

A TIRU Publication

SRI LANKA

SITUATION REPORT

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SITUATION REPORT

A selection of recent reports from Sri Lankan newspapers, without comment. Readers are requested to form their own conclusions.

Note to Readers :

This issue of Situation Report was printed late due to inadequacy of funds. Although it is dated November 15, we have availed of the delay by incorporating more recent news reports published up to December 31.

What I Saw in Jaffna - Vijaya Kumaratunga

*(By courtesy-A special Interview)
Christian Worker, 3rd Quarter
1986.*

On October 20th afternoon I left for Jaffna to help secure the release of two Army men who were taken prisoner by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the course of the fighting in Mannar the previous Week.

I had earlier received a telephone call from "Rahim" (his real name I learnt later was Kanagaratnam) promising to release the two soldiers to me in Jaffna. He wanted me to come with members of the families of the two captured servicemen and media personnel from the newspapers, radio and T. V. so that the soldiers could be handed over to me in their presence.

I had naturally to get Government permission for such an arrangement and the Government at first agreed only to my making the trip alone. It was with some difficulty that I was able to even obtain permission for Ossie Abeygunasekara and Felix Perera of my Party to accompany me on this mission. For security reasons, I was asked to fly to Jaffna by a Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) aircraft.

On our arrival at Palaly airport, we were taken to the Palaly Army Camp where we lodged for the night. At the camp I learnt that there was in fact to be an exchange of prisoners: two of the LTTE captured by the Army were to be released in exchange

for the two captured servicemen in LTTE custody. Colonel Wimalaratna, the Commanding Officer in the North, described this as a "historic occasion". The mass media had reported earlier that the two soldiers were to be handed over to the Jaffna G. A., Mr. Panchalingam, but this was apparently not acceptable to the militants.

At the Palaly Camp early that evening I was present when there was a telephone conversation between 'Rahim' and Captain Kotalawala about the intended exchange of prisoners and, Colonel Wimalaratna gave eleven names to Captain Kotalawala to be read out over the phone to Rahim. It was agreed that Rahim should, on the next morning, inform Captain Kotalawala of the two prisoners who were to be released out of the list of eleven names. A German TV team who had been in Jaffna a few days earlier with Government permission also recorded an interview with Colonel Wimalaratna in my presence at the Camp. In this interview, the Colonel confirmed that this was the first time that prisoners were to be exchanged and said that this was a



Capt. Kotelawala of the Sri Lanka Army shakes hand with 20-years old 'Major' Rahim of LTTE, while Vijaya Kumaranatunga looks on.

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good turn of events. He was appreciative too of the earlier gesture of the militants in handing over coffins containing the bodies of nine soldiers killed in action in Mannar to the Jaffna Fort Camp. All this is recorded on video and cannot therefore be controverted.

On the 21st morning Colonel Wimalaratna came to my bedroom with a telex message he had received from the Joint Operations Command (JOC) with instructions that no prisoners should be released. I too saw this message.

Despite the countermanding of the arranged transfer of prisoners, I said that I had to meet the militants and we were therefore flown to the Jaffna Fort Camp from Palaly.

We stood at the barrier near the entrance to the camp with an Army raincoat held over our heads since it was raining somewhat. On seeing the militants approach us at a distance, I advanced with my companions to meet them some distance away from the barrier where we had been standing. These were tense moments for us as soldiers and militants, fully armed, stood facing each other on opposite sides. A false move by someone on either side could well have meant the end of us.

'Rahim' a smart young man of 20 years rushed forward and shook hands with me and I introduced him to my companions. He asked where Captain Kotalawala was and called out to him to come out and meet him. The tension was broken when Rahim and I walked back to the barrier where we were joined by Colonel Weerasekera who was in charge of the Jaffna Fort Camp, Colonel Wimalaratna and Captain Kotalawala. It was the first meeting between Colonel Wimalaratna and Rahim along with the militants. Captain Kotalawala was already known since it was he who had received the bodies of the dead soldiers from the militants earlier. After introductions were made, we left the camp with the militants, accompanied by the German TV team. The Army received permission to send another camera man to accompany us (whom the militants discovered before

long to be a Sub-Inspector of the National Intelligence Bureau!). The militants even invited the Colonel and the Captain to join us but this offer they politely declined.

We then walked on into the town where we met 'Kittu', the Northern leader of the LTTE a stout bespectacled militant about 28 years old who was obviously held in high esteem. Kittu spoke in Tamil and was translated into English by Rahim who was fluent in Sinhala too, having being educated at Trinity College, Kandy. Kittu and Rahim appeared to be very popular figures wherever we went.

