



SPURNZ

## Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (SPUR) New Zealand

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# Rights of all communities are violated by LTTE NZ MPs are urged not to be misled by false propaganda

The *Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (SPUR) - New Zealand* has noted a recent NZ Press report regarding a protest staged by about 30 members of the Wellington Tamil Society near the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington.

The protestors called for action by the New Zealand Government on alleged human rights abuses in Sri Lanka requesting support for sending independent observers.

The points raised by the protesters as reported in the press included the following.

1. For the past 24 years, Tamil minority group in Sri Lanka have been waging a guerrilla war for a separate Tamil State in the country's North and East.
2. Tamils make up about 20 per cent of Sri Lanka's population, with the majority Sinhalese dominating the country's government
3. The Government has blocked a key road and food and vital supplies to the predominantly Tamil area has been affected. Also, there are restrictions on movement under the guise of security.
4. Last month, police tried to arbitrarily remove all Tamils without a job or "valid reason" from the country's capital Colombo. The order has eventually been rescinded after the courts ruled it illegal.
5. The protesters want unbiased people to go in, so they can see what is happening in Sri Lanka. The NZ Government should push for this through the United Nations or the Commonwealth.
6. NZ should also push Sri Lanka to allow Tamil to vote on whether they should have a greater degree of autonomy or independence.

The *Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (SPUR) - New Zealand*, while respecting the protestors' rights to express their views, would like to make some pertinent observations on the points raised by the protestors to help the law makers and the New Zealand public to form a balanced view.

We appreciate the concerns that have been raised by the Wellington Tamil Society on the current situation in Sri Lanka. However, we believe **that the current events should be considered within the context of past developments**. Therefore, we would like to elaborate on the points raised with some background information so that the readers could arrive at their own conclusions.

### 1. Twenty four years of guerrilla war by the Tamil Minority Group for a separate Tamil State in Sri Lanka

It is true that a guerrilla war was launched, not by the Tamil Minority Group but by LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), 24

years ago, in 1983. Originally there were some other Tamil Organizations who were in support. The Sri Lankan Government recognized the need for a negotiated settlement and invited *all Tamil Parties* for talks. In July 1985, a session of talks was carried out in Thimpu, Bhutan between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and a Tamil delegation that consisted of representatives of Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberating Front (EPRLF), Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS), People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and LTTE.

The talks failed because the Tamil delegation insisted that the GOSL should recognize the existence of a separate "Homeland of Tamils in Sri Lanka". However, differences between the Tamil parties themselves emerged after the above talks and **LTTE started a diabolical programme of annihilation of the leaders of all other Tamil groups**. Following Tamil leaders were brutally assassinated:

- TULF MPs, A. Thiyagarajah and K. Alalasundaram - 1985
- TELO Leader, Sri Sabaratnam - 1986
- TULF Leader, A. Amirthalingam - 1989
- EPRLF Leader, K. Padmanabha - 1990

By eliminating the leaders and disrupting the political activities of all other Tamil political groups LTTE claimed that they were the sole representatives of Tamils. - *A List of Tamil political Leaders (some of them internationally acclaimed Tamil intellectuals) brutally killed by LTTE is give at the end of this Bulletin.*

After 24 years bloodshed, mayhem and the disruption of civilian life in Tamil areas, it appears that most of the Tamil political parties and groups in Sri Lanka have realized the futility of fighting for a separate state and the need to accept a democratic path. The acts of terrorism of LTTE have compelled the USA, the UK, India, Canada, the EU and Malaysia to declare it as a prohibited Terrorist Group while Australia has designated LTTE as a terrorist organization in their country. Recently, the LTTE itself was split in to two and a new faction called "Karuna Group" has emerged and started to extend its authority in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. However, they are yet to embrace the democratic process.



**Mr. V. Anandasangaree** is the current President of the Tamil United Liberation Front. He is the winner of the 2006 UNESCO's Madanjeet Singh Prize for the promotion of tolerance and non-violence. The contents of his statement are nothing new to the ordinary Sri Lankans.

However, it may be an eye opener for the sympathizers of LTTE living around the world who are trying to convince the legislators of the foreign governments to take actions against the democratically elected government of Sri Lanka.

The current leader of the TULF, the oldest and once strongest Tamil political party, not allowed by LTTE to return to his home in the North, in an Open Letter addressed to LTTE Leader Prabhakaran on 22 June 2007, has stated that if not for the violence unleashed by the LTTE, the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka would have been sorted out peacefully. (Please see excerpts from this letter in the Box 1 and Box 2).

