

Ref : TIC/UN/85/4.2

Date : 21st April 85

TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND TAMILS OF SRI LANKA

INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE LAST REPORT

1.0 JAFFNA

- 1.1 On 21.3.85, a boat carrying some Tamil refugees to India from Mathagal was fired at by the Sri Lanka navy. The number of casualties are not known yet. The navy also carried out artillery fire from the sea damaging some houses in Mathagal area.
- 1.2 On 24.3.85, at Valvettithurai the security forces arrested several persons including girls.
- 1.3 On 25.3.85, at Kankesanthurai dead bodies of two young persons with gun shot injuries were washed ashore.
- 1.4 On 29.3.85, at Valvettithurai Somasundaram Kurukkal (Hindu Priest) age 27 was shot and killed by the army.
- 1.5 On 7.4.85, near Gurunagar army camp two Tamils going on a bicycle were shot and killed by the army.
- 1.6 On 8.4.85, at Nainathivu the navy brutally assaulted 7 persons working in a Hindu Temple.
- 1.7 On 10.4.85, the Jaffna police station was attacked by the Tamil militants. Details are not known yet.
- 1.8 On 12.3.85, near Central College Jaffna the army fired indiscriminately at the pedestrians injuring Jesurasa Anthonipillai, Aloysius Subramaniam, Sivakumaran, Jesuthasan Marrimuthu and a married lady. This is believed to be in retaliation to the attack on the police station by the Tamil militants.

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1.9 On 12.4.85, near Hospital Road, Jaffna security forces fired at a van injuring two persons.

1.10 On 16.4.85, during a house to house search in Suthumalai, Manipay and Arali 6 people were injured by the army shootings.

2.0 MANNAR

2.1 The houses of those Tamils from the Mannar District who took refuge in India have been sealed and it is believed that these houses will be used for colonisation by Sinhalese from outside Mannar.

3.0 TRINCOMALEE

3.1 A scheme to split the present Trincomalee District into three units is under consideration by the government. Under this scheme the government is to amalgamate some Sinhala districts with each of the three units so that the Tamils are in a minority in all three units.

3.2 At Sambalthievu, during third week in March, Army forced girls to drink toddy (an alcoholic drink).

3.3 The Sri Lanka government is making arrangements to open up an army camp at Mathur.

4.0 BATTICALOA

4.1 A Tamil youth named Sundaram who was an inmate of the Batticaloa Hospital under treatment for injuries received due to army firing on 21.3.85 was abducted by unknown persons believed to be members of the security forces.

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- 4.2 On 15.3.85 at Kadambanai in Kokkoddicholai, the police commandos entered a house and burnt the paddy stacks and raped a young girl in front of her mother and forced her to drink paraffin (kerosene oil).
- 4.3 On 16.3.85, at Valaierava police commandos have raped a Tamil woman while they were on a search operation.
- 4.4 On 25.3.85, at Saththunakkandan village the officer in charge of a search operation was reported to have raped a girl.
- 4.5 On 29.3.85, at Teriya Kallaru six persons were killed by the security forces. They are a) Sivalingan b) Amirthanayagan c) Jayapal d) Suthakaran e) Yogan and f) Sulakumara.
- 4.6 On 1.4.85, at Melvelody a girl named Sarojini Devi had been raped and killed by the security forces.
- 4.7 On 3.4.85, at Cheralandi six police commandos were killed in a land mine.
- 4.8 On 4.4.85, at Pankuduvady the security forces set fire to the houses believed to be in retaliation to the landmine explosion the previous day.
- 4.9 At Kallady Army Camp, the army has chopped off toes and cut nerves in the heel of a detainee. Kallady Army Camp has been used as a torture camp and some of the methods of torture are
- a) cutting of heel nerves
 - b) inserting a sharp instrument into private parts
 - c) cutting of skin and applying chilli powder
 - d) forcing the prisoners to eat human flesh.