Accompanied by Kittu and Rahim we went first to see the two captured soldiers at a nursing home. Both of them were being treated for their injuries and looked relaxed and com-

fortable. They said they were being treated well. Rahim and Kittu explained to the soldiers that the government had violated its undertaking to release two prisoners in Army custody in exchange for them and that it was not possible therefore for them to be released to me as arranged.

We had a long discussion on this matter. I tried my best to secure the release of the soldiers notwithstanding the Government's refusal to exchange prisoners. But the militants were reluctant to do this as they felt they had been cheated. They explained that they wanted to show the world that they had no desire to fight against the Sinhalese or against the ordinary soldiers who were merely fighting for their pay.

(To be Continued in issue No. 24)

S. NADESAN - Dedicated Champion of Human Rights



Mr. S. Nadesan, QC., the eminent lawyer, Senator and gifted and dedicated champion of Human Rights, died in the early hours of Sunday morning after a brief illness. He was in his 83rd year.

Mr. Nadesan applied his intellect and passion for justice to an amazingly wide range of Human Rights issues throughout his life. Beginning his legal career in the 1930s, he was noted for his incisive logic, relentless pursuit of facts and skilful and dogged advocacy. He was elected to the Senate in 1947 as an independent, and

was a founder member of the Civil Rights Movement in 1971. He was President of the Bar Council from 1970 to 1972.

In a long career of 55 years at the Bar, Mr. Nadesan was associated with a number of famous and important cases, such as the Abdul Aziz trade-union trespass case, the challenge to the Press Council Bill of 1972, the fundamental rights applications against the banning of the "Aththa" and "Saturday Review" newspapers, and the challenging of the contention that the Supreme Court Judges were deemed to have vacated office.

Amongst his most recent and successful cases, were the "Pavidi Handa" fundamental rights case, the Kalawana constitutional issue, and the defence of Kalmunai Citizens' Committee President, Paul Nallanayagam.

He was a colossus in a vanishing breed of lawyers who excelled in every sphere of the profession. Nadesan was equally at ease, and equally a master of his field, whether applying his extraordinary talent to a criminal trial, a tax case, a constitutional issue, a trade union dispute, a complex commercial arbitration, or a case involving international Human Rights standards. This versatility marked his career from its beginning right up to his last days....

(Excerpts from an appreciation by Manel Fonseka - Daily News Dec. 24 th, 1986)

Obituaries

ELAYATHAMBY - Jeyaveersingham. Advocate. Husband of Myrtle, father of late Premkumar, Rev. Fr. Jayanthakumar, St. Paul's Milagiriya, Michael and Christine. Funeral on 18th November. Family Burial Grounds. "Choice Villa", Chenkaladi.

MUDIAPPA - Michael Sathianathan. Husband of Anna, father of Anslem, Raji, Vasanthi, Bernadette, Jecintha, Malar and Quintus. Funeral on 21st November. Kalliankadu cemetery. 41/1, Boundary Road, Batticaloa.

SRIKANATHA - Danaluxmy. Wife of late Selliah Srikantha, mother of Saravanapavan, Ramachandra, Vadivambikai, S.S.Rajah and Kathigasan. Cremation on 22nd November. General cemetery, Kanatte. 18/9, Hampden Lane, Wellawatte.

RAJARATNAM. N. - (Formerly A.G.A Batticaloa) Husband of Nagaranee, father of Thillaiwasan, and Thillairajah. Funeral on 23rd November. Kaludewala cemetery. 14/5 Rattota Road, Matale

SIVAPRAGASAM - Veerasingham. (Retd. Supdt. of Excise) Husband of Ulaanayaki, father of Shiyamala, Sivarajith Sivakumar, Sivarajah and Sivaraaveen. Funeral on 23rd November. Old Road, Irupalai, Kopay South.

KANAGARATNAM. K. - (Retd. Dy. Dir. Irrigation) Husband of Chandramathy, father of Giriya. Cremation on 25th November. General cemetery, Kanatte. 32, Rajasinghe Road, Colombo-6.

THIYAGARAJAH. V. - (Retd. Post Master). Husband of Thiraviyam, father of Mangalakumar, Jeyakumar, Selvakumar, Anandakumar, Krishnakumar, and Arunthathy. Funeral on 26th November, Manipay. "Luxmi Vasa", Innuvil, Road, Manipay.

SELLAMAH - Wife of late V. S. Selladurai, mother of Pushpakaran, Rajasuriyar, Dr. Rajendram (University of Malaysia) and late Sarojinidevi. Cremation on 29th November, at Urelu crematorium. Palaly Road, Urelu East, Chunnakam.

