



Tamil Information

NEWS BULLETIN OF
THE TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

MARCH 1993

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Fundamental Right

No. 20

UN Human Rights Commission Fails To Explore Human Rights Violations In Sri Lanka

Acknowledging the national statement of the Sri Lankan delegation to the 49th Session of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva on 11 March, the Chairman of the Commission said that the intention of the Sri Lankan government to share with the Commission, and other interested parties information on the progress made to improve human rights was noted and that the efforts of the government to arrive at a negotiated settlement to the problems in the North and the East of the country should be encouraged.

The programme of work to be implemented in 1993 as outlined by the Sri Lanka delegation was also referred to in the Chairman's statement. These are: (a) taking appropriate measures to ascertain the whereabouts of alleged missing persons; (b) prosecution of those found responsible for disappearances and other human rights violations; (c) a comprehensive review and revision of Emergency legislation relating to arrest and detention; (d) composition and publication of a consolidated version of all current Emergency Regulations (e) continued implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group on Disappearances contained in its 1991 report and consideration of the Working Group's recommendations in its 1992 report.

In his submission to the Commission Sri Lanka's Attorney-General Tilak Marapana also stated that the invitation to the Special Rapporteur on Summary or Arbitrary

Execution to visit Sri Lanka still stands and that the government had also decided to consider favourably Sri Lanka's accession to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Apart from making promises as in the past years, the Sri Lankan delegation resorted to underhand tactics to deceive the international community. A fifteen-page Situation Report prepared by the Sri Lankan government, containing inaccurate, misleading and totally false statements on achievements of the government on human rights, had been distributed in Europe as a document prepared by Western diplomats in Colombo. Furthermore the Sri Lankan statement to the Commission was distributed at the eleventh hour and only in French, hardly giving NGOs time for any meaningful response.

The future performance on human rights of the Sri Lankan government must be judged from its past record rather than its promises or the acknowledgement of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission. Sri Lankan human rights NGOs say that 'improvements' have taken place only in certain areas of concern, while blatant violations of fundamental, democratic and civil rights of the Sri Lankan people have proceeded apace in certain other spheres.

According to human rights organisations, the reduction in disappearances is directly linked to the reduction in the intensity of militarised conflict in certain areas

and not to any conscious effort on the part of the State authorities to dismantle the mechanisms that permit disappearances to occur. In Eastern province alone there were over 400 disappearances in 1992 and several persons in the South also disappeared. No action has been taken regarding the 40,000 persons who disappeared in the South and over 5,000 who disappeared in the East.

Violations of the rights of persons in detention under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations have continued. According to the Bar Association 2,975 cases alleging illegal detention and torture were filed in 1992. A large number of persons ordered to be released by the Supreme Court still remain in custody. Released youths complained of continued harassment by police and some have been prosecuted once again. A large number of youths, both Sinhalese and Tamils, are held in police stations and army camps. There are no proper records for these detentions and most have been subjected to torture. According to NGO reports, by January 1993, there were 3,208 persons still in detention, of them 982 were in the main detention centres at Boosa, Pelawatta and Weerawila. 1,166 were in prisons in Colombo and Kalutara (most of this number are Tamils) and a further 1,060 in rehabilitation centres. This figure excludes those in police cells and army camps. A particular practice, which is named "mobile detention" by the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) is resorted to in which

detainees were continually transferred from place to place to prevent detection.

The UN Human Rights Commission's Chairman also acknowledged Sri Lankan state mechanisms for improvement of Human Rights. The Human Rights Task Force appointed in August 1991 to monitor detentions, has been unable to compile a complete list of either the detainees or the places of detention and thus has been unable to fulfil the primary function for which it was set up. The HRTF refuses, despite a Supreme Court directive in March, to fully use its powers under the law to bring relief to detainees.

The Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal of Persons which continued in 1992 to deal with cases of disappearance in 1991, had concluded hearings only in respect of four cases. The reports on these four cases are not available to the public, according to human rights agencies. A number of people who gave evidence before the Commission have been intimidated by police within the premises of the Commission. Legal action has been taken in only one case brought before the Commission. Human Rights agencies are convinced that the Commission is merely a cosmetic exercise and say that the mechanism is clearly inadequate to deal with the number of cases brought before it.

