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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 15.5.85, at Annaikodai, security forces killed 5 youths.
- 1.2 On 18.5.85, a car exploded near the Public Library, Jaffna, and the security forces who arrived at the scene shot at random, killing 4 persons and injuring several others.
- 1.3 On 19.5.85, at Nallur, army stopped a passenger van and opened fire killing Subaluxmy (25 years) from Maniarthoddam and injuring five others.
- 1.4 On 21.5.85, a public protest was observed by the people in Jaffna, against the atrocities of the security forces. Schools were closed.

2.0 VAVUNIYA

- 2.1 On 17.5.85, 16 Plantation Tamil settlers who were victims of 1977 pogroms were killed by the security forces.
- 2.2 20,000 Tamils in the village of Cheddikulam face expulsion to create a 'Free Fire Zone'.

3.0 TRINCOMALEE

- 3.1 On 17.5.85, at Nilaveli, a bomb exploded in a Tourist Hotel.
- 3.2 On 23.5.85, at Nilaveli, a son of K Sivapalan, President of Trincomalee Citizen Committee, was shot dead by security forces. Mr Sivapalan featured in the BBC Documentary 'Siva's People' last year. Seven other youths too were killed.
- 3.3 On 23.5.85, at another incident after a skirmish with militants in which one air force personnel was killed, the air force personnel went on a rampage at Nilaveli 9 civilians, including 6 women and a child. Tamils in the area have vacated and taken refuge at Sampalthivu.
- 3.4 On 24.5.85, at Pankulam, 6 women, 2 men and one child belonging to two families were killed by security forces.
- 3.5 On 30.5.85, security forces burnt 40 houses at Poonagar and 60 houses at Mankamam and Thangaveli.
- 3.6 On 02.6.85, at Kuchaveli, a radio relay station was attacked by the militants and two vehicles were removed.

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- 3.7 On 02.6.85, the Police Station at Kuchcheveli was attacked by the militants killing one police personnel and 8 others. Following this incident, the militants also attacked a navy post at Kuchchaveli killing a navy officer and injuring 4 others.
- 3.8 On 1st and 2nd, seven houses of Tamils were burnt by armed Sinhalese mobs and security forces at Mainkamam, Ankaveli and Punagar. The Tamil people have fled to Kiliveddi and other nearby villages. More guns were distributed to Sinhalese villagers in the area. The situation worsened on 3rd and 4th and it is feared that about 1000 houses in Punagar, Sampar, Kiliveddi and Chenaiyoor were burnt and several Tamils killed. Tamils have taken refuge in the homes of Muslims in the area.
- 3.9 On 04.6.85 at Pankulam, security personnel stopped a passenger bus from Trincomalee to Jaffna and killed 13 Tamil passengers and injured eight others. Other passengers escaped into the jungle.
- 4.0 BATTICALOA
- 4.1 On 16.5.85, at Akkaraipattu, 18 Tamils were killed by police commandos.
- 4.2 On 16.5.85, Akkaraipattu police station was attacked by militants and two police constables were killed.
- 4.3 On 17.5.85, at Thambiluvil, over 40 youths were made to dig their own graves and then shot and killed by police commandos. The youths were arrested from different villages including Naipattimunai and Chenaikudiyiruppu.
- 4.4 On 17.5.85, at Sinnamuhathuwaram, police commandos shot dead 41 Tamils and burnt their bodies in the local cemetery.
- 4.5 On 18.5.85, the police commandos arrested 4 Tamils at Ilupaddichenai and gunned them down at Koduwamunai.
- 4.6 On 18.5.85, 38 Tamils were arrested in a farming village, Naripulthoddam, by the police commandos. 21 of them are still detained at Kallady commando camp. It should be noted that extensive tortures have been carried out in this camp.
- 4.7 On 20.5.85, the militants attacked the police post at Mannampitty killing 2 policemen and injuring two others. Security forces harassed the Tamil villagers in the area and arrested 30 of them.
- 4.8 On 20.5.85, at Vadamunai, 2 police jeeps ran over landmines. 6 policemen were killed and 5 others were injured.
- 4.9 On 30.5.85 at Amirthakali, police commandos killed 2 Tamil youths and arrested 20 others.

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4.10 On 01.6.85, at Batticaloa, security forces killed two Tamils.

4.11 On 03.6.85, 50 Tamils have been arrested from Thurainilavanai and Neelavanai by the police commandos and detained at Kaluvanchchikudi camp.