RAJAPILLAI. Dr. V. - (Retd. Pathologist) Husband of Annaletchumi, father of Dr. Akilan (London), Barathan (Medical College, Tanjore) and Vaidehi (Student, Chundikuli Girls' College). Cremation on 2nd December. Kottathurai, Alolai Lane, Vaddukodai.

RATNASABAPATHY. T. K. - Husband of Gene, father of Suventhrene. Funeral on 16th December at Makiyawa. 38/21, Anniwatte, Kandy.

RATNASABAPATHY - Wijeya Indra (Rat-Wije) son of late Ambalavanar. Ratnasabapathy, and late Rasammah Ratnasabapathy. Brother of late Mangaiyarkarasi Kandiah, Raja Indra of Michigan (U.S.A) late Maha Indra, late Poorna Indra and Mrs. Indrani Pathmanathan of Michigan (U.S.A). Died 22nd Oct. in Michigan (U.S.A). Cremated on October 25th at Sunset Hills cemetery, Flint, Michigan. 10 Jaya Road, Colombo -4.

PARAMESWARAN. N. - Husband of Premila, father of Naren. Cremation at Kanatte on 8th December. 48/1, St. Mary's Road, Mattakuliya.

AMARASINGHAM - Bharathan R. Husband of Chandra, father of Jeevan, Vanathy and Chandran. Died in Australia on 6th December. 15, Rajasinghe Road, Colombo - 6.

THAMBIRAJAH C. - Husband of Thangaratnam, father of Jayaseelan, Jayarane, Kamalasin (Kuwait), Pushpagnani (Australia) and Sathiyaseelan (America). Cremation at Kombayanmanal cemetery on 9th December. 306/1, Navalar Road, Jaffna.

SIVAPATHASUNDERAM - Namasivayampillai. Husband of Ratnayaki, father of Somapalan, Dr. Vasanthanathan, Suntheresan, Pathmadevi, Arudpathy and Dr. Uma Devi. Died on 9th December, Funeral at Viyaparimoolai, Pt. Pedro.

SIVANESAN - Sivasubramanian (Engineer U.K.) Husband of Shanthini, father of Sivarupan and Sivakami. Died on 7th December in Madras. Funeral took place in Madras on 8th December. 35, Cowper Road, Harwell, Ealing U.K.

SHANMUGANATHAN -

Annapooram. Wife of late Mr. S. Shanmuganathan, mother of Vasanthanathan, Mahendranathan, Shanthanathan, Mrs. Raveendra Ranjithkumar (U.K.), Ramawathy and Nimalanathan. Cremation 1st December at Kokuvil cemetery.

AYADURAI - Nagamuthu. Husband of Maheswari, father of Somesan, Sri Nalini, Vimalanayakie and Shakuntala. Died on 13-12-86. 6/2, St. Anne's Church Road, Chundikuli, Jaffna.

PONNAMPALAM - Thuraiveerasingham. Husband of Sivapackiam, father of Dr. Jeyawickramaraja (Bahrain), Jayabalan (U.K.), Kamaladevi Giriya and Thanaluxmy. Died on 17-12-86 Manipay.

THURAIRAJASINGHAM -

Mercy Thangaratnam. Wife of late C. Thurai Rajasingham, mother of Belle, Dr. Chandra (U.K.), Pathmaranee (U.K.), Malar (Australia), Mahendran Sathia and Rahin (U.K.). Interment at General cemetery Kanatte on 20-12-86. No. 10, E Block, Anderson Flats, Narahenpitiya, Colombo-5.

VAMADEWAN S.T.K. - Son of late Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Kanagasabai, brother of late Navaratnam, Mahadeva, Pathamanathan, late Sarvananda and Mrs. Maheswari Abeyanandan. Cremation on 22-12-86 at Borella cemetery. No. 365/1, R. A. de Mel Mawatha, Colombo-3.

FR. L. A. SINGARAYER - OMI. Jaffna. Funeral on 22-12-86. Cathedral, Jaffna.

VITHUVARATNAM S. - Husband of Pathmaranee, father of Sarojini, Bama and Radhika. Cremation at Kanatte on 25-12-86. No. 16/2, Schofield place. Colombo-3.

ARULIAH - Abraham. Husband of Leela, father of Seelan. Cremation on 27-12-86. No. 73, Rakka Road, Jaffna.

POORNANANDA K. - Husband of Pathmawathie, father of Gnanakaran (Australia), Usha, Narmatha, (U.K.) and Divakaran (Belize). Died on 28-12-86 and funeral took place in Sydney. 30/9, Elie House Road, Colombo-15.