Captain Kudaligama who was

responsible for the massacre of 180 Tamils at Kokkaddicholai in June 1991, was found guilty by a military court only of failure to control his subordinates and of disposal of dead bodies and was dismissed from service. The seventeen soldiers implicated in the massacre, whom he failed to control were acquitted.

Observers say that throughout 1992 the state continued with its policy of appointing Commissions of Inquiry, but none of the reports has been published. During 1992 the intimidation and harassment of members of opposition political parties as well as attacks on journalists, media personnel, printers and newspaper distributors have served as major constraints on freedom of expression and opinion. Draconian provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations conferring abuse and misuse of power remain in force. The Sri Lankan government has failed to implement most recommendations of Amnesty International and the Working Group on Disappearances and several international fact-finding missions.

No tangible steps have been taken to solve the conflict between Tamils and the Sinhalese. The government has ignored offers of the LTTE for negotiations and the decision of the Parliamentary Select Committee has been rejected by the Tamil political parties. The Tamil parties have described the proceedings of the

Select Committee as a "farce" and fear that the decision of the Committee which was arrived at by a Sinhalese majority and not by a Tamil-Sinhalese consensus, may be imposed on the Tamils. Military operations continue in the North-East, and civilians are being killed in airforce bombings. The economic blockade of the North also continues thus violating the fundamental rights of civilians to have access to food, medicine and fuel.

While in reality the human rights situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated many Sri Lankans, including Tamils are puzzled over the rare measure by the UN Human Rights Commission's Chairman in acknowledging, Sri Lankan government delegations statement, thus giving the impression that all is well in Sri Lanka.

Observers believe that the proceedings of the Commission have been manipulated by Western governments for their own ends. Western governments, as is known, wish to return Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka. The Swiss government has already announced a repatriation programme in June 1992 with the assistance of UNHCR. At least a semblance of normalcy and improved human rights situation must prevail in the island if refugees are to be returned. The Sri Lankan conflict will continue if Western governments are not honest and are engaged in manipulation for narrow political gain.

Tamil Schools Converted

Tamil students in Vannathivillu in Puttalam District have been compelled to study in Sinhalese, as there are no Tamil schools in the area. There were several Tamil schools in Vannathivillu. These schools have over a period of time, been converted into Sinhalese schools.

Shelling In Jaffna

Houses in the North-West areas of the Jaffna peninsula were shelled from naval vessels on 15 March. Shells fell in Pandatarippu and Periyavilan. Bombers attacked Uduthurai in Vadamaradchi destroying three houses. Vadamaradchy area was also shelled from Vetri-laikerni and Elephant Pass army camps.

BBC Denied Access to Jaffna

The Colombo based BBC reporter and a Danish TV cameraman were refused entry into Jaffna on 25 March. An army spokesman said that their safety could not be guaranteed. In response the BBC reporter said that citizens and NGO workers were regularly being allowed to go into Jaffna.

Diarrhoea Epidemic In Nuwara Eliya

Four people died of diarrhoea in the Nuwara Eliya District in March. Over 245 cases of diarrhoea have been detected, but only 74 are receiving treatment in hospitals. An urgent meeting of the Pradeshiya Council was summoned and health officers visited estates to advise workers and management. According to Health Inspectors some Superintendents on estates say that they were not responsible for health issues and others were overtly hostile to the Inspectors. On some estates Health Inspectors were compelled to wait for many hours to gain entry. They had to seek the assistance of the police in cases where permission to enter estates was denied by the management.

Tamil Tortured in Pesalai Army Camp

A Tamil in custody for over two years was ill-treated and tortured according to evidence in a fundamental rights application before the Supreme Court. Rajaratnam Chandrasekaran was arrested on 24 January 1991 inside the Pesalai refugee camp on Mannar Island (currently managed by UNHCR) by the army. He was taken to the Thallady army camp and tortured. Another man was killed by soldiers in the presence of Chandrasekaran and his body was removed. Chandrasekaran's eyes were covered and he was attacked daily with batons. His eyes were covered for six months and as a result his eye sight has been badly affected.

