



European Parliament Resolution: Paving the way for economic gain without respect for human lives

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 22 April calling on the European Commission to establish a permanent mission in Colombo immediately to facilitate closer economic cooperation between Sri Lanka and the European Union. The resolution follows a report by the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security of the European Union, based on a report submitted by the Committee on Development and Cooperation.

The resolution also calls on the European Union, as part of its common foreign and security policy, to close all offices of the LTTE in the territory of Member States, alleging that the offices are used to propagate terrorism against a "friendly country".

The fact that the resolution, which deals with human rights, was adopted

on the basis of a report by the Committee on Development and Cooperation has raised questions as to the sincerity of its purpose. Speaking at a meeting in the British Parliament on 11 May MEP Christine Oddy said the Subcommittee on Human Rights was usually involved in matters pertaining to human rights and expressed surprise that the Committee on Development and Cooperation, which could hardly be said to comprise

Subsequent to my visit to Sri Lanka and writing my report, the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security presented a report on Sri Lanka written by Mr Jas Gawronski pursuant to a resolution by Mrs Pollack, Mr Saby and Mr Stevenson. It is unfortunate that the report was rushed through the Parliamentary procedure and was originally tabled for vote without debate. It was only by the pressure of twenty three signatures of MEPs (including my own) at the last minute that enabled a debate to be held on a Friday morning when most MEPs had already left Strasbourg for their constituencies. It is also unfortunate that the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Security did not refer the report to the South Asia Delegation for an opinion. The report is somewhat flawed, because it lacks a balance approach. A more considered and thorough examination could have removed the lack of balance from the report and inserted a more critical analysis of the Government's record.

CHRISTINE ODDY

Member of the European Parliament (Midlands Central)

experts on human rights had submitted opinion on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. In its report the Development Committee heavily stresses economic cooperation, even before resolution of the Sri Lankan conflict, and has attempted to add fuel to fire by recommending lifting

restrictions on arms sales. The Committee says "The lifting of such restrictions would appear to be equitable, and would furthermore give the European Community leverage in insisting on continued respect for human rights on the part of the Sri Lankan government". Since the resolution is based on this report, the European Parliament philosophy seems to be "arming states is essential for improving human rights". This clearly shows that the intention is not to improve human rights but improve trade, even at the cost of thousands of lives.

In its report the Committee on Development and Cooperation further says:-

"Since the liberalisation of the economy and the encouragement of private investment, gross domestic investments increased to 23.5% of GDP in 1991.

"Relations with the European Community date back to 1975 when a commercial cooperation agreement was signed and the first session of the EEC-Sri Lanka Joint Commission was held in Brussels in 1976. Since

then Sri Lanka has benefited from some 145 million ECU in grants from the EC. In 1992 the value of EC imports from Sri Lanka amount to 617 mECU while exports were valued at 451 mECU, a deficit for the Com-

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

munity of 166 mECU. Sri Lanka's main exports to the Community are gemstones, semi-precious stones, tea, textiles and clothing. Nevertheless, despite repeated requests from the Sri Lankan authorities and from the European Parliament, the Commission has not yet opened an office in Colombo, and EU relations with Sri Lanka are handled from New Delhi. This is most regrettable and should be rectified in the immediate future.

"In conclusion, the Committee on Development and Cooperation calls for even closer links between the EU and Sri Lanka, and hopes that an expanded cooperation agreement will be concluded in the immediate future following the resolution of certain difficulties currently impeding the process".

The report also says that the human rights situation has improved considerably in government-controlled areas in the last three years. Human rights cannot improve while the structures which lead to abuses continue to remain in place. The report also contends that human rights violations occur only in war zones. However, other reports indicate human rights violations are committed against Tamils throughout the island. The report refers to the violations by the LTTE as appalling and implies that only some government troops are responsible for human rights abuses. It conveniently omits that the ultimate responsibility for abuse lies with the military and political leadership. In Sri Lanka the treatment of the minorities by the government, particularly by President Wijetunge, has encouraged and promoted violations against them. The report refers to the acceptance by the Sri Lankan government of 30 out of 32 recommendations of Amnesty International, but has failed to point out that the government has not implemented most of these recommendations. A report of MEP Anita Pollack, who led a delegation to Sri Lanka recently, to the European Parliament also gives an impression that Amnesty recommendations are being fully implemented. Furthermore the

major part of the recommendations of Colombo University's Centre for the Study of Human Rights for the comprehensive review of Emergency Regulations have also not been implemented. But, further Emergency regulations have been introduced. Proposed amendments to the Constitution affecting fundamental rights published by the government in December 1990 and announced to the UN Human Rights Commission in 1991 have not, up to now, been put before Parliament. There has been no progress whatever in the establishment of the proposed Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission. Some of the other major issues that have been conveniently omitted in the reports of the two Committees and the resolution are as follows:-

1. The aerial bombing and shelling of the North-East, particularly Jaffna, in which thousands of Tamils have been killed and enormous amount of property destroyed. The bombing and shelling continue. The resolution implies that violent actions are taking place only in the Jaffna peninsula by the action of the LTTE. A member of an international NGO and Anne Abeysekara, a journalist of *Sunday Times* who separately spent several days in Jaffna recently meeting people, confirm that currently the main fear of the people is the bombing and shelling by government security forces. Human rights violations by the LTTE as well as government forces have been documented by Amnesty International. But the European Parliament seems to imply that the violations of human rights by a "friendly country" could somehow be excused.

2. The economic blockade of the North as a result of which many thousand people are afflicted by disease and malnutrition. Thousands of people, including hun-

dreds of children, have died in hospitals, because the Colombo government refuses to supply sufficient medicines and medical equipment. Forty-two essential items have been banned including fuel, building materials and chemicals. As a result transport, education, industries, communication and agriculture have been badly affected.

3. The lack of tangible action on the part of the government to halt human rights abuses. Government members and security forces have continued to violate human rights with impunity and government members have also supported criminal elements. The recent granting of presidential pardon to Shelton Nimal Peiris and Bandula Jayadeva, the convicted criminals involved in attempted homicide, is an example. These two ruling United National Party supporters, refused to appear before Court during trial and defied Court orders because of their direct connections to the President. Eleven Police inspectors found guilty of fundamental rights violations by the Supreme Court have subsequently been promoted and in over 50 judgements delivered by the Court, fines have all been paid by the State. There has been no instance, according to human rights agencies that security force personnel found guilty of fundamental right abuses by Court have been punished by the State.

