



# Violation of Human Rights in Sri Lanka

## 100,000 KILLED

*Over hundred thousand killed and  
mutilated by the government's  
death squads.*

**United Nations Committee  
on Human Rights (UNCHR):  
Sri Lanka regime out**

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CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA-UK

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ASSOCIAZIONE DI SOLIDARIETÀ DELLO SRI LANKA - MILAN, ITALY.  
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SRI LANKA

HOLIDAY PARADISE SINKS INTO BARBARISM

OVER 100,000. KILLED

DISSAPPEARANCES

TORTUE

RAPE

MURDER

MASSACRES

A Disaster a few Thousand Kilometres away in an island where thousands of Germans, English and other Europeans have spent many happy holidays sparks only a tiny fraction of sympathy which nevertheless would involve real anger if it happens in our immediate surroundings. Peoples emotions have become sensitized to pictures of horror and massacres thousands of Kilometres away.

Security Forces Para Military Forces and Death Squads have killed over 100,000 youth and students during 1989 - 1990.

Mass Media and the International Community have maintained a deafening silence on the tragic