Chandrasekaran's father was arrested on 18 January 1991 by officers from the Mannar army camp and since then he has disappeared. Later, Chandrasekaran was transferred to the Colombo Magazine prison. After hearing the evidence the Supreme Court ruled that fundamental rights of Chandrasekaran had been breached and ordered his immediate release.

TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by TIC in March 1993

SHR 3133

Malaiyaka Makkal Munnani Potuc Ceyalalar Valakku

(Text in Tamil)

3p

DESCRIPTORS: Up-country Tamils/ Detention/ / Case

SHR3131

Christians Aware

"Out of the Depths": Struggle and Hope in Sri Lanka

Dorset; Greeds the Printers; December 1992

108p

DESCRIPTORS: History/ Statistics/ Women/ Political Poems/ Visit Report/ Jaffna/ Detention/ LTTE/ Mothers' Front/ Killing/ Human Rights Activist/ Journalist/ Refugee Camps/ Human Rights Violation/ Sri Lankan Government/ Southern Province/ Tamil Homeland/ Sri Lanka

SHR 3129

Memorandum of Understanding among the Government of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and the Office of the UNHCR Relating to the Repatriation of Sri Lanka Refugees and Displaced Persons

Colombo; Ministry of Reconstruction Rehabilitation and Social Welfare; 1st February 1993

6p

DESCRIPTORS: Refugees/ Agreement/ Sri Lankan Tamils/ Sri Lankan Government/ UNHCR/ Repatriation

SHR 3126

Information for Sri Lankan refugees Geneva; UNHCR; January 1993

4p

DESCRIPTORS: Refugees/ UNHCR/ Sri Lankan Tamils

SHR 3130

Reply from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office to the Questions about the situation in Sri Lanka

London; House of Common:

23 December 1993

3p

DESCRIPTORS: Parliament/ United Kingdom/ Ethnic Problem/ Sri Lanka

OHR 217

LAWASIA

Human Rights Bulletin: January-December 1990

Philippines; LAWASIA; December 1990

Vol. 9; 124p

DESCRIPTORS: Human Rights Violation

SHR 3128

Refugee Situation in Tamil Nadu

Madras; ProTEG; 09 February 1993

3p

DESCRIPTORS: Refugees/ Sri Lankan Tamils/ Tamil Nadu

SHR 3124

Activities of the Federation of Trincomalee District young Men's Hindu Associations

Trincomalee; Young Men's Hindu Association; 04 October 1992

DESCRIPTORS: Relief/ Statistics/ Refugees/ Trincomalee District/ NGOs/ Rehabilitation/ Relief Organisation/ Sri Lankan Tamils

MARCH DIARY

MARCH 1

RATION CARD COUPONS: The Rehabilitation Ministry began issuing dry ration coupon cards to families which officials say will enable families to obtain dry rations on the basis of the number of members. Dry rations may be obtained from Multipurpose Co-operative Societies once in two weeks by submitting coupons on the cards.

MARCH 2

TRANSPORT PROBLEM IN JAFFNA: Reports from Jaffna said that transport was becoming more difficult. Students and employees walk to school and places of work. A bicycle in Jaffna costs Rs.10,000 and spare parts were not available.

MARCH 3

YOUTHS SHOT DEAD: Two youths were shot dead in Kilinochchi allegedly for robberies carried out in Jaffna and Kilinochchi.

MARCH 4

TAMILS DETAINED WITHOUT CAUSE: The Court of Appeal ordered the release of Pavil Anthony who had been arrested in Pandiruppu in the Batticaloa District on 22 December 1990 by the Special Task Force. He had not been produced before a court and the release order was made following a habeas corpus application by his mother.

MARCH 5

FOOD TO JAFFNA: Essential Services Commissioner Charita Ratwatta said that 11,430 M tonnes of food aid were sent to Jaffna upto 26th February. He also said that any amount of food required by the GA would be provided. But reports from Jaffna said that malnutrition was causing disease and deaths

MARCH 6

EPRLF MEETS INDIAN ENVOY:

EPRLF Secretary-General Suresh Premachandran met Indian High Commissioner Nareshwar Dayal. Discussions centred around Sri Lankan political and security situation and Parliamentary Select Committee.