4. The reference by the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Security that LTTE committed the murder of President Premadasa. Recently Mr. Premadasa's own son and daughter have raised the issue of government's reluctance to conduct investigations in the proper manner and have called for the appointment of a Presidential Commission of Inquiry. The government says that the investigations so far conducted by the police point to the fact that the LTTE was responsible. However, so far, no judicial inquiry

has commenced. Therefore it is inappropriate for a responsible body to conclude prematurely and to accuse anyone

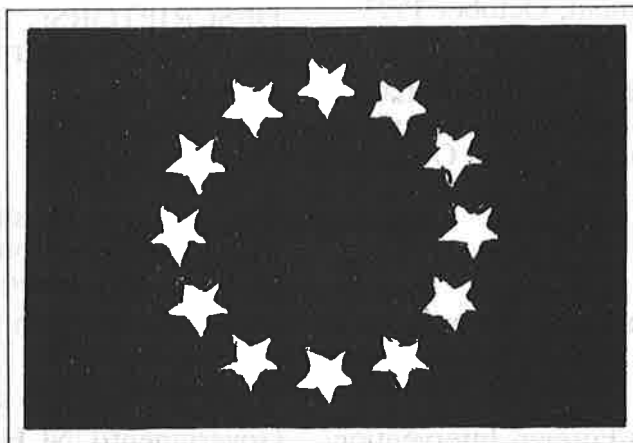
5. The arrest of more than 16,000 Tamils in Colombo and harassment of the Tamil community in the South by the security forces.

6. The detention of thousands of Tamils without trial for over three years and torture in custody. In a number of habeas corpus applications before the Court of Appeal and fundamental rights applications before the Supreme Court, it has been revealed that Tamils have been held without trial or access to lawyers for several years and have been subjected to torture in custody. There are also an unknown number of Tamils, probably thousands, detained by security forces in military camps. The Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) has not been able to compile a complete list of detainees and as far as Tamils are concerned, is part and parcel of the government machinery and has done little towards the alleviation of the sufferings of Tamil detainees.

The Supreme Court has accused HRTF of not using its full powers granted under the law for the benefit of detainees. A recent investigation by the Legal Aid Centre of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka has revealed that many of over 90 Tamils detained in Batticaloa prison had been tortured and a Tamil woman had been raped in custody.

7. The government intransigence in the matter of peace, its refusal to accept international mediation, the pursuance of a military solution and most important of all the failure of the government to put forward peace proposals. Anita Pollack's report, which does not present the whole picture correctly, also gives the impression that the attitude of the LTTE was preventing implementation of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Ethnic Conflict. This is incorrect. The LTTE

did not participate in the Select Committee. After an year of deliberations the Select Committee recommended by a majority decision (that means a decision by the Sinhalese parties) to divide the North-East which was merged under the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987. All the Tamil parties, including the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) which is part of the present government, have rejected the Select Committee recommendations and have refused to participate in the Committee. The proposal of the CWC which



could have formed the basis for negotiations was rejected by the government.

These are only some of the issues that the European Parliament has ignored, with a purpose, we believe. The intention of those who promoted the resolution seems to be similar to that of the Sri Lankan government - to relegate the Tamil National Question as a local problem confined to certain areas of Sri Lanka. It must, however, be pointed out that relegation in earlier years resulted in such catastrophe. It would be disastrous, if responsible institutions join the bandwagon, simply for economic gain, without consideration for morality, human rights or for peace.

There is no doubt that the resolution is also a strategy to

justify the decision already secretly by Western governments to involuntarily return Tamil asylum-seekers to Sri Lanka. The Swiss government has already signed an agreement with Sri Lanka to return Tamil refugees. Reports say Denmark will follow suit. On the initiative of the Swiss government, immigration officers of the EC countries will meet in Zurich in early June to discuss the possibility of an EC agreement with Sri Lanka for the return of Tamils, of course with the active participation of UNHCR. It appears that problems arising in relation to such an agreement would be dealt with by the proposed new office of the European Commission in Colombo.

The resolution of the European Parliament also makes no reference to the long discrimination and oppression of the Tamil Community. Discrimination in various fields of national life, continued government-planned colonisation of the Tamil Homeland and repeated genocidal massacres have forced the Tamils to take up arms, after failure of peaceful and Gandhian protests over a period of 30 years. The European Parliament must not forget that the current struggle is in furtherance of the mandate given by the Tamil people at the democratic elections in 1977 for the formation of a separate state for the Tamil nation. Tamils have legitimate aspirations which the European Community must recognise. Attempts at suppression of a community by various strategies and tactics without addressing the root causes of the problem will only lead to aggravation of a grave crisis.

TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by the Centre in April/May 1994

SHR 3332

Sri Lanka: summary of human rights concerns
London: Amnesty International; February 1994.
10p

DESCRIPTORS: Arrest/Sri Lankan Tamils/
Disappearances/Torture/Detention/Emergency/
Regulations/ICRC/LTTE

SHR 3330

Pollack, Anita
Report on the European Parliament delegation
to Sri Lanka October 1993

London: European Parliament; October 1993
6p

DESCRIPTORS: Foreign Mission/Sri Lanka/
Disappearances/Torture/Detention/Killing/Visit
Report/European Parliament/Political Opinion.

OHR 282

The truth about Somalia
London: Campaign Against Militarism; Decem-
ber 1993

No.1; 10p.
DESCRIPTORS: Somalia/Foreign Intervention/
United Nations/History/Human Rights Violation

SGN 388

Aranerip Patacalaikalukana Patattitam
Colombo: Hindu Cultural Affairs Ministry: 1994
20p

DESCRIPTORS: Education/Hinduism/Sri
Lanka

SHR 3341

Questions and Answers in parliament
London: House of Commons; 22 February 1994
10p

DESCRIPTORS: Detention/United Kingdom/
Refugees/Statistics/Sri Lankan Tamils/Asylum

SHR 3340

Special dossier on mass graves at Suriyakanda
Sri Lanka: INFORM; 1993
11p

DESCRIPTORS: Killing/Students/JVP/Sinha-
lese/Southern Province

OHR 277

Refugee Arrivals Project annual report 1993
London: Refugee Arrivals Project; 1993
44p

DESCRIPTORS: Refugees/Asylum Act/Im-
migration/United Kingdom

SHR 3337

Appeal to President D B Wijetunge
Geneva: World Council of Churches; 17
November 1993

1p
DESCRIPTORS: Bombing/Killing/Sri Lan-
kan Tamils/Northern Province

Appeal

SHR 3338

Marapana, Tilak
The Sri Lankan statement delivered on 7
March 1994 by Hon. Tilak Marapana to the
UNCHR 50th session

Sri Lanka; 7 March 1994

12p
DESCRIPTORS: Statement/ Sri Lankan
Government/UNCHR/Human Rights Viola-
tion/Ethnic Problem/Emergency Regulations

SHR 3339

Women's International League
Statement of the Women's International
League to UNCHR 50th session

Geneva: Women's International League;
February 1994

3p

DESCRIPTORS: Torture/ Disappearance/
Human Rights Violation/Sri Lankan Govern-
ment/Statistics/Abduction/Appeal/Detention/
UNCHR

SHR 3327

Taraki
The Eluding peace: an insider's political
analysis of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka

France; ASSEAY; 31 September 1991
112p

DESCRIPTORS: Articles/Ethnic Problem/Sri
Lanka/LTTE/Sri Lankan Government/Politi-
cal Opinion

Media Under Presidential Fire

President Wijetunge has accused the local press and the international media for partisan reporting and has directed the Minister of Information Tyronne Fernando to take measures to limit the damage caused by such reports. The letter to the Minister is given below.

"There is at the moment, a well orchestrated and aggressive anti-Government campaign by the local and foreign media. I am referring in particular to the vicious campaign launched by the *Island* and *Times* Newspaper Groups as well as almost all tabloids. I understand that there is a similar campaign by the BBC, Veritas and several other radio and TV, Broadcasting Stations.