## 2. Majority Sinhalese dominate the Country's Government

The current Sri Lankan Government is a coalition and has garnered the support of 118 MPs out of 225 that includes the minority Tamil and Muslim parties, with nearly 20 Members. If not for this support the government will not have a majority to rule. Both political parties that represent the Indian Tamil Community in the tea plantation sector (Ceylon Workers Congress and the Up Country Peoples' Party) are coalition partners holding several cabinet portfolios. The two main Muslim Parties, SLMC and NUA are also in the coalition with the government holding key cabinet portfolios.

Therefore, it is nothing but a devious un-truth to state that the majority Sinhalese dominate the country's government.

### **BOX 1 (Emphasis by us)**

Mr. Anandasangaree has told in his letter to LTTE Leader Prabhakaran,

..... "The newly formed alliance, the T.U.L.F., would have sorted out the Tamil problem peacefully but it is you who aggravated the situation by taking drastic steps, never heard of in the history of Jaffna till that time.

**Things took a violent turn with your introduction of gun culture by gunning down the Late Hon. Mr. Alfred Duraiappah, Ex-Mayor of Jaffna, who became the M.P. for Jaffna by defeating the nominees of the two major political parties the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and the Federal Party led by two prominent Queen's Councils the Late Hon. G.G.Ponnambalam and the Late Hon. S.J.V.Chelvanayagam.**

The only known crime Mr.Duraiappah committed was defeating the nominees of both the Leading Tamil parties in Jaffna. I wonder whether even you knew as to why you gunned down Mr. Alfred Duraiappah, a popular political figure, while he was praying before Lord Vishnu at the Ponnalai Varadarajah Perumal Temple, another name for Lord Vishnu. People believe that the high toll of death and loss of properties among the Tamils were inflicted as retribution for assassinating Mr. Alfred Duraiappah right in front of the deity Lord Vishnu and for driving away the Muslims from the North, depriving them of all their possession and preventing them from taking even the ear-studs of Muslim kids.

**You should be held responsible for the deaths of over 70 thousand people of all faiths, of all age groups, of both sexes of all communities in Sri Lanka not only at the battle front but also in land and claymore mine attacks, hand grenade and bomb attacks and also massacres of innocent ones in buses, trains, etc.** The Kepitigolawa and Aranthalawa massacres, attempt to sink the ship carrying 700 service personnel in mid-sea, the killing of the hundred odd Navy personnel going on leave and returning for duty and many other massacres in the Mosques etc. cannot be justified.

What harm did the 31 innocent Buddhist Priests you slaughtered at Aranthalawa did to you? **Can you cite one single incident of this nature in which a Sinhalese civilian got involved. Further more please take it for granted that up to now not one Tamil life was taken by any one of those so called Buddhist Sinhala Chauvinist although some talk irresponsibly.**

I am not unaware of the "Kumuduni" Ferry massacre, the Velanai, Suruvil and Mankumban incidents, and the mass burial of Tamils at Navatkuli by the forces. **The Sinhalese civilians had never been implicated in any one incident of this nature but as far as the civilian killings are concerned your hands are bloody.** The curse of the victims will not spare anyone responsible for these heinous crimes.

That is why I say, "Let us now forget everything and turn over to a new leaf and earn the admiration of all Sri Lankans and the International Community, all of whom are yearning for peace".

- TULF Leader V. Anandasangaree in a letter to LTTE leader on 22 June 2007

## 3. The Government has blocked a key road and the flow of food and vital supplies

The allegation that the Government is blocking the roads and other modes of transport to the Northern Province of Sri Lanka a distortion of truth. The transport infrastructure in the North have been targeted by LTTE for some time and the Government who holds the responsibility of providing essential food items to the civilian population has been rendering the service against severe logistical difficulties. LTTE has resorted to destroying railway locomotives, rolling stock and even stripped several hundred kilometers of rail tracks for fortification in the Northern Province. The GOSL has repeatedly replaced the rail tracks and other equipment that have been destroyed by the LTTE and restored the rail and road transport.