MARCH 7

UNCHR TALKS TO LTTE: UNHCR officials held talks with LTTE's Anton Balasingham in Jaffna in an effort to open a humanitarian corridor between the Jaffna peninsula and the mainland at Sangupiddy. UNHCR officials arrived in Jaffna on the invitation of the LTTE following a number of killings of civilians at the Kilali crossing by the Sri Lankan navy.

MARCH 8

MILITARY OPERATION IN VANNI: Curfew was declared in areas under LTTE control in Mannar and Vavuniya Districts from 10 am. An army operation code-named 'Fullmoon' began in Cheddikulam in Vavuniya District and government officials in the area were ordered by the army to stay at home. Schools were also ordered to be closed. At Vannankulam PLOTE and LTTE clashed and two LTTE cadres were reported killed.

MARCH 9

LEPROSY PATIENTS: Research has revealed that there are 562 leprosy patients in Jaffna District. Reports say that the patients are being treated by doctors and Health Department officers with the assistance of grass-root organisations and students of the Jaffna Medical Faculty.

MARCH 10

SOLDIERS IN BATTICALOA HOSPITAL: Soldiers have been posted inside the Batticaloa hospital. According to District Defence Coordinator Brigadier Yohan Gunawardena, the measure has been

taken to prevent theft of medicine.

MARCH 11

ARMY ASSAULT ON WORKERS: Checking of lorries at the Eerateriyakulam check point in Vavuniya was disrupted following assault of workers by soldiers. The army alleged that the workers were responsible for the disappearance of articles in one of the lorries. Two workers were seriously injured and admitted to the Vavuniya hospital.

MARCH 12

MOBILE SERVICE IN BATTICALOA: Mobile services of 3 ministries were held in Batticaloa. The ministries were housing & construction, Health & Parliamentary Affairs. Ministers B Sirisena Cooray, Renuka Herath and Vincent Perera were present.

MARCH 13

TIGERS SHOT DEAD: JOC announced that five Tigers were killed and arms recovered in a clash at Janakipura in the Manal Aru area of Mullaitivu District.

HINDU TEMPLE DAMAGED:

The parapet wall of Kalmunai Tharavai Pillaiyar temple was demolished by unknown persons. In 1986 and 1990 the temple was damaged by vandals. Militant group TELU says in a statement that the damage to the temple premises is causing concern among the Tamils and has called for appropriate action.

MARCH 14

SOLDIER ARRESTED: Soldier Samirajeewa while on duty fled with his G3 rifle from the Panagoda Army Camp. He was however arrested with the weapon the following day at Dunmalasuriya in Chilaw District.

MARCH 15

POLICEMEN KILLED: Three policemen patrolling at Pesalai on

MARCH DIARY

Mannar Island were shot dead by the LTTE, according to reports released by the JOC.

MARCH 16

BUDDHIST MONKS ON

MERGER: Rev. Kithulgama Nayake Thero, the chief priest of Dimbulagala said only traitors will demand the merger of the North and East provinces. The Mahanayake of Malwaltha Chapter Rev. Rambukwela Vibasi said no measures to change the unitary character of the state should be implemented.

MARCH 17

TAMIL SHOT DEAD: Forty year old Rajaratnam was shot dead by unknown persons in Trincomalee. His body was found tied to a tree near the Sambaltivu junction.

MARCH 18

DISAPPEARING FOOD:

Presidential Advisor Bradman Weerakoon told reporters that Rs. 166 million (\$4.2 million) worth food aid sent to the North in 1992 had disappeared. According to him Rs. 1.18 billion (\$29.5 million) worth food was sent to the North during 1992 and Rs. 532 million (\$13.3 million) worth food was distributed free of charge to displaced people.

MARCH 19

JAFFNA STUDENTS IN

DEMONSTRATION: Four students from Jaffna University participated in a demonstration in Colombo demanding lectures on Western Medicine for students studying Indigenous Medicine. This followed a decision by the Government to do away with lectures on Western Medicine at School of Indigenous Medicine. Jaffna students said they travelled to Colombo amidst great danger.

