civilian driver died when their jeep hit a landmine in Batticaloa. The next day, two army officers and two soldiers died when two army trucks were blown up at Padaviya.

"The same day [December 19, 1984], more than 1,000 young men were rounded up in Jaffna in a fresh crackdown. The government, alarmed at the sudden escalation in fighting, announced in Colombo its decision to put into use rockets, bombs and small-caliber artillery against Tamil guerrillas. The death toll in just one month, beginning the last week of November, was put at more than 400. By the end of 1984, Sri Lanka was waging a full-scale war against Tamil guerrillas, whose strength was estimated at several hundred and who enjoyed secure bases across Palk Strait. The militants also held the initiative, and military officials privately acknowledged." *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas* by M R Naran Swamy, page 138 to 139.

On December 4, Sri Lankan army personnel shot and killed at least 90 Tamils unarmed civilians including, old men, women and children. They were all shot in cold blood by army personnel in reprisal for the killing of one of their colleagues in a landmine explosion on the same day.

On December 13, Reverend George N Jeyarajasingham, a Methodist priest, his driver Abdul Cader Sulaiman, and a police constable named Jesuthasan Roche attached to the Murunkan police station, while traveling from Mannar to Murunkan were stopped by army personnel in civil. They subsequently shot and killed the three occupants of the car and it was reported that they burnt them with the vehicle.