"An appropriate strategy needs therefore to be designed and implemented with a comprehensive programme of activities which will sustain the publicity effort over the next six to nine months. An important aspect of this strategy would also be the monitoring of all anti-Government propaganda which may take place both locally and abroad, through the print media or through radio and TV. This should be followed up with the daily release of news items and stories to the media unoffi-

cially which are both factual and authentic and aimed at countering this disinformation and misinformation campaign.

"I would therefore wish that you put together a strong and dynamic media strategy and co-ordinating and implementing team which can effectively meet the challenges that face us. Since this is a matter of great urgency, I would like you to immediately commence work on the proposal and see me early next week with the strategy and the programme of activities. Kindly note such a team will have to work continuously for the next six to nine months round the clock".

The President's brief is a tall one as the Minister has to take on the mighty BBC. The duration of six to nine months for the team to function is clearly based on the timing for the Presidential and parliamentary elections and the purpose is plainly to ensure success for the ruling party. The characterisation of the campaign by the media as "vicious" is vital. The Minister of

Information himself, in an interview to the press in early February said of newspapers, "If they attack other ministers, may be they will get a couple of returns". And to a question whether it would be "tyres" - a reference to the use of tyres by government death squads to burn the bodies of victims - the Minister replied "I don't know about tyres. May be a milder dose of treatment". Having accepted that there were ministers who could retaliate in milder forms than burning people on tyres it is difficult to see how the Minister could stave off such alleged anti-Government propaganda, particularly in the midst of reports that the residence of a Cabinet Minister was searched resulting in the seizure of weapons of the security guards. The Minister has now no option but to grist information the Geobbels fashion.

It is also significant that although the President did not accuse the Lake House Newspapers he did remove the Chairman and Editor of Sunday Observer H.L.D. Mahindapala who was the main prop for government propaganda. Although reports say Mahindapala has been reinstated, the Minister has to do better than the two in presenting a slanted version on events concerning the government.

Life Under Military Rule

are confined to their homes or ordered to assemble in some place. Each house is searched, often causing damage to property. If the soldiers are in a bad mood following an attack by the LTTE, houses may be burned. Houses will be torched if the soldiers suspect a family member of involvement with the LTTE. After a LTTE landmine attack on 18 April, fifty of the sixty houses in Murugankovilady village in Batticaloa District were burned by soldiers and an old man was burned alive in his house.

After the people assemble in the temple or school, their names are checked with a list in army's possession. If a person's name is not on the list he or she and the house owner are arrested, often never to return. During search operations all activities of the village come to a standstill. Schools and shops will be closed and people cannot go to work. Search operations are conducted so often in some villages that the people have been driven to destitution.

Villagers are not allowed to store food and small shops in many village areas have been ordered to close. People are thus forced to travel into nearby towns to purchase food. If the soldiers decide that there is more food than necessary, all occupants of the house will be taken into custody alleging that the extra food is for the LTTE.

Travelling is another, nightmare! A checkpoint has been established almost every mile. People are questioned about articles they carry. If satisfactory answers are not given then the person will be detained. Vehicles must stop 300 yards before the checkpoint. All passengers must get

down. They could board the vehicle again only after walking 300 yards beyond the checkpoint. Normal travel time of one hour between Kalmunai and Batticaloa, for example, now takes 4-5 hours.

In many areas villagers have been ordered to sign at security force camps on an appointed day a week. They also have to obtain permission from the security forces to go outside the village. Reports say some villages have been surrounded by barbed wire. Following the shooting of policemen at Mandur in Batticaloa District in May, all males above the age of 12 have been ordered to sign at the STF camp at 8.00 am on Sundays. Villagers say that when they go to sign they are forced to work in the camp. Forcing people to work has become common not only in the East but also in army-occupied areas of the North. In some places villagers must collect firewood for the camp if they wish to go to areas beyond.

Cultivation in army-occupied areas has become almost impossible for farmers. Application of fertiliser to planted fields is decided by the army. This is in addition to restrictions on fertiliser. Harvest also must be done with the permission of the security forces. Large portions of cultivated paddy is often taken away by the military. Only a limited amount of paddy can be transported or stored. Tamil farmers are forced, as a result, to sell crops at low prices.

Fundamental rights and freedoms have been restricted or violated with impunity more than ever in the East and army-occupied areas of the North. People must do what the military says, new slavery as we approach the twenty first century.

The Sri Lankan government has proclaimed that normalcy has been restored in the East and civil administration is functioning, giving the impression outside the island that the people are leading normal lives in peace and security. Western nations find it convenient to repeat Sri Lanka's statements, with ulterior motives, although their embassies are well aware of the true situation in the East.

The Tamils of the East have been turned into a nation of slaves under Sri Lankan military rule. The security forces have ensured that nothing moves without their command.

Search operations are conducted daily in many parts of the East. During search operations in villages, the people

APRIL DIARY

APRIL 01

PRESIDENT SHOOTS DOWN PEACE MISSION: President D B Wijetunge directed Parliament Speaker M H Mohamed to suspend his peace mission to Jaffna at the eleventh hour, although arrangements had been made with the assistance of the ICRC.

APRIL 02

US STATE DEPARTMENT APPRAISED: Batticaloa MP Josphe Pararajasingham explained to visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphael that the immediate needs of the district are Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Resettlement which cannot in any way be met by the local councils recently elected.

ASHRAFF AND MERGER: Addressing the 12th Annual General Meeting of his party at Kalmunai in Batticaloa District, SLMC leader M H M Ashraff said that demerging the North-East would benefit neither the Tamils nor the Muslims.

APRIL 03

REFUGEE CAMP DESTROYED: The refugee camp at 2nd Division, Saltern in Puttalam District where Muslim refugees were sheltered was destroyed in a fire. One person was burned to death and 700 others belonging to 156 families lost all their possessions.

POLICEMEN KILLED: Four policemen were killed in an LTTE attack at Pulmoddai in Trincomalee District.

APRIL 04

SKIRMISHES IN THE NORTH-EAST: Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry reported the killing of three LTTE cadres and injury to 10 others in a confrontation in the jungles of Manal Aru in Mullaitivu District. Five soldiers were wounded in this incident. The killing of another LTTE cadre was also reported from Batticaloa.

APRIL 05

IDENTITY CARDS IN THE HILL COUNTRY: Deputy Commissioner of the Department for the Registration of Persons Patkunarajah announced that plantation managements were respon-

sible for the delay in the issue of identity cards to plantation workers. Most applications submitted by managements were incomplete.

APRIL 06

LTTE LOSSES: Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry reported the killing of eight LTTE cadres at Ilamaruthankulam in Vavuniya District.

APRIL 07

DINGHIES TARGETED: Security sources reported that the Navy attacked three dinghies in the sea off Silavathurai coast in Mannar District. According to this report one of the dinghies was destroyed by naval fire.

APRIL 08

CIVILIANS KILLED IN SHELL FIRE: Mrs Sivalingamoorthy Perinpanayagi (54 yrs), Mrs Veluppillai Sakunthalathevi (42 yrs), and Miss Sivalingamoorthy Sivadarshini (19 yrs) all from the same family were killed when shell fire directed from Palaly army camp destroyed their house at Atchuvely in Jaffna District. Several houses in the village were also damaged.