The TULF Leader Mr Anandasangaree in his letter to LTTE leader Prabhakaran has set out in detail how the LTTE has destroyed the road, rail and air traffic network that links Jaffna and the out side world. (Please see Box 2) During the ceasefire which commenced in 2002, LTTE started collecting "taxes" from the people who were using the main road to Jaffna, contrary to the agreements. If the Wellington Tamil Society wants to blame the real culprits who have blocked the key road and the flow of food and supplies, they should turn to the LTTE, not the GOSL.

## 4. Last month police tried to arbitrarily remove all Tamils from Colombo

We note with regret the use of the words "removing all Tamils from Colombo" as a blatant attempt to hype the charges of discrimination and wish to give the background. Colombo has a very large population of Tamils who own properties and lead a life more secure than their cousins in the north. The immediate reason for this frivolous charge is an incident that took place recently in Colombo when some over zealous members of the Police in charge of the responsibilities of providing safety of the capital city conducted a security sweep in some Lodges ( similar to Back Packer motels) where people in transit seek accommodation. About 360 Tamil people staying in these places that could not provide valid reasons for their stay were provided with transport to return to their homes in the north. The government as well as the courts found that this was a harsh act and the affected people have been brought back

The security forces in Colombo are under severe pressure to detect the high explosives that are being brought in to the city of Colombo by LTTE for mass destruction of civilians. During the last few months several attempts to transport high explosives from the North and East have been thwarted by them.

Since the primary responsibility of providing protection to the citizens in a country rest with the government, the security forces have to take extraordinary precautions to avoid disastrous attacks on the civilian population. **It is important to note that during the past two weeks the security forces have detected more than two tonnes of high explosives, hidden in two Colombo bound trucks. Experts say that each bomb is strong enough to destroy all the buildings and people within a 150 meter radius. We request**

## **BOX 2 (Emphasis by us)**

### **Mr. Anandasangaree in his letter to LTTE Leader Prabhakaran on 22 June 2007 states thus:**

"The economy of Jaffna was completely destabilized by you and your cadre. From my house at Kilinochchi on the A.9 road I used to count 60 to 70 lorries speeding to Colombo with their loads of fish, vegetables, grapes, plantains etc every night and a similar number to Jaffna with varieties of goods from Colombo. Your keeping the A.9 closed to traffic completely destabilized the economy of Jaffna. Sea foods and vegetables did not fetch good price. The people of Jaffna were virtually starving. The C.F.A. brought some relief for them which too has now stopped. Your illegal taxes increased the cost of production and imported goods were much cheaper in the Market than those produced in Jaffna. They hardly get any income these days, because they were compelled to stop production.

#### **... about Transport**

Everyday we had five trains to Colombo and five from Colombo of which three were express trains and one was the mail train. On Saturdays we had an extra air conditioned coach. 'Sleeperettes' and berths were available in every train and journey to Jaffna took only seven to eight hours. Today there are no trains to Jaffna and journey to Jaffna takes more than one full day by ship. Your cadre had completely removed the rails, sleepers and metal on the main line to a distance of 160 Km and about fifty km on the Thalaimanar track. The Indian Government was generous enough to re-lay these lines by air-lifting the materials required but today once again nothing is left on the tracks. Letters that reached their destination within 24 hours are today rotting in the mail room in Vavuniya for months. This is what you have done to the people. Everything was removed from the rail tracks for the construction of bunkers for your cadre.

#### **....about Suspension of ferry service to India.**

You must take full responsibility for the suspension of the ferry service to India which I am sure will never be re-installed again. A trip to Chennai which cost less than 300 rupees then, now cost you 20,000 rupees. Thanks to your cadre.

#### **...about domestic and international air services.**

We had regular flights from Colombo to Palaly and from Palaly to Trichirapally in India. By this time Palaly would have become an International Airport. Thanks to your cadre for disrupting this service which I am sure we will never enjoy again.

all fair minded New Zealanders to think about the carnage that would have occurred if these two bombs were exploded in the City of Colombo. Above detections would not guarantee the safety of Colombo. It is only the terrorists know the amount of explosives that are ready to be exploded. The duty of the Security Forces is to continue with their investigations and eliminate the loss of life and property.

