

S.C.O.T.

Standing Committee

of

Tamil Speaking People

U.K. Registered Charity No. 274499

Newsletter

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Grave Crisis in Tamil Homelands

The Tamils of Sri Lanka (particularly those living in the North and East) are today facing the gravest crisis in their modern history. Since early June 1990 the civilian population in the north-eastern areas of the island has been subjected to wave after wave of unprecedented violence. During the first six weeks alone nearly 1600 civilians are said to have died; this does not include army and militant cadres killed in action. The war has wrought havoc amongst the innocent populace, and brought untold suffering, personal violation, and horrific injury to hundreds. The worst affected areas appear to be the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu in the North, and Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Amparai in the East. An estimated 900,000 people have been displaced. There has been a mass exodus of the old and the infirm, the sick and the wounded, and women and children — across land and sea. Over 100,000 are said to have braved the seas again and fled to south India.

The main cause for this inexorable descent into hell is the continuing 'war' pervading the North and the East. The continuing 'military operations' by the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and the various skirmishes between ethnic factions have exposed thousands upon thousands of hapless, innocent civilians to death, their properties to destruction, and their lives to an unacceptable,

precarious form of existence. The unprecedented ferocity of the campaigns launched by the Sri Lankan army, ostensibly against the L.T.T.E., has been borne almost in entirety by civilians living in the North-East.

Towns and villages are deserted. Several hundreds of homes and shops have been set ablaze and destroyed, and the inhabitants driven out by government forces. This is particularly so in the district of Trincomalee, where the government claims its forces had regained control. A virtual economic blockade has been imposed on the north and east, brutally so in the district of Jaffna, Bringing the people to the point of starvation.

Jaffna peninsula in particular, and certain areas in the East continue to remain completely cut-off from the rest of the island, without transport, telecommunication, and postal-service.

Medical services have come to a grinding halt in many areas, and are severely disrupted in others. Even emergency services are unavailable in certain sectors. Overcrowding and lack of sanitation in makeshift refugee camps have brought in its wake infectious diseases, made worse by malnutrition.

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It is unfortunate that the 'war' that is raging today in the North East of the island is taking place in the face of an abysmal lack of concern by the international community. It is time world governments, governmental and non-governmental organisations alerted themselves to the enormity of the tragedy that is being enacted and bring pressure upon the

parties concerned, and achieve immediate cessation of hostilities between the Sri Lankan government and the L.T.T.E. The world should call for the combatants to strictly adhere to international humanitarian and human rights covenants, and also provide urgently needed aid to the refugees, and all adversely affected people.

S.C.O.T.: Rehabilitation Update – 1989/90.

Catholic Relief Organisation for North-East (CRONE).

In view of the prevailing desperate situation following the outbreak of 'war' and the consequent acute shortage of food, medical supplies etc the good offices of the Human Development Centre in Colombo was used to transfer a sum of £7000 to CRONE (headed by Bishop Kingsley Swampillai) to obtain food and medical relief in the following proportions:

Jaffna, Vavuniya & Mullaitivu districts	: £3000
Batticaloa & Trincomalee districts	: £2000
Mannar district	: £2000

Oxfam.

A sum of £1800 was made available to Oxfam towards stipends for a year for nine Rural Health Assistants to work mainly in the Kilinochchi area. A further £2000 has been provided, since the out-break of the current conflict, to assist Oxfam's efforts relating to relief work.

Federation of Young Men's Hindu Association (Trincomalee).

Following a request from the Federation for assistance in providing relief in the area soon after hostilities began an emergency donation of £1000 was made.

Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.

Following an appeal from the Society in September 1989, a sum of £300 was given to the Society.

Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OFFEr) (Madras).

In continuing to assist this organisation's work a sum of £500 was made available.

Vadamarachchi Steno Club.

A sum of £1000 was contributed towards the purchase of two Tamil typewriters, two English typewriters, books and other materials, and for the training of under-privileged youth in typing skills as a means to future gainful employment.

Rotary Club Jaffna.

A contribution of £500 was made towards the Club's 'Senior Citizens' welfare programme.

Research Organisation of Tamil Eelam.

A contribution of £250 was made in connection with a Seminar on Development of Tamil Areas, held in London, in March 1990.

'Poorani' Women's Centre, Uduvil (Jaffna).

A sum of £600 was contributed to the Centre, towards the cost of retaining the services of the 'Coordinator' who had resigned from her job in the U.K. to work in the Centre.

Sivalechuman Trust (Madras).

A contribution of £300 was allocated to the trust towards the cost of employing teachers at schools for children of refugees.

District Baseline Survey (Batticaloa)

A sum of £750 was made available in connection with a research project on demographic changes in eastern Sri Lanka.

Postscript.

The peace and normalcy that the Tamil people seek seem to be far away judging from the

Postscript (continued)

developments we have witnessed in the recent past. The brutalities, the violence and the violations to which they are being subjected to have reached unprecedented levels. The trials and

tribulations of the people would appear to have reached an unending phase. We in SCOT can only attempt to provide some relief within our very limited means. The ultimate solutions for peace lie elsewhere, over which we have little or no control.