5.0 AMPARAI

5.1 On 22.5.85, Mr Paul Nallanayagam, President of Kalmunai Citizens Committee, was arrested by the police. He is accused of collecting evidence relating to the massacres of Tamils and passing the information to foreign correspondents. He was thereafter taken to Colombo and detained.

6.0 OTHER DISTRICTS

6.1 ANURADHAPURA

On 15.5.85, 17 Tamils were chopped to death at Anuradhapura and at least 5 persons were killed in custody by the army personnel following the attack at Anuradhapura on 14.5.85 killing 146 Sinhalese civilians, believed to have been carried out by Tamil militants. Among those killed were several Tamil engineers working in the area.

6.2 MADAWACHCHIYA

On 15.5.85, Selvarajah, the railway station master, a Tamil, was killed by Sinhalese mobs.

6.3 COLOMBO

On 25.5.85, over 300 Tamils were arrested in Kotehena and Wellawatte in Colombo in a house to house search carried out by the Armed Forces. The arrests were extended to other areas in Colombo. Most of them were released but several are still detained.

6.4 KALAWEWA

Around 27.5.85, two Tamils travelling in a mini bus were killed and burnt.

6.5 UPCOUNTRY

The plantation workers proposed a stop work cum prayer for three days starting on 2.6.85 for peace and harmony in Sri Lanka.

7.0 GENERAL

7.1 According to All India Radio (on 19.5.85) 10 gun boats are to be supplied by Britain. Arms and ammunitions were also promised by Pakistan and China. It is also reported that Sri Lanka is buying 6 more gun boats from Israel and 2 from Singapore.

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- 7.2 On 23.5.85, President Jayewardene announced that he may impose martial law to wipe out terrorism and restore peace and order, and that he may give executive powers to all members of parliament to combat violence.
- 7.3 It is reported that 200,000 Sinhalese single males would be given basic military and agricultural training for four months and settled in the north during a period of one and a half years by the Sri Lankan government.
- 7.4 On 1st. and 2nd June, Jayewardene met Rajiv Gandhi at Delhi to discuss the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. At a news conference Jayewardene has said that he would grant Amnesty for the militants, if they lay down arms and that would be the only term for negotiations. He indicated that the political solution will have district councils as the basis. It should be noted that a similar solution suggested at the all party conference was rejected by the Tamil United Liberation Front.
- 7.5 During the last week of May and 1st week of June 581 Tamils belonging to 125 families have crossed to India as refugees. Some of them are from the districts of, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Amparai, Vavuniya and Kandy.
- 7.6 1900 Tamils refugees have arrived in the U K during the past month. On 20th May the British Govt. announced that the refugees who arrived before 20th April 1985 will be given exceptional leave to stay for six months but other cases will be considered individually. However, on 29th May it was announced that Sri Lankan Tamils will be required to obtain visa to enter the U K. On 5.6.85 the British Govt. has deported Kandiah Raveenthiran a Tamil, to Colombo even before representation were made about his case by U K Immigration Advisory Service. Home Secretary said that the order was due to "serious failure of communications".

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REMINDER

A questionnaire on Urgent Notes was sent to you in April. We would be grateful if the questionnaire is returned early, if you have not done so already.

SPECIAL REPORT

MASSACRE AT VALVETTITHURAI :

Sri Lanka Government denied the massacre at Valvettithurai (VVT) on 9th May. The foreign media reported to the contrary. The citizens Committee of Valvettithurai made representation of the massacre immediately and thereafter has sent in a report to the Government Agent of Jaffna setting out list of 42 persons killed. In one operation 25 persons were herded in a community centre and blasted and in the second operation at Theerthamadam 12 persons were ordered to kneel down and shot at point blank at the back of their heads and in the third they were killed in search operations. They have also stated as follows :-

"We are most disturbed to find that the Hon'ble Minister of State in the process of interview was attempting to cast doubt on the massacre of 9th May. It is a pity that he should have taken such an attitude, especially after the complaint we made to you and through you to Brigadier Wanasinghe. We recall vividly the promise given by the Brigadier to investigate into the massacres and the other excesses."

The attitude of the armed forces is vividly reflected in some of the killings reported. At Navindil, Kandavavanaanathan, a graduate teacher, and his domestic help Viswanathan were shot dead by the soldiers after quenching their thirst with young coconuts provided by the victims.

In another incident, a person who was on a palmyrah tree top tapping toddy was shot dead, perhaps a good target practice. At least nine of the victims were shot dead in their homes or in the vicinity. The list is by no means complete. Several persons are still missing. Looting of valuables by the soldiers was extensive. Women too were victims of molesting and rape. But the government denies the incident though the Brigadier Wanasinghe promised to investigate into the 'massacres and the other excesses'.