We share the belief that even under such extremely volatile and dangerous situations the arbitrarily removal of people could not and *should not* be justified. The Prime



A major disaster was averted in Trincomalee district, Sri Lanka, following the interception of a lorry with 1,000 kgs of explosives intended for a "high profile suicide mission by the LTTE." The defence Ministry said that acting on a tip off from civilian sources, personnel of the Navy seized the vehicle from a fishing village and it was laden with c-4 high explosives weighing over 1000 kg. - **The Hindu 01 July 2007**

Minister of Sri Lanka has personally apologized for the inconvenience caused. The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka immediately met and ruled that order illegal. All 360 people, who were affected, were offered return transport to Colombo and have been brought back within a day. The political parties, civic organizations and community leaders have expressed their opposition to such moves and democratic processes were seen in action in Colombo over this incident.

Although this is the case that is found in the South, what is happening in the North is quite a contrast. The Sinhalese and Muslims who

lived in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka were purged by LTTE in one mad act of ethnic cleansing. No Sinhalese person is allowed to live in what is called LTTE controlled areas. In October 1990, almost all Muslims (around 80 – 85,000 men, women and children) who lived in the Northern Province were evicted by the LTTE. They were given only 48 hours to leave.

**No one was allowed to go back to their homes yet. It was unfortunate that no organization in the Northern Province, local or international came to help them. Even after 17 long years, most of these people are still living with basic facilities in refugee camps in the government controlled areas.**

The sad fact is that no body except Tamils is allowed to live in the Northern Province by the LTTE. However, the figures released by the Department of Statistics recently show that the Tamils are the largest ethnic group living in the Colombo Divisional Secretary's Division. ( Sri Lankan Tamil – 117,510 ; Indian Tamil – 7,946 ; Sinhalese – 117090 ; Sri Lankan Moor – 120,105 )

### **5. NZ Government should push for unbiased people to go in to Sri Lanka to see what is happening.**

Any right thinking person would welcome the proposition of sending unbiased people to observe conflicts and help to reach solutions.

" It is indeed very saddening that around 130,000 northern muslims driven out forcibly by the LTTE from their houses 17 years ago continue to languish in refugee camps. ...The question is where were these pressure groups when it came to the plight of Northern Muslims, who were shamelessly robbed of their belongings and driven out like livestock to an unknown wilderness." - **Latheef Farook**  
[www.muslimguardian.com](http://www.muslimguardian.com)



However, a conflict has to be viewed as a whole if enduring solutions are to be made. A "peace-meal" approach to long drawn conflicts would not help any one.

As we have shown in this bulletin, unless the core issues to the conflict are considered as a whole, the observations and statements on isolated incidents may only help interested parties to interpret it to their advantage while daily threats of terrorist machinations continue.

We have seen the work of "unbiased" Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), headed by Norway for the last 5 years. A ceasefire was declared in 2002 and the incidents have been monitored by SLMM. Did it help to reach a solution? The LTTE did not even bother to look at the findings of the SLMM. Millions and millions of funds have been wasted while the LTTE has reportedly used the ceasefire period to expand their armory and go on unperturbed in their recruitment and to training of child soldiers. **Does the Wellington Tamil Society advocate the NZ Government to spend a couple of millions of NZ tax payers' money for another such sterile exercise?**

**6. NZ should also push Sri Lanka to allow Tamil to vote on whether they should have a greater degree of autonomy or independence**

Being aware of how “democratic right to vote” has been abused by the LTTE which controls an area in the North and the East like a Fascist Dictatorship, we find it difficult to understand what Wellington Tamil Society means by this representation. Allowing only the Tamil community to vote on whether they should have a greater degree of autonomy or independence will not solve any problem. **The crux of the matter lies in protecting the right of all Sri Lankans to live anywhere in Sri Lanka.**

As we have commented earlier, Sinhalese and Muslims in the North have already been forcibly removed using terrorist tactics. LTTE have terrorized the East and have tried to purge the Sinhalese and Muslims from East too. Even in the face several ruthless massacres committed by LTTE in the eastern province killing hundreds of innocent civilians, both Sinhalese and Muslims, the people have resisted strongly and LTTE has so far failed in their attempts.