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The following members constituted the Human Rights Council:

Dr. S. Arunachalam : President
Mrs. S.Sivanithy : General Secretary
Miss K. Pathmaseni : Treasurer

P.Rajanayagam
N.S. Kandiah
C.Kathiresan
A.Sriharan
A. Pakiyathan
T.Visvendran
A.J. Bendict
K.Gunaratnam
Dr. S. Navaratnam

Mr. Rajanayagam has attended the sessions of the United Nations Commission and Sub Commission on Human Rights in February and August of this year. He also attended two seminars organised by the International Peace Research Institute in Norway one early this year and the other in June this year, a Congress organised by the World Solidarity Forum on Sri Lanka in Bangkok, and a Seminar on the 'Obstacles for Peace in Sri Lanka' in Uppsala in Sweden organised by the Swedish Section of the Minority Rights Group from Octo-

ber 7 to 10.

The Human Rights Council has addressed questions relating to abuse of human rights in the course of the year including the assassination of Dr. Rajini Thiranagama, forced recruitment of Tamil youth into the TNA, the murder of Mr. Sam Thambimuthu and lately the indiscriminate violence and bombing operations carried out in the north and the abuses of human rights associated with the outbreak of war since June 11.

STANDING COMMITTEE OF TAMIL SPEAKING PEOPLE (S.C.O.T.)

PRESIDENT

Dr.S.Arunachalam
57 Sudbury Ct. Drive
Harrow, M'sex HA1 3ST
01 904 6472

SECRETARY

Mrs.S.Sivanithy
181 Torbay Road,
Harrow, M'sex HA2 9QF
01 422 8984

TREASURER

Ms.K.Pathmaseni
107 Coleman Ct.
Kimber Rd. SW18
01 870 9897

PROJECT OFFICER

P.Rajanayagam
13 Arbuthnot Lane
Bexley, Kent, DA5 1EH
(0322) 50191

AN URGENT APPEAL FOR DONATIONS & SUPPORT

The Tamil people are today facing the gravest crisis in their history because of the continuing war and violence. Never before have the civilian population in the north-east of Sri Lanka been subjected to the scale of violence, violations, death, destruction and displacement that have occurred since June 11 this year. Every succeeding day has brought more havoc and devastation.

An estimated 800,000 people have been uprooted from their homes and even from their areas of normal residence and have become refugees. Over 100,000 people have fled to south India. Having been forced out of their homes and their areas, hundreds of thousands of people are suffering without food, medical and other essential facilities. A virtual economic blockade has been imposed in the north-east, particularly in the Jaffna peninsula, which has brought the people to the point of starvation.

The General Council of SCOT is of the view that we as an organisation which has traditionally been involved in providing relief for the affected and displaced people of North-East Sri Lanka should make our contribution in this hour of urgent need. From our limited resources, we have already provided relief assistance amounting to a sum of Ten Thousand pounds over and above our normal disbursements. We are aware that this is just a drop in the ocean when one takes account of the enormity of the problem.

To enable SCOT to provide more assistance to relieve the immediate hardships and suffering of our people, the General Council appeals to all concerned well wishers to make a reasonable financial contribution. Please respond positively as a matter of urgency by sending your donations in favour of SCOT to:

The Treasurer, SCOT, 107 Coleman Court, Kimber Road, London SW18, U.K.

Mrs. S. Sivanithy
GENERAL SECRETARY

Dr. S. Arunachalam
PRESIDENT

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Treasurer, S.C.O.T., 107 Coleman Court, Kimber Road, London SW18 4PB

I wish to join SCOT and enclose herewith a cheque for £...../standing order to my bank (delete that which is not applicable).

Name:
(in capitals)

Address:
(in capitals)

Tel

Note: (i) All cheques should be drawn in favour of 'SCOT' and crossed.
(ii) Members should notify any change of address to the General Secretary

STANDING ORDER

To: Bank plc, Code No

Address:

Please pay on (date of first payment) to National Westminster Bank plc, 143 High Street, Bromley,

Code No: 60-04-02, the sum of £ (in words)

for credit to account of S.C.O.T. Account No: 42433126 and make similar payments

(frequency) on the up to and including*

..... or until cancelled. Charging such

payments to my/our account No:

*If this order is to terminate on a specific date insert date of last payment but if not applicable, please delete.

Signature: Date

DEED OF COVENANT

I,
(Full name in capitals) (Mr, Mrs, Miss)

of

.....
(Full address in capitals)

hereby covenant with the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People of 107 Coleman Court, Kimber Road, London SW18 4PB that for a period of four years from the date hereof and every year thereafter unless and until countermanded by me or during my lifetime, whichever period shall be shorter, I will pay annually to the Trustees of the Standing Committee of Tamil Speaking People

(SCOT) on (insert day and month) such a sum as will after deduction of income tax at the standard rate for the time being in force amount to: £ : (amount in words) Given

under my hand and seal this day of

..... 198

.....
(SIGNATURE)

In the presence of

.....
(Signature of witness)

.....
(Postal address of witness)

.....
(Occupation of witness)

* The date should be later than the date of signature