EXPLOSIONS IN HOTELS: Bombs exploded in Marriot, Taj Samudra and Sapphire hotels in Colombo causing damage. A person identified as Alphonso Anthony Aruldas was killed and Mahendran Mathivanan injured in an explosion near Ranveli hotel in Mt.Lavania.

LTTE ATTACK: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of a soldier and injury to several others when the army check point at Kamburupitty in Trincomalee District came under LTTE attack. The report also added that there could have been some LTTE casualties.

APRIL 9

EXPLOSION IN THE ZOO: A bomb exploded in the Colombo zoo, but there were no casualties.

APRIL 10

REFUGEES BLAMED: Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary T V Venkataraman urged through advertisement in newspapers, Tamil refugees staying outside refugee camps to go back to their motherland. This request came after Chief Minister Jayalalitha accused Tamil refugees of being responsible for the steep rise in crime in Tamil Nadu.

APRIL 11

UP-COUNTRY LEADER RELEASED: P Chandrasekaran the leader of the Upcountry People's Front elected to the Central Provincial Council while in custody at the Police headquarters, was released on bail after three years in detention before the trial's completion. He is accused of sheltering Varathan, the main suspect in the JOC headquarters bombing.

APRIL 12

TAMILS DETAINED: Kankipuram and Konesarpuram in Trincomalee District were surrounded by the security forces who ordered the villagers to gather at the Infant Jesus Church. Twelve men and eight women were detained after interrogation.

APRIL 13

DISPLACED PERSONS KILLED: Rajaratnam, a displaced person living in Manipay was shot dead by the army while visiting his house at Ilavalai in Jaffna District. In a similar incident another displaced person living at Alaveddy was killed.

APRIL 14

SHELL FIRE TARGETS CIVILIANS: One civilian was killed and 18 others were injured when the army camp at Mandaitivu directed continuous shell fire at the coastal areas of Jaffna town. The main hall of the Sri Meenatchi Hindu temple on Kittangi Road was also damaged by shell fire.

APRIL DIARY

APRIL 15

COUNCILLOR KILLED: Matale Municipal Councillor M R Hussain was gunned down at his residence in the night by two unidentified men. A relative of Mr. Hussain was injured. The dead councillor had fallen out with UNP council administration after allegations of corruption were made by him.

BRIBERY TAKES CENTRE STAGE: Assistant Bribery Commissioner V P A Hettiarachchi petitioned the Supreme Court that he had been victimised for investigating the asset declarations of a former cabinet minister and three other members of the government. He claims Rs. 10 million (\$200,000) as compensation and the entire cabinet has been cited as respondents.

APRIL 16

POLICEMEN ATTACKED: Operational headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of a policeman and injury to three others when the police post at Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee District came under LTTE attack.

APRIL 17

YOUTHS ARRESTED: Manjathoduvai village in Batticaloa District was surrounded by police in the morning in a search operation. Twenty youths were arrested on suspicion.

APRIL 18

CIVILIANS KILLED: Two civilians were killed and eight were injured when air force planes dropped six bombs at 11.00 a.m. on the Pandivirichchan village in Mannar District. Several houses in the village were also damaged in the bombing.

REPRISAL KILLING: Security forces set fire to over 50 of the 60 houses at Murugankovilady village in the Panichchankerni area in Batticaloa District after a landmine explosion damaged a vehicle in an army convoy. Veeran Vyramuthu (50 yrs) was burned alive in his house and 18 others sustained injuries as soldiers ran amok assaulting and shooting.

APRIL 19

LTTE STRIKE: The police check point at Vammiyadi in Batticaloa District was attacked by the LTTE at 7.25 p.m. and constable Gamini Dissanayake was killed.

APRIL 20

CLASH IN MANAL ARU: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of two soldiers and two LTTE cadres in a clash at Manal Aru in Mullaitivu District.

APRIL 21

UNIVERSITY CLOSED: The University of Peradeniya was closed until further notice after two undergraduates sitting examinations were attacked by unknown persons. The University was opened for conducting examinations on 20 April after being closed from 26 February.

APRIL 22

MILITARY OPERATIONS: Security forces in the North began an operation code-named *Jayamaga* (Victory Path) with the objective of securing the area up to Parayanalankulam junction on the Cheddikulam-Mannar Road. No resistance was encountered in this advance of troops. A similar operation code-named *White Eagle* was launched in the Angodavillu area in the East. Many LTTE camps were destroyed in this operation according to security forces.

APRIL 23

ANTI-RABIES VACCINE: Reports said that anti-rabies vaccine was not available in hospitals in the Akkaraiptru area in Amparai District and people had to travel to Batticaloa for treatment.

APRIL 24

CLASH AMONG SECURITY FORCES: One policeman was stabbed to death at Udappu in Puttalam District in a clash between police and soldiers in civilian clothes. Nine soldiers were admitted to hospital with injuries.

APRIL 25

FISHERMEN MISSING: Three fishermen went missing after going out to sea in Mannar. The boat in which Jude, Robert and Ambrose went fishing was found ashore with blood stains.

APRIL 26

MILITARY ADVANCE: Forces engaged in operation *Jayamaga* begun on 22 April continued to advance to Iranai Iluppankulam in Vavuniya District with little resistance.

APRIL 27

TIGER MESSAGE: Reports said that the LTTE has sent a message through a senior Tamil government officer to Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe that the Tigers were ready for peace talks. The officer met Deputy political leader Karikalan, Vanni District's Eesan and Vanni area leader Kulathepan.

APRIL 28

PRESIDENT VETOES PRICE INCREASE: President Wijetunge cancelled the price increase of 10 cents on a litre of diesel effected by the Petroleum Corporation on the ground that he as Finance Minister was not informed of the price increase.

APRIL 29

UPF LEADER ACQUITTED: Upcountry Peoples Front Secretary B Abdul Cader was acquitted by the Colombo High Court. The Judge C V Wigneswaran said that this case was an example of what could happen to innocent people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

APRIL 30

WELFARE PACKAGE: In his message to mark the May day, President Wijetunge announced a series of welfare schemes. Tax cuts, increased wages and fertiliser subsidies were part of this package.

MAY DIARY

MAY 01

PARTY SECRETARY QUILTS: Cabinet Minister Sirisena Cooray resigned from his post as secretary of the ruling United National Party acceding to the request of President D B Wijetunge.

MAY 02

FISHERMAN KILLED: Abdeen Niyas (26 yrs) was killed when the boat he was out fishing, off Muthur coast in Trincomalee District was fired upon by unidentified persons. Two others in the boat escaped unhurt.

DETENTIONS IN TAMIL NADU: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha informed the State Legislative Assembly that 1,629 Sri Lankan Tamil militants and their supporters are being held in detention in special camps in the state.

MAY 03

FAMILIES DISPLACED: As a result of continuous shell fire from forward positions of the army as part of the military operation *Jayamaga* directed at the Tamil villages of Pulvanarur, Veppankulam and Madukkulam in Vavuniya District, over 300 families left these villages and sought shelter elsewhere.

MAY 04

BOMBS IN BATTICALOA: Police said several bombs had been planted in the Batticaloa town by the LTTE.

MAY 05

POLICEMEN KILLED: Sub-Inspector of Police Dissanayake and Constable Ranjith Piyasiri were killed at Eravur in Batticaloa District at 5.30 pm when unidentified persons fired on a police patrol.

MAY 06

POLICE STATION ATTACKED: LTTE penetrated into Mannar Island and attacked the police station killing five policemen. Several others were injured and the police station destroyed.

MAY 07

SHELL ATTACK ON CIVILIANS: Three residents of Chemmani village in Jaffna District were injured by shells fired from the army camp at Palaly.

MAY 08

FISHERMAN ASSAULTED BY SAILORS: Arumugam Thanurajah (24 yrs) of Athikoyilady in Jaffna District was assaulted by naval personnel while fishing off Kudathanai coast.

MAY 09

SAILORS CONTINUE ASSAULTS ON FISHERMEN: S. Kanapathipillai of Kudathanai in Jaffna District sustained injuries when sailors assaulted him while fishing off Kudathanai coast.

MAY 10

ARSON ATTACK ON MUSLIM VILLAGE: Forty-five boats, over 100 outboard motors, 28 huts and fishing nets were set ablaze at Serukuli village in Puttalam District by unidentified persons in the night. The attack followed an earlier incident where a Sinhalese fisherman was assaulted in the area.

MAY 11

FISHERMEN DISAPPEAR: Two Tamils fishing off the coast of Nagarkoyil in Jaffna District were taken into custody by naval personnel. Their whereabouts are not known.

SHELLING BY ARMY: Intense shell fire was directed from Palaly army camp towards Valikamam West in Jaffna District. Gurunagar in Jaffna was too targeted by the Mandaitivu army camp in a similar manner. Schools remained closed in the affected areas and all activities were curtailed.

MAY 12

CIVILIAN KILLED: Police Headquarters reported that

Ilayathamby Somasundaram, a civilian was killed in crossfire when security forces clashed with the LTTE at Kaluwanchchikudy in Batticaloa District.

MAY 13

ARMY ADVANCE ON MANNAR ROAD: The army advanced a further mile on Mannar Road from Cheddikulam without any resistance from the LTTE.

MAY 14

BAN ON LTTE EXTENDED: India banned LTTE for a further period of one year alleging that the LTTE threatened its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

MAY 15

NEW PROBE INTO KILLING OF EX-PRESIDENT: Dulanjali, the daughter of the late President Premadasa in a written communication to President D B Wijetunge requested him to appoint a commission of inquiry to investigate the Premadasa killing on 1 May 1993.

MAY 16

REFUGEE RETURNEE ARRESTED: Krishnapillai Ganeshalingam deported from Switzerland last year was arrested in Colombo and detained at the Cinnamon Garden Police Station.

MAY 17

SINHALESE BROADCAST: Minister Arunasalam opened the first broadcasting service in Sinhala at the Thuthukudi Radio broadcasting station in Tamil Nadu in India. Two hours of Sinhala broadcasts could be heard in Medium Wave 1.053HZ; 284.9 meters between 6.15 am - 6.45 am and 6.30 pm - 8.30 pm.

MAY 18

DISEASE IN JAFFNA: Reports said that disease was spreading in Pachchilaipalli and Vadamaradchy in Jaffna. In April 58 were affected by septicaemia

MAY DIARY

and 700 by malaria.

MAY 19

SLMC LEADER RESIGNS: Leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress M H M Ashraff resigned his seat in Parliament as his party failed to secure control of all the local councils in the Muslim dominated areas in Amparai District, his constituency.

DETENTION CONFIRMED: Speaking in Parliament on the debate for the extension of Emergency Rule Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe confirmed that there are 136 detainees at Boosa detention camp in Galle District and six among them are in detention since 1987.

MAY 20

PRESIDENT REJECTS NEW PROBE ON PREMADASA KILLING: Secretary to the President K H J Wijedasa conveyed to the daughter of the late President Premadasa that her request for a commission to inquire into the circumstances of her father's killing could not be accepted as an investigation was already been held and results have been concluded and the LTTE was responsible for the Commission of this crime.

MAY 21

RETURNED REFUGEE ABDUCTED: Jeevendran who returned from Tamil Nadu and was in Talaimannar Station Road Refugee Camp was abducted at 3.00 am from the camp by men in uniform.

MAY 22

ENCOUNTER AT SEA: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the destruction of an LTTE boat with seven men aboard off the north west coast of Jaffna District.

TAMIL ARRESTS IN THE EAST: Veeramunai and Pandiruppu in Amparai District were surrounded by police in the early hours and several arrests were made after a search.

CIVILIANS KILLED IN AIR FORCE BOMBING: A father, daughter and daughter-in-law were killed when a house at Nèerveli in Jaffna

District was bombed by air force planes. Five bombs dropped in the area also injured over ten others. A report issued on 24 May by the Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry claimed that air force planes attacked a LTTE hide-out and there was no information about casualties.

CLASH IN THE EAST: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of an LTTE member in a confrontation at Navalady in Batticaloa District.

MAY 23

TAMILS ARRESTED BY SAILORS: Robert Coonge, Christurajan Crusz, Emil Lambert, Jamil Layam, Augustine Sahayam, Layam Lima, Ewan Coonge Reginald, Suresh and S Jude were arrested in the evening by sailors when they arrived at Talaimannar in Mannar District. Two of the nine Tamils arrested are students.

ARMED CLASHES CONTINUE IN EAST: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of one LTTE member and injury to three others when security forces fired on them at Vettaikadu in Batticaloa District.

MAY 24

ARMY PATROL AMBUSHED: Two soldiers were killed when an army patrol was ambushed in the early hours by the LTTE at Galpotta in Trincomalee District.

MAY 25

INDISCRIMINATE BOMBING IN DARKNESS: Two "Puckara" aircraft were engaged in bombing the Kudathanai and Nakarkoyil villages in Jaffna District from 6.00 pm and 9.00 pm.

MAY 26

SOLDIERS AMBUSHED IN THE EAST: Five soldiers travelling in an agricultural tractor along St. Michael Road, Pulmoddai in

Trincomalee District were killed in an LTTE ambush. One soldier was killed by the LTTE in another incident at Siththandy in Batticaloa District.

COASTAL AREAS OF JAFFNA POUNDED: Northern and North-Eastern coast of Jaffna District were targeted by naval ships, aircraft and army camps. Cannons, artillery and bombs were used extensively in the concerted attack on coastal areas.

MAY 27

AMPHIBIOUS LANDING FOILED: Attempts to land troops along the Northern and North-Eastern coast of Jaffna District by the security forces failed due to LTTE resistance.

MAY 28

REFUGEES HARASSED: Refugees in Bhavanisagar camp in Tamil Nadu have complained to refugee workers of harassment by Indian officials. Over 3,000 refugees who have refused to return to Sri Lanka fearing persecution are confined to this camp.

MAY 29

SKIRMISH IN THE NORTH: Operational Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence reported the killing of five LTTE men and one soldier in a confrontation at Vasavilan West in Jaffna District.