MARCH 20

LETTERS TAMPERED EN

ROUTE: Reports said 752 of the letters in the 220 bags brought to Jaffna by the Sri Lankan ship 'Kumana' had been opened or torn and money in the letters sent from abroad robbed. Letters arrived in Jaffna after four months' delay. The security forces held the letters for checking in Colombo.

MARCH 21

ARMY CLAIMS CONTROL OF

BATTICALOA: Batticaloa Defence Coordinator Yohan Gunawardene said that ten of the twelve AGA Divisions in the Batticaloa District were now under army control. According to him Vaharai and Vellaveli were contested areas.

MARCH 22

AIRFORCE BOMBS

VAVUNIYA: Poovarasankulam and Eechamkulam areas in Vavuniya were bombed by the Sri Lanka airforce.

MARCH 23

FOOD HELD IN VAVUNIYA:

Over 300 lorries to the North carrying essential food items held at the Eeratperiyakulam army camp for two weeks were refused permission to proceed.

MARCH 24

SEARCH IN TRINCOMALEE:

Uvarmalai and Kannakipuram in Trincomalee town were searched by the police. Each house was searched and identity cards of residents checked.

MARCH 25

TAMIL WOMAN DETAINED: A

habeas corpus application to produce 27 year old Mrs Selvarani Gunaratnam was filed. She was arrested on 14 November 1992 in Colombo, and is detained under Emergency Regulations. The Court of Appeal ordered the police to produce her in Court on 31 March.

MARCH 26

TAMIL IN DETENTION: Mrs Nallathamby Mangalam filed a habeas corpus application for the production of her son N. Balachandran who was arrested at the Valaichenai railway station in Batticaloa. Currently he is held at the Colombo Magazine prison.

MARCH 27

TIGERS ARRESTED: JOC

announced that four Tigers were arrested with their arms in Batticaloa. In Amparai a Tiger leader named Atputhan was shot dead, according to the JOC.

MARCH 28

FAST BY DETAINEES: 102

political prisoners in the Boosa Detention Camp began a fast unto death. They demanded to be released or speedy disposal of court cases into charges against them.

MARCH 29

CURFEW IN MANNAR: Curfew was imposed in Mannar Island from 5.00 am according to JOC. Police and Army began a joint operation.

MARCH 30

TEACHER IN CUSTODY: Miss

Blossom Vedanayagam is currently being held in the Colimbo Welikada Prison. She was a teacher at the Mullaitivu Convent and was arrested by the officers from the Mullaitivu Camp. Her mother filed a Habeas Corpus application in the Court of Appeal.

MARCH 31

YOUTH SENTENCED IN

MURDER TRIAL: Colombo High Court sentenced 24 year old Arunasalam Surendra for 1 1/2 years suspended for 10 years in the murder trial of former State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne. He was charged with failure to inform the Police about the conspiracy to murder. He was also fined Rs.7,500.

MALNUTRITION - A WAR STRATEGY

The report submitted by a committee appointed by the NGO Council, Jaffna has brought to light the current nutritional status of the population in the Jaffna District. The nutritional status of children and pregnant and lactating mothers had been identified as showing a downward trend which cannot be arrested by the NGOs alone. The report concludes that preventive action must be taken now to arrest this trend. Tomorrow may be late and will certainly be more difficult, the report adds. The State's intervention to ensure inter alia

- a) Availability of 'Triposha' at all clinics for malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- b) Availability of a regular supply of vaccines and proper storage
- c) Assistance for animal husbandry, fishing and agriculture.

has been recommended as priorities in this report.

A few of the findings of the committee are -

1. A survey in the western section in the Jaffna Municipal area as at October 92 of children between the ages of 1-4 showed 58% of them as being malnourished.
2. A similar survey in the Manipay health area showed 60% of those in the village and 74.5% of those in refugee camps as being malnourished.

Senior lecturers in Community Medicine, state officials and representative from FORUT and Save the Children Fund (UK) served on the committee which produced this Nutritional Status Report.

The economic blockade imposed by the Government on the Northern Province is the root cause for the

malnourished state of its population. The death of 1500 persons in 11 months upto Nov.92 has been attributed to the inadequacy of vital drugs.