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- 4.10 On 4.4.85, at Koduvamadu the security forces burnt 50 houses rending 70 families as refugees.
- 4.11 A boy named Nagapan Ganeshan arrested on 9th March and admitted to the Batticaloa Hospital with injuries of assault was removed from the hospital by the security forces and his whereabouts are not known yet.
- 4.12 On 5.4.85, at Aythiyamalai 22 persons were taken into custody by the security forces including a mother with a baby.
- 4.13 On 6.4.85, at Aythiamalai 4 persons were shot and killed by the security forces including Alagan (age 45) Muniandy (age 50) and Simmathamby.

5.0 OTHER DISTRICTS

5.1 KANDY:

On 3.4.85, near Kathiresan temple at Kandy a Tamil shop was burnt by the Sinhalese mobs.

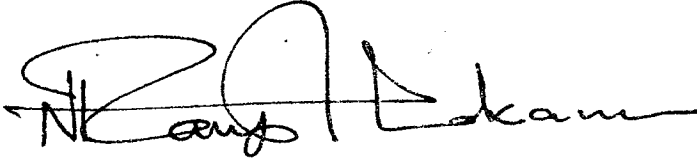
6.0 GENERAL

- 6.1 On 3.4.85, 28 Tamils deported from Italy were arrested on their arrival at the Colombo Airport.

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6.2 On 12.4.85, there were clashes between Tamils and Muslims in Karaithivu, Mallikaikadu and Akkaraipathu. Most of the clashes were instigated and encouraged by the police commandos.



INFORMATION OFFICER

RECENT PUBLICATION BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

External

AI Index: ASA/37/03/85

Distr: SC/CO/GR

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London WC1X 8DJ

Sri Lanka

Allegations of Extrajudicial Killings by Army Personnel
Details of some cases reported during December 1984 and
January 1985.

A. Reports of killings of two Clergymen in the Mannar
in December 1984/January 1985

B. Reports of killings of at least 27 Villagers in
Othiyamalai on 2 December 1984.

April 1985

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The British connection in Sri Lanka tortures

SHYAM BHATIA reports from Colombo on the role of SAS-trained police commandos.

THE Sri Lankan authorities are to investigate charges that an elite squad of British-trained commandos have engaged in systematic torture and harassment of terrorist suspects belonging to the Tamil minority.

The Special Task Force of police commandos was created last year and trained by British experts who are former members of the Special Air Services (SAS). Sri Lanka's Minister of National Security, Lalith Athulathmudali, told me the British team was hired from a Channel Island-based company, KMS, which has also been known in the past to supply bodyguards to the British Ambassador in Beirut.

Mrs Thatcher was criticised by Tamil community leaders for ignoring human rights violations during her visit to Sri Lanka last week. They say recent atrocities are fresh evidence that the country could be on the verge of civil war and the Prime Minister's visit could be misconstrued as legitimising state terrorism.

Neelam Thiruchelavam, a former MP and spokesman for the opposition Tamil United Liberation Front, said: 'We are deeply concerned that former SAS officers are responsible for training the brutal, ruthless and undisciplined police commandos.' KMS yesterday declined to offer any comment on the Minister's statement.

On the eve of Mrs Thatcher's visit, a 23-year-old man described from his hospital bed how he was arrested by police commandos and accused of being a terrorist. He was tortured for two months before being released without explanation and dumped at the local hospital.

Manendra Kesivapillai, a second-year science student from Jaffna University, told me nails were driven into his heels to force him to confess. Chilli powder was rubbed into sensitive parts of his body and he was hung by his handcuffed wrists for up to eight hours a day in his prison cell. Doctors say he will never be able to use his arms again because crucial nerves have been 'ripped apart.'

Kesivapillai's is the first detailed account of police commando torture, which has been suspected but never before substantiated. Stories of army atrocities are legion, but the commandos were set up as

troubled northern and eastern provinces.

Kesivapillai said he was filling in a form at a government office in Batticaloa last January when four commandos burst in and told him he was under arrest.

'They handcuffed and blindfolded me and pushed me out of the door. I know I screamed at least once, because they smashed a rifle butt into my left foot. I could hear my bones breaking.