MAY 30

PRESIDENT ON TAMIL PARTIES Speaking at a meeting in Badulla, President Wijetunge said that all the northern parties were racist, although some parties were working with the government, and their ultimate aim was to secure a separate state for the Tamils.

MAY 31

FISHERMEN KILLED Two young fishermen were killed by the LTTE in Padaviya in Mullaitivu District, according to the police.

NEWS IN BRIEF**SHORTAGE OF DRUGS**

The Mullaitivu District Hospital has no stocks of anti-rabies vaccine according to a recent report. One patient died at this hospital without treatment due to the lack of the drug. There is also an acute shortage of drugs used in the treatment of diabetes, blood pressure, heart ailments and asthma. Patients in need of these drugs have been advised to await the arrival of stocks.

SPREAD OF MALARIA

During January and February 12,857 cases of malarial fever have been reported in the Jaffna peninsula. The highest figure of 4,650 had been reported in the Point Pedro Medical Division. From the total number affected 720 cases were identified as cerebral malaria patients. The non-availability of Malathion for the effective prevention of malaria has been attributed as the main cause for the spread of the disease.

MALNOURISHMENT

In a survey carried out by the Manipay Health Division within the 25 Grama Sevaka divisions in Valikaman West area 9,100 persons were identified as under-nourished. The figures show that 4,390 of these were children over the age of five, 3,790 were children between the ages of one and five, 390 were lactating mothers, 285 were babies below 12 months and 245 were pregnant mothers.

Another survey conducted by the Jaffna Municipal Health Department has revealed that 90% of lactating mothers were malnourished. The non-issue of nutrient "TRIPOSHA" at post-natal clinics is cited as the main cause for this situation.

Illegal Detention by Government

Nineteen Tamil villagers from Mannampitty in Polonnaruwa District face an illegal punishment by the government. They were detained on 14 January during a cordon and search operation conducted by the security forces in the village. The search operation followed the killing of a soldier by unidentified persons. The arrested persons all range between the ages 25 and 40 and are married with dependent families. Nine of them are being held at Habarana Police station and 16 at Polonnaruwa police station although both these locations are not designated detention centres.

Relatives visiting the detained men have been informed by the detainees that they are to be moved to the Rehabilitation Centre at Bandarawela. There are other villagers from Mannampitty who are already at this Rehabilitation Centre after being detained in similar circumstances for several years. This fact has created much anxiety among the villagers who fear that the nineteen men too would serve long periods in the Rehabilitation Centre.

Detainees with no evidence of crime against them are being sent to Rehabilitation Centres for unspecified periods. They are not being freed as claims for wrongful detention and compensation could arise in such a situation. The Rehabilitation Centre is in fact a ruse to keep suspects without trial. Some human rights groups have already brought this matter to the notice of the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF). There are also a large number of Sinhalese youths who are illegally detained in Rehabilitation Centres according to reports.

Religious Persecution

According to a report by the Ministry of Hindu Cultural Affairs 1,479 Hindu temples were damaged or destroyed up to December 1990 in the North-East and the loss has been estimated at Rs. 238 million (\$5 million).

| District | No. of temples | Estimated damage (Rs. millions) |
|-------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Jaffna | 513 | 128.0 |
| Kilinochchi | 33 | 2.1 |
| Mullaitivu | 181 | 39.0 |
| Mannar | 37 | 7.0 |
| Vavuniya | 136 | 16.0 |
| Trincomalee | 199 | 34.0 |
| Batticaloa | 283 | 27.0 |
| Amparai | 147 | 30.0 |

" I wish the war would end so that I can return. My homeland is the place where I belong "

My name is Devi and I am 29 years old. I lived with my family in Kankesanthurai, Jaffna. We were seven in the family, four brothers and two sisters. I was the youngest in my family. My father died of heart-attack when I was four years old. After my sister was married, my brother-in-law became my guardian.

I sat for the 1983 GCE (AL) examination but the results were delayed because of violence against the Tamils in the South. I took up social work during this long wait. I gave tuition to children in my village. Occasionally, I visited homes of the elderly in my village to help them. There were many old people living in Jaffna without any help. Their children had been either killed or joined the liberation movements or fled the country as refugees.

In 1984 I joined the Thamil Mahalir Peravai an organisation involved in human rights, and attended regular meetings. We were concerned about the Tamil cause and worked hard to create greater awareness among our people. The 1983 violence was the turning point for popular youth uprising against the rule of the Sinhala state. It was the first time I felt that there was something more than the simple discrimination in education and employment against the Tamil people. I saw injured Tamils being brought to KKS

by ship from the South. Each one had a pathetic story to tell. Their agonising tales still remain in my mind.

My family became worried that I might join the militant groups and got me employment in the nearby cement factory to keep me occupied.

Soon after the July violence, the military activities in the North were intensified. The army began harassing people. They treated us like criminals. Soldiers entered houses and took away young men and tortured them. They began to look for people who were politically active and those involved in human rights work. Even social and religious workers were considered as supporters of militants.

A Sinhalese bakery owner had been living in the area for several years. He was considered as part of the Tamil society. I had known him giving money to Tamil militants and having Tamils released from army custody. As time passed he became evasive and the army visited him regularly. There were rumours that he had become an informant. Several young men were picked up by the army. Most of them were well known to the baker as Tamil militants. My brother-in-law and one of my brothers were well known to him. He was also aware that they knew some of the militant leaders. After the arrests of some Tamils, my brothers and brother-in-law did not spend their nights at home. Fearing the army, they slept in my aunt's house.

Soldiers began to visit our house frequently looking for my brothers and my brother-in-law. On a number of occasions they narrowly escaped from being arrested. One of my brothers

had links with Tamil militants but not my brother-in-law. Based on the information obtained from victims the army began to arrest others. Some of the youths released said that the army had enquired about my brothers and brother-in-law from them. The army had told them to inform my brothers and my brother-in-law that they would be shot on sight.

One day the army surrounded our house and asked all of us to come out on to the front verandha with our hands up. When we came out the army officer called out my brother's name. My mother said that he had left home and did not stay with us any more. He pushed my mother away and came towards me. He was abusive. He threatened to shoot us. We begged him to spare us. Two other soldiers came and took my hands and began to twist. It was very painful. They caught me by my hair and pulled me down. I began to scream. I saw one soldier beating my mother with a stick. My mother was also screaming. The soldier then came to me and beat me with the stick on my back, my knees and arms. My mother shouted. "Oh! they are killing my daughter! Please help!" They said they would kill us if we did not help them to find my brother and left.

All our relatives and neighbours advised my mother to send my brother and my brother-in-law away. I also felt that they should leave. There were too many informants. I knew that some day they would be caught and the army would kill them. My mother advised

them to go out of the country and they fled to France.

