

TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

INCIDENTS FROM 21ST JULY, 1983.

1.0 EARLIER REPORTS

- 1.1. We have been reporting on the pogroms against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka by "Sinhalese people" and the Security Forces of the Sri Lanka Government. Over thousand Tamils were killed. 53 Political Prisoners were massacred and thousands of Tamil homes and business places were destroyed and burnt.
- 1.2 There has been a continuous invasion of Sinhalese people into Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts which has not been checked by the Government. The "invaders" have started cultivation in these areas on a permanent basis. This aggressive "invasion" rendered the Tamils and Muslims of these areas refugees and made them abandon their houses and paddy fields which had been theirs for generation.
- 1.3 The Government is making arrangements forcibly to evict the settlers in Vavuniya District who are victims of the 1977 and 1981 pogroms. They consist mainly of plantation Tamils settled by the Gandhian Society.

2.0 BATTICALOA

- 2.1 By the mass "invasion" of the Sinhalese people about 900 families were deprived of their houses and properties at "Vadamunai", "Madavanai" and "Kallichchi". Of these 200 are Muslims. The fact that the latter have been victimised despite their belonging to a religious persuasion different from that of the Tamils, proves that the reason for their victimisation is that they are Tamil speaking.

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- 2.2 In Kalkudah (Batticaloa District) some Army personnel fired indiscriminately and seriously injured 3 civilians. K.W. Dovanayagam the Minister of Home Affairs and Member of Parliament of that area has protested against this army atrocity. The people of this area are frightened to move about after 6 p.m.
- 2.3 An elected Member of Batticaloa Municipality Mr. Thayanithy has been taken into custody by the police for questioning. The reasons are not known yet.
- 2.4 It is reported that the Government is taking steps to annex the "newly invaded" Vadamunai in the Batticaloa District with the Polonnaruwa District thereby reducing the area of the Tamil homeland within a period of few weeks. This systematic encroachment of the Tamil homeland has been carried out by the successive government in power since independence. This move has resulted in carving out 2 electorates in the Eastern Province which enabled 2 Sinhalese Members of Parliament being elected increasing thereby the disproportionate parliamentary representation for the Sinhalese and conversely decreasing it for the Tamils.
- 2.5 One of the major factors in the insecurity of Tamils is the direct or indirect state-aided colonisation of Sinhalese in the traditional Tamil homelands. At the time of independence the percentage of Sinhalese population in the Eastern Province was 2%. Whereas after the efforts of the government particularly the Government of the United National Party which is the presently ruling party, the percentage of Sinhalese is now over 23%. Nearly 1500 sq.miles out of 2262 sq.miles in the Eastern Province is now under the control of the Sinhalese which enabled them to elect their Members of Parliament.
- 2.6 These activities by the Government or the agents of the government will result in making the Tamils a minority in the Eastern Province within the next few years. It is most unfortunate that the aid given by foreign countries for humanitarian and development purposes is being misused by the government to deprive the Tamils of their traditional homelands and destroying their very identity.

2.7 It is also reported that Poonanai in the Batticaloa District about a thousand Sinhalese families are being settled since a week hence. A similar settlement of the Sinhalese was carried out in 1972 by a Buddhist priest.

3.0 REFUGEES

3.1 There are at present over 20 Refugee Camps in the Northern Province and several others in the Eastern Province. There are some refugees in camps in Colombo as well.

3.2 Threatening letters signed by "Young Lions" claiming Sri Lanka to be exclusively theirs have been sent to Tamil Refugee Camps warning the refugees to leave the country.

3.3 It is reported that refugees in Colombo are denied their mid-day meal, but this has yet to be confirmed.

3.4 Progress in rehabilitation programmes has been hampered by the Government harassment of the already existing refugee settlements. It is feared that the cost of rehabilitation is certain to increase since private lands have to be bought to settle the refugees.

3.5 Those still remaining in refugee camps are pressurised by the government to return to their native places. However, the refugees are resisting the pressure.

3.6 The recently set up Joint Services Special Operation Command is to undertake the task of forcibly flushing out Tamil Settlers from Vavuniya. It is feared that they will be replaced by Sinhalese.

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3.7 A new movement called "The Ruhuna Sinhala Sanvidhana" has been formed by the Sinhalese to occupy lands traditionally Tamil.

4.0 GENERAL

4.1 It is reported that the "All-Party" Conference recently called by the President has proved abortive since only one of the Opposition parties was willing to attend it. The S.L.F.P. refused to participate since no proper agenda had been submitted to the party prior to the conference; the C.P., L.S.S.P. refused on the ground that the Tamil United Liberation Front which is the leading Opposition party and the major party to represent the Tamils had not been invited to the Conference.

4.2 It will be recalled that the United National Party which is the currently ruling party had pledged in its Manifesto of the 1977 General Elections to convene an All-Party Conference but has up to now failed to honour the pledge.

4.3 The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution requires that all Members of Parliament should take Oaths disavowing "Separatism". But since in virtue of the fact that the Tamil United Liberation Front was given a Mandate in the 1977 General Parliamentary Election to create an Independent Tamil State comprising the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the Tamil United Liberation Front Members of Parliament cannot take the Oath, the Tamils are left without their lawful representation in Parliament.



INFORMATION OFFICER.