The absence of vital drugs for a malnourished population is so devastating that infant mortality from infectious diseases rose to 75 in Oct. and Nov. at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. The high incidence of Cancer in the Jaffna Peninsula has been attributed to aerial bombings by a professor of the Jaffna University.

Denial of food supplies, medical supplies and the disruption to the animal husbandary, agriculture and fishing are clearly weakening the health of the civilian population. It becomes inescapable in this context that the Government adopts these measures as a war strategy.

Situation Report

Dashed Hopes

Over 6000 persons who thronged to Batticaloa for the Mobile Service of the Ministries of Rehabilitation & Reconstruction and Social Services on 09 March were dejected when their written appeals were collected at the entrance. They were asked to leave with the promise that they would be contacted later. Most people who were the victims of violence and military offensives had queued up until noon to gain entrance.

Police Rape Tamil Woman

In a letter to the Defence Secretary EPRLF leader and Jaffna MP Suresh Premachandran demanded an inquiry into the rape of a young mother by three policemen at Urani in Batticaloa District.

Tamil Nadu Camps Searched

Several refugee camps in Tamil Nadu where Sri Lankan Tamil refugees live were searched by police. Camps in Madurai, Trichy, Coimbatore, Rameswaram and Velur were searched to ensure that there were no LTTE cadres, according to the police. Security in coastal areas and on roads leading to other states was strengthened.

New Army Camps

Two new camps at Tharavai and Ninth Mile Post in the Kudimbimalai (Thoppigala) area of Batticaloa were established by the army. Security was tightened in the coastal areas and fishermen were prohibited from going out to sea.

Grenade Kills Children

Four boys who played with a grenade in the Murunkan Church yard in Mannar District were killed when it exploded on 27 March. Twelve others were seriously injured.

Fishermen Released

Twelve Indian fishermen detained in the North by the LTTE were handed over to the ICRC on 09 March. They were taken to Vavuniya for eventual return to India.

Boy Shot by Police

A thirteen year old boy was shot dead by a policeman near the Mamankam Railway station in Batticaloa on 22 March. Another boy was injured and admitted to Batticaloa hospital. Police said the shooting was accidental.

Tamils Denied of Their Right to Learn

Education for Tamils in their homeland is a difficult and painful experience. Inability to find a political situation, the economic blockade of the government, military operations and aerial bombardment by Sri Lankan airforce have had a far reaching effect on education of Tamils.

In a survey conducted in the Vavuniya District by Jaffna University students, it was revealed that between November 1990 and June 1991, at least twelve Tamil schools were damaged and many buildings in the schools were completely destroyed by airforce bombing. A list of twelve school damaged in the Vavuniya District is as follows:-

No	Name of School	Type of Attack	Month of Attack
1.	Maha Vidyalayam, Omathai	Bombed	May 1991
2.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Maatharpanikka Mahilankulam	Bombed	May 1991
3.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Sonthakkarankulam	Bombed	May 1991
4.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Koliyakulam	Bombed	May 1991
5.	Mahavidyalayam, Kanakaraayankulam	Bombed	Nov.1990
6.	Vinayagar Vidyalayam	Bombed	Nov.1990
7.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Peyaadikoolankulam	Bombed	Nov.1990
8.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Pampaimadu	Bombed	Nov.1990
9.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Thavasiaakulam	Bombed	Nov.1990
10.	Mahavidyalayam, Poovarasankulam	Bombed	June 1991
11.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Thampanai	Helicopter-Fire	June 1991
12.	Government Tamil Mixed School, Kurukkal Puthukkulam	Helicopter-Fire	June 1991

Military operations have resulted in large-scale displacement of people and as a result 29 other schools had to be shifted to other areas where they function under difficult conditions without proper buildings, furniture or equipment. Some 80% of the student population in many villages is without education as a result of the war, according to reports.

Reports further say that no electricity, no telecommunication, dangerous travelling due to indiscriminate bombing and shelling, lack of access to latest educational materials for students, inability to participate in educational conferences and seminars, inability to forge links with-out side educational institutions are all causing enormous damage to the education of the Tamils. Students say that they were allowed to take only 10-15 half-sheets of writing paper to Jaffna through Thandikulam army check-point. The cost of one sheet of writing paper is SLRs 1/50 in shops in Jaffna.

SRILANKAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN BRITAIN

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	TOTAL
APP	46	380	548	2306	1332	774	469	2005	3620	3750	2085	17315
CS	2	-	-	19	4	10	9	5	23	10	40	124
ELR	3	13	31	967	1913	963	304	975	562	705	4265	10701
REJ	43	31	100	19	6	62	50	35	8	20	435	809
PEN	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1411	NA	NA	4460	4460

APP - Applications; CS - Convention Status; ELR - Exceptional Leave to remain; REJ - Rejection
NA - Not Available

Situation Report

Army Suspends Boat Service

The army has ordered the suspension of boat service between Mannar Island and Vidattativu on the mainland. The Dutch bridge connecting the mainland to the Mannar Island was damaged in 1990. Thereafter boat services between Vidattativu and Mannar Island and between Kalpitty in Puttalam and Mannar Island were begun. The suspension of the boat service is causing great difficulty to thousands of Tamils living on the Mannar mainland. All government services currently function on the Mannar Island. People are now forced to travel south to Kalpitty first and then in boats to the Mannar Island at great cost. Most Tamils on Mannar mainland have been displaced because of military operations and are living in refugee camps. In order to obtain birth certificates, withdraw money from the bank or seek medical treatment they must travel to the Mannar Island and the suspension of the boat service is another problem imposed by the army on the long-suffering Tamil people.

Tamils Disappear in Vavuniya

Disappearances of Tamils in Vavuniya are on the increase. Tamil youths are being abducted by men in black uniform arriving in a white van, according to eyewitnesses. Ponnuthurai Murugathas, an employee of the Vavuniya Education Department disappeared on 1 March, after he was visited at his office by two men. Another youth employed in a transport company disappeared on 18 March. Vanni M.P. Raja Kuhaneswaran speaking in Parliament on 23 March said that in March alone eleven people disappeared and all disappearances took place in army-controlled areas.

Army Moves in Batticaloa

A military operation code-named "Sumana" began in the Kudumbimalai (Thoppigala) jungles in the Batticaloa District on 10 March. Jungles were heavily bombed and a military spokesman said that the operation was launched to flush out the Tigers.

Tigers Kill Soldiers

Three soldiers were killed and five others injured when over seventy five LTTE cadres attacked Cheddilulam Army Camp in Vavuniya District on 30 March.

Electricity Disruption imminent in Jaffna Hospital

The delay in repairing the 15 kilo-watt electricity generator in the Jaffna hospital led to fears there could be a total disruption of electricity supply. Spare parts for the generator are not available in Jaffna and because of the economic blockade spare parts cannot be brought into the peninsula. Two generators sent for repairs to Colombo have not been returned. The X-ray section of the hospital is also unable to function as X-ray films have run out. Only 25% of the requirement of X-ray films for the first quarter of 1993 was sent from Colombo in January. Each film was cut into six pieces and used only for urgent cases.

There is also an acute shortage of all drugs in the hospital. Anti biotic and anti-septic medicines are exhausted and reports say children are affected the most by lack of drugs.

Soldiers in Crime

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ernest Perera launched a special operation against murders and robberies in south Sri Lanka, following recent use of modern weapons in crime. The IGP has ordered police to concentrate on crimes committed by persons who have escaped from the armed forces with weapons.

Jaffna Bombed

Sri Lankan airforce bombed Pommaiveli area north west of the Jaffna town on 11 March. Five civilians were injured and houses were damaged.

Provincial Council Election

Seven Provincial Councils were dissolved on 16 March and nominations for fresh elections were scheduled for the first week of April. Elections in all provinces, except the North-East Province will probably be held in mid-May. According to Elections Commissioner Chandrananda de Silva, 9.1 million people are eligible to vote. Many hill country Tamils who were granted citizenship under the 1988 Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons Act will be able to vote for the first time. Despite the increase in the number of Hill-country Tamil votes, the Plantation trade union and political party, the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) has decided to contest along with the ruling United National Party (UNP). The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by M H M Ashraff will also support UNP according to some sources.

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