On 22 April 1987 the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the Harber View Hotel military camp around 1.00am. People said the military had suffered losses. Soon after the attack the military retaliated by indiscriminately shelling the surrounding areas. It was dark and there were screams everywhere. We came out on to the street. I saw LTTE men carrying their wounded. People begged the LTTE men to take them as they feared the army. LTTE men were too busy and moved out. We saw a helicopter gunship hovering with lights and firing. The bullets hit the street and near my house. My mother and myself fled into the house and took cover inside a cavity under the fireplace where we stored firewood. The shelling continued till the morning. I could hear gunfire from all directions. We heard neighbours calling out our names. We came out on to the front varandah. Crowds of people were running in all directions. My mother locked the house and we followed a group of people. They were shouting "Move on, move on, the army is coming". I saw many dead bodies on the roadside. Houses were damaged, bodies were lying in the house varandahs, children were screaming and the seriously wounded were left on the road. Cars and cycles were carrying the dead and wounded. I saw the bodies of Thangavelautham, Nynar and Kanthalingam covered with blood. I knew them well. They were innocent people.

We passed Maviddapuram and reached Thellipalai and took shelter in the Thurgai Amman Temple. The temple was crowded. Old men and women, the sick and the wounded were carried by others. People stayed in the temple for two days and the trustees provided food. Some of those who were injured became seriously ill and some young men took them to the hospital. After a few days, people who had relatives and friends in other areas moved out of the temple camp. My mother sent me to my uncle's house in Thellipalai. I visited her daily. Around 1,500 refugees continued to stay

in the temple. Most of them were from Thaiyiddy and Urani, the places that were badly affected. Some of the people decided to visit their houses. My mother, myself and our neighbours joined them and went to see our house. We saw our main door, windows were shattered and the house ransacked. The soldiers had smashed my father's photograph hanging on the wall. For them every Tamil was a Tiger

After the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987, the Indian military arrived in Kankesanthurai followed by Tamil refugees from Tamil Nadu. The Sri Lankan military was asked to leave from the Harber View Hotel. We saw them leaving with their weapons and baggage. The ruthless army with camouflage uniform suddenly became very polite and passive. They were wearing ordinary civilian dresses when they left. They looked very relieved and smiled at us. They tried to say goodbye with the little Tamil they knew. Some villagers passed rude remarks at them. Of course, those who had lost their loved ones would not forgive them. But, the soldiers were very calm. I could not believe my eyes that I was standing so close to the soldiers who assaulted me and hurt my mother. There was sadness in their faces. I felt that they were trying to say sorry for what they had done to us.

The North celebrated the arrival of the Indians. I joined my friends and cycled everywhere, attending meetings and taking stock of the destruction. Vadamaratchi looked like a battle field. Houses had been razed to the ground. No one would know how many were buried under the rubble. The villagers returned and I saw old folks weeping like small children. I saw a woman screaming that her daughter was buried in the rubble. I stood helplessly with my friends not knowing what to do. We had nothing to offer.

As days passed, I felt a sense of uneasiness growing among the people. Young men, particularly LTTE members were not happy. I knew some of them. I asked them what was wrong. Their replies were abrupt. One of them said "People don't seem to realise the danger they were walking into, by their behaviour with the Indians". I told them that the people were tired and feel that they had won their freedom. The people sincerely believed that the Indians would settle the conflict.

The peace did not last. War broke out between the IPKF and LTTE in October 1987. Once again the people were subjected to a brutal military campaign, but this time it was by the Indians. It was worse than our experience at the hands of the Sinhalese army. People were simply massacred. Unlike the Sri Lankan soldiers, the Indian soldiers ventured out in the streets in armoured vehicles with machine guns and shot people on sight. They carried out intensive house to house search operations for LTTE members round the clock.

Once again the Harber View Hotel became the operational headquarters for the KKS Division of the Indian military. Helicopter gunships were used to fire shells from the air. Artillery fire was directed continuously day and night. People could not sleep at nights. Children were hysteric. There were daily reports of killings in the area. One entire family, namely the Thambithurai family, including their 18 year-old daughter jumped into a well to escape the Indian massacre, but all drowned.

One day, an Indian contingent came to our street. They wore turbans and their eyes were fearsome. They burst into our house and yelled in their language. One of them dragged me out by my hair and another dragged my mother

some. They burst into our house and yelled in their language. One of them dragged me out by my hair and another dragged my mother out. We screamed and begged for mercy. The soldier held his gun on to my head when I was on the ground. I saw his finger on the trigger. My mother was also on the ground screaming and shouting for help. The other soldiers went into the house. We heard loud noises. Glasses were broken, windows were smashed. I could see one soldier ripping off the light switch from the wall in our front varandha. There was a call from inside and the two soldiers holding us left us and went into the house. We fled into the neighbouring house. The neighbours took us in and said that we must get away quickly. I saw Indian soldiers dragging five girls away. They were screaming. People began to shout, "O God! they are taking our girls away". But, we were helpless. They took away the girls and they were raped. One girl who was brought back home was unconscious.

This was not the only incident of this kind. On another occasion when the IPKF arrived to search our homes, we knew of their arrival and fled before they came. My mother and myself fled to the house of a friend two streets away. We heard screams behind the house. As we were standing near the main entrance of the house, we managed to cross the road and enter a house on the other side. We were lucky. Soldiers jumped over the parapet wall from one side and surrounded the house. Our friend's daughter tried to come out. But, she was stopped by the soldiers, dragged in and raped. We could hear her screams. We could do nothing.

People began to flee to the Red Cross Office in Kankesanthurai. My mother and myself also went to the Red Cross Office. All had horrendous stories to tell. The people pleaded with the Red Cross Officials. The Red Cross Officers were all Indians and they did nothing. I saw a man entering the Red Cross Office carrying a young girl who was without any

clothes. Oh God! It was my friend and the boy was her fiance. She was a victim of rape by the Indians. Some of the men there, removed their shirts and flung them on the girl to cover her body. She had scars all over her body and she was unconscious. Her fiance was sobbing.

Few hours later one military officer entered the office in a jeep and ordered all to walk to the nearby cemetery. People began to scream and begged the Red Cross Officers to stop them being taken away but to no avail. We walked to the cemetery. Women were crying and begging the military officer to spare them. My friend was carried by her fiance. We were all asked to kneel down on rough ground under the hot sun. There was an eighty year-old man next to me. He could not kneel. He sat on the ground. But, one soldier came and slapped him on his shoulders and asked him to kneel. We were ordered to keep our hands high in the air and we were searched by the soldiers. I looked at the eyes of the soldier who seached me. I had given him a drink when he visited my home on one occasion. Was this the man to whom I gave directions when he was lost in the streets? No. It cannot be. He seemed so different.

We were asked to remain on the ground for nearly four hours. They took some young men to the military camp and others were ordered to go to the Nadeswara College. We were instructed to stay inside the college premises until further notice. We remained there for over two and a half months. The college was overcrowded. All young girls were ordered to wear saree and have a *pottu* on the forehead. They said that Indian soldiers were attacking only young girls and those wearing sarees were considered married and spared. I began having nightmares and became mentally ill.

As days passed my illness became acute and I began to lose control of my senses. I remember being taken to the Tellipalai Hospital

for treatment. I was given medication and the doctor prescribed some medicines to be taken for a year. But, my mother could not get the prescribed medicine. There were no medicines in the area and travel to Jaffna town was dangerous. My mother risked her life and travelled to Nallur to obtain the medicine. But, it was not adequate. Due to lack of medicine and treatment, my health began to deteriorate and I broke down mentally. I did not know what happened thereafter. When I recovered, I found myself in a private hospital in Tamil Nadu in India. I was told that my mother managed to send me across with the help of a relative to India in a boat of refugees.