'First, I was taken to a camp called Kalanavichi, then to another camp of theirs called Kalladi. Every day, between 8 and 4.30, they would hang me by my hands. One day they slit my left wrist with a razor blade, packed it with chilli powder and bandaged it.

'Another time they hammered nails into my heels. They would say, "Tell us where are the terrorists." They even threatened to burn me with a metal rod.'

Doctors at Batticaloa hospital, where Kesivapillai has been a patient since last month, say he has been subjected to unbelievable cruelty. There are burn marks, they say, on his

buttocks and arms. Two bones in his arms, the radius and ulna, have been so badly damaged after being ripped apart he will never recover the use of his arms.

Kesivapillai thinks he was released because he managed to smuggle out a letter to his father, a retired teacher, telling him where he was.

A soft-spoken, slightly built young man, he told me he was concerned that he will be a burden to his parents for the rest of their lives.

Kesivapillai's horrifying experience is not the only example of commando brutality, according to the local citizens' action committee. Prince Casinader, headmaster of a Batticaloa school and chairman of the action committee, said there were other cases of young men picked up by unmarked commando vans and taken to unknown destinations.

'When you ring commando headquarters, they pretend they don't know what you are talking about.' Last month, unable to trace three of his missing schoolboys, he went in desperation to the local mortuary. 'I saw three horribly

mangled bodies with bashed-in skulls. I don't know who they were, poor wretches, but they were not my boys.'

The commandos also use tactics that were first made popular by the Army in the war against terrorism. They burn the homes of families suspected of harbouring terrorists. Last month after a mine killed seven members of a police patrol outside Batticaloa, commandos surrounded the three nearby villages of Koduwannadu, Tamanavelli and Kayankuda, where they set fire to 27 homes.

Senior police officers in Batticaloa claimed this is the first time they have heard such stories. Sarath Seniviratne, the officer in charge of the commandos, said: 'My men would never do this. Why don't you hear the other side of the story? Does anyone talk about police and soldiers who are being killed by terrorists?'

In Colombo, Athulathmudali told me: 'I know of Kesivapillai, I had him released. His brother is a well-known terrorist. But this is the first time I have heard these stories. This will be looked into. Why has no-one told me before?'

Mrs Thatcher refused to be drawn on the human rights issue before she left Sri Lanka yesterday for India. At a press conference in the hill town of Kandy, she said Britain would continue to 'give as much aid as we can' to the Government of President Junius Jayewardene.

She said: 'The matter of the Tamils is a matter for the Sri Lankan Government.' But one Western diplomat in Colombo told me his Government at least would have to reconsider its aid programme unless there was significant improvement in Sri Lanka's record on human rights.

According to government officials, two terrorist attacks last week were timed to coincide with the Thatcher visit. A bomb which exploded at Colombo airport last Wednesday, killing one person and injuring three others, was reportedly planted by the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS).

Terrorists also attacked a police station at Jaffna the next day and were driven off with the help of soldiers using mortars. According to the Government, five policemen and 20 terrorists were killed, but others in Colombo say police casualties were nearer 40.



Mr and Mrs Thatcher in Sri Lanka on Friday.

Obote troops deal

BRITAIN has agreed to a request from President Milton Obote of Uganda to extend the term of the British military training team in Uganda for a further year, to June 1986 (writes Nigel Hawkes).

The team, 13-strong, is based at the Ugandan Army School of Infantry at Jinja, 50 miles east of Kampala. It trains officers and NCOs of the Uganda National Liberation Army.

The role of the training team has been controversial

acres in the battle against opponents of President Obote's Government. By helping to train the army, critics have alleged, Britain is indirectly involved in these breaches of human rights.

The Foreign Office nevertheless feels that the best way of preventing them in future is by training better officers.

John Stanley, the Army Minister, is in Kampala this weekend discussing details of the extension. He is also expected to discuss a Ugandan request that the team should be increased by half a

THE OBSERVER SUNDAY 14 APRIL 1985