The only practicable solution available for all Sri Lankans is the acceptance of all parties to allow any body to live anywhere in Sri Lanka. Denial of that is a violation of a basic human right of Sri Lanka citizens. That right is embedded in the constitution of Sri Lanka. That is the right which was rightfully highlighted by the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka in the recent ruling. **Unilateral vote for autonomy and independence for Tamils means a vote of denial for other communities to live in a large part of Sri Lanka.** (Land area of Northern and Eastern provinces amounts to one third of Sri Lanka)

For Latest News on the Conflict in Sri Lanka  
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**We update the news daily.**

**Prominent Tamil Leaders killed by the LTTE**

A T Duraiyappah	SLFP Mayor for Jaffna
A Thiagarajah	Ex ACTC MP for Vadokkottai who later joined the UNP
K T Pulendran	UNP Organiser for Vavunia
A J Rajasooriar	UNP Organiser in Jaffna
Mala Ramachandran	UNP MMC for Batticaloa
Gnanachandiram	Ex District Judge, Point Pedro and Government Agent
C E Anandarajah	Principal, St Jones College, Jaffna
B K Thambipillai	President, Citizens Cimmittee
V Dharmalingam	TULF MP and Father of D Siddharthan, Leader of PLOTE
K. Alalasunderam	Ex TULF MP for Kopay
P Kirubakaran	Primary Court Judge
Kathiramalai	Sarvodaya Leader
Vignarajah	Assistant Government Agent, Samanturai
Anthonimuttu	Government Agent, Batticaloa
S S Jeganathan	Assistant Government Agent, Batticaloa
Sinnadurai	Assistant Government Agent, Trincomalee
M E Kandasamy	Principal, Palugamam Maha Vidyalaya
S Sithamparanathan	Principal, Vigneswara Vidyalaya, Trincomalee
S Wijayanadan	District Secretary, Ceylon Communist Party
Velmurugu Master	TULF Organiser and Citizens Committee Member
Rev. Father Chandra Fernando	President, Citizens Committee, Batticaloa
Rajjshankar	President, Citizens Committee, Tennamarachchi
S Sambandamoorthy	Ex TULF Chairman, District Development Council
V M Panchalingam	Government Agent, Jaffna
K Pulendran	Assistant Government Agent, Kopay
A Amirthalingam	TULF Leader and National List MP
V Yogeshwaran	Ex TULF MP for Jaffna
Dr. Rajini Thirananagama	Lecturer in Anatomy at the Jaffna University
Ganeshalingam	Ex EPRLF Provincial Minister for North and East
Sam Thambimuttu	EPRLF MP
Mrs Thambimuttu	Wife of EPRLF MP
V Yogasangari	EPRLF MP in Madras
A Thangadurai	TULF MP for Trincomalee
Mrs Sarojini Yogeshwaran	TULF Mayoress for Jaffna
Pon Sivapalan	TULF Mayor of Jaffna
Canagasabai Rajathurai	EPDF Member for Jaffna
Veerahaththy Gunaratnam	PLOTE member of the Pachchilaipalli Pradheshiya Sabha
Razick,	A Military Leader of the EPRLF
Dr Neelan Thiruchelvam	A Leader of TULF
N. Manickathasan	Vice President of PLOTE
Kumar Ponnambalam	President of All Ceylon Tamil Congress
Vadivelu Vijayaratham	Point Pedro Urban Council Chairman
Anton Sivalingam	EPDP's Municipal Council members in Jaffna
Kanapathipillai Navaratnarajah	TELO Member of Batticaloa
Rajan Sathiyamoorthy	Tamil National Alliance Parliamentary Candidate
Lakshman Kadiragamar	Foreign Minister—GOSL
Kethishwaran Loganathan	Deputy Secretary General of Sri Lanka Peace Secretariat

We, “The Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka (SPUR) - New Zealand, is an organisation committed to a peaceful resolution of the Sri Lankan conflict.

SPUR- Victoria and SPUR-New South Wales are operating from Australia for a long period and SPUR-NZ is linked to SPUR-New South Wales.

SPUR-NZ intends to provide you with the information about the armed conflict in Sri Lanka and also of the peaceful avenues that are being pursued towards conflict resolution. **Excepting for the LTTE**, all other Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim parties in Sri Lanka are involved in democratic processes to seek a peaceful solution.

We call upon all peace loving people in New Zealand to support us to curb growing terrorism in Sri Lanka in particular and in the world in general. **We kindly request you to think twice and refrain from giving any support to the elements who support LTTE . Else, you may regret one day that unknowingly or unwillingly you have contributed to the growing global terrorist menace.**

If you would like to get more details or to discuss about the Sri Lankan conflict, we would be very happy to do so. Please send us your comments and suggestions. We would like to thank all our readers who have already sent us their comments to improve the Information Bulletins and the Web Site.

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