I remained in India for six months. I was cared for by a friend of my father who was a businessman. I could not remain in India for long without seeing my mother. As I had no passport, I had to return to Jaffna again by boat.

When I returned home, the situation was different. The Indian army was in full control of the peninsula and the Tigers had gone underground. Though there were people living in refugee camps, those whose houses were still standing returned. My mother also had come back. My village looked different. There were new faces. I enquired about my old friends. My mother did not answer, but said that I should put everything behind and begin a new life. When my friends heard that I had returned they came to visit me. My friend who had been raped and whom I saw being carried away unconscious by her fiance also visited me. She told me what had happened to all our friends. I had lost some of my good friends forever and others had fled. She also told me what had happened to her.

Our sufferings were not over. This time, the EPRLF was after the LTTE. They moved with the

Indian troops and committed atrocities. People were taken away as supporters of the LTTE and shot dead. Tamil teacher Mr. Karunananthasivam was shot alleging he was an LTTE supporter on 4 December 1988. His wife who was the leader of Tamil Mahalir Peravai was hunted by the IPKF and EPRLF. She managed to escape and went into hiding. I was told that some of my friends and colleagues who were active in the Tamil Mahalir Peravai had fled from the North. But, few were killed. House to house search for LTTE members and supporters became the order of the day. Suspects were executed summarily. There were daily reports of arrest, killing, rape and torture.

After my return from India, I did not venture out of my home. But, I knew what was going on. The continuous reports of killing, torture and rape caused enormous strain on me. Once

again I became seriously ill. The sight of a soldier or the sound of gun fire was adequate to make me hysteric. My friends and relatives advised my mother to send me away. They said that my presence may even endanger her life. But, my mother did not want to send me away. I also did not want to leave her. We both agreed that if we had to die we would die together. But, this commitment from my mother did not last long. My mother was persuaded to send me away. With the help of a wealthy businessman, my mother arranged for my flight to the UK. It was a sad time in my life as I had to say goodbye to my mother, knowing that she was risking her life. I was uncertain whether I would see her again.

I applied for asylum in the UK

when I arrived in September 1990. The authorities have informed me that I would not be considered as a refugee under the UN Convention, but they have granted me Exceptional Leave to Remain. I do not know the difference clearly. I believe I can stay till the war is over.

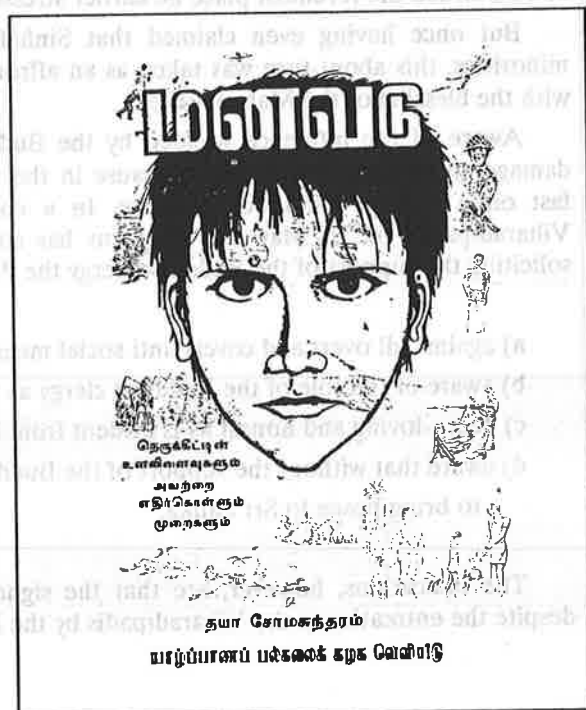
The war still continues in Sri Lanka. This causes me pain and frequently I fall ill and sometimes I end up in hospital. I wish the war would end so that I can return. My homeland is the place where I belong.

MANA VADU (Psychological Trauma)

The University of Jaffna has recently published a monograph titled "Mana Vadu" written by Dr Dhaya Somasundaram in Tamil. The publication is dedicated to affected people living under the present day war conditions.

The book deals with Post traumatic Stress Disorders and their Management.

The price of the book is £7.00 available at the Tamil Information Centre.



Highpriests Demand Primacy to Buddhism

Buddhist highpriests, the Mahanayakes launched a signature campaign on 24 May at the Dalada Maligawa, the temple where the venerated Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha is enshrined. The Diyawadene Nilames, who are the layman keepers of the temple followed the high priests in signing the memorandum to the government calling for:-

- giving priority to Buddhism as provided for in the Constitution.
- preventing comparing the Buddhist doctrines with those of other religions.
- fostering of the Buddhist Sasana (clergy) by the government.
- preventing Buddhists being converted and curtailment of the activities of the Christian missionaries.
- preventing the construction of places of worship for other religions in exclusive Buddhist villages.
- abandoning the "deceptive concept" of religious tolerance.

A million signatures are to be collected according to the organisers of the campaign.

The demands made in the memorandum in this year of presidential elections are quite significant. Hegemonistic Buddhist elements want to assert themselves in the political framework and the President and government cannot ignore the strident call now being made. What is being demanded of the government already exists. But what prompted this move by the powerful Buddhist lobby is the vacillation President Wijetunge displayed after the defeat of his UNP party in the Southern Provincial Council elections on 24 March.

Having stirred majoritarian sentiments of the Sinhalese Buddhists through his often repeated assertion that there exists no ethnic problem but only a terrorist one, President Wijetunge stoked the chauvinist flames. The Buddhist clergy and the lay officers together with the champion of Buddhist hegemony Gamini Jayasuriya, a former cabinet minister applauded and built upon the President's assertion. The minority communities alienated by the President's strident Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism voted against the UNP in the local government and provincial council elections in March. Electoral defeats and the upheavals that followed within the UNP made President Wijetunge to change his tune. He began repeatedly speaking of all communities being equal citizens and discarded the foremost place he earlier stressed for the Sinhalese Buddhists.

But once having even claimed that Sinhalese Buddhists have nowhere to go in the world unlike the minorities, this about-turn was taken as an affront by the Buddhist clergy and has resulted in the memorandum with the blessing of the Mahanayakes.

Aware of the influence wielded by the Buddhist clergy with no power base of his own and realising the damage an antagonistic clergy can cause in the forthcoming presidential elections, President Wijetunge moved fast on a damage limitation exercise. In a communication to all Chief Priests of clerical residences, the Viharadipadis, on 25 May the President has sought their co-operation in bringing peace to the country. In soliciting the support of the Buddhist clergy the President has pointed out that he is:-

- against all overt and covert anti-social measures for attaining power or for continuing in power.
- aware of the role of the Buddhist clergy as the guiding force behind the public at large.
- peace-loving and honest as is evident from his 40-year public life.
- aware that without the support of the Buddhist clergy it would be impossible for the country's leader to bring peace to Sri Lanka.

The indications, however, are that the signature campaign over the memorandum is gaining momentum despite the entreaties to the Viharadipadis by the President.

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