The Sri Lankan Govt. also denied the shelling of the village of Valvettithurai in August 1984, though there were reports confirming the shelling.

E X T R A C T S

THE GUARDIAN

Saturday August 11 1984

From Roland Edirisinghe
in Colombo

The Minister of National Security has flatly denied that its naval units shelled the Valvettithurai coast a week ago, following the killing of two naval ratings by northern militants who were said to be making their way to Jaffna from the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

Mr Lalith Athulathmudali called a press conference yesterday specifically to put the record straight on this widely reported story of a naval bombardment

SATURDAY REVIEW

1st September 1984

The Times of India had this to say on the recent incidents in Jaffna:

The frenzied blasting of the northern coastal town of Valvettithurai by the Sri Lankan navy is as shocking as it is deplorable. A national navy does not reduce its own towns to near-obliteration, however grave the provocation. The Sri Lankan authorities would explain the action as a "reprisal" against the killing of naval personnel by Tamil Tigers. But that cannot justify this kind of indiscriminate ferocity on the part of an armed force. It is reminiscent of the tactic of wiping out whole settlements in the name of hunting guerillas during the Vietnam war.



CONCILIATION IN COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Parliament has ended the week in emergency session to debate the country's rising toll of inter-communal massacres.

In May alone so far, according to some accounts, more than 300 Tamils and Sinhalese have been killed. Another 100,000 Tamils are refugees in India while more than 2,000 are now seeking shelter in Britain. Despite almost two years of a continuous state of emergency the rift between the two main communities is greater than ever before. Yesterday it became clear that President Jayawardene is under pressure to seek a political solution, he has responded instead by threatening martial law.

If the Jayawardene Government is to escape further blame for its handling of the problem it will have to turn with the tide, against a military solution. The President already has a lot to answer for. Although the origins of this crisis hark back to the traditional ethnic and cultural rivalries between the Arayan Sinhalese and Dravidian Tamils, exacerbated by a deliberate policy of British preference for the Tamils whilst Ceylon was a Crown Colony and a crude reverse Sinhala first redressal after independence, a large share of the blame for the present near-hopeless state of communal relations must lie with the Jayawardene Government.

During the period of formal negotiations with the Tamils, the President failed to rise above politics and his ruling United National party's own concern to make a serious offer which moderate Tamils, and in particular the Tamil United Liberation Front, could reach out and grasp. Instead, by clinging rigidly to the narrow position of the Buddhist Sinhalese clergy and his party's hardliners, he ended up discrediting the TULF in the eyes of its own Tamil supporters and forcing the Tamil middle ground into the clutches of the extremists and their terrorist tactics.

More importantly, however, since the predictable collapse of the all-party conference at the end of last year, the policy Mr Jayawardene pursued exposed his lack of a truly sensitive national vision. Instead of intensifying his attempts at trying to

find a negotiated solution, his government opted for what amounts to a military settlement, relying on its indisciplined forces to tackle the terrorists without any corresponding political initiative to win back majority Tamil sentiment. Indeed, to add insult, it also repeatedly committed itself to settling Sinhalese on Tamil land, a policy that could not have been more deliberately designed to offend.

It is against this bleak background that this month's massacres have occurred. They are a measure of the despair and desperation which is now widely spread through both Sri Lankan communities.

It is therefore imperative that the Government pay heed to the calls to seek a political solution by means of fresh negotiations which have this week been made in Colombo. Even leading members of the Buddhist clergy, numbed by the brutality of the wanton murders, seem to have come out in favour of another conciliatory conference with the Tamils. In fact, this time round President Jayawardene is being urged to sit down with both the terrorists and the Indian Government (which he believes supports the former) to find a solution. It is an opportunity he should not miss.

For, paradoxically, the May murders may have pushed Sri Lanka's crisis to its nadir but have also created for President Jayawardene, were he willing to take it, the best opportunity yet to press for political concessions to the Tamils. As the military approach has so visibly failed, the majority Sinhalese are for the moment prepared to try negotiations once again. In their present mood, the President might just get them to accept a solution they would earlier have rejected. At the same time, with the terrorists internationally discredited for their part in the Anuradhapura killing, the President may also find the TULF suddenly more willing to respond to his overtures. While the terrorists are temporarily laid low the moderates could steal back into the limelight. It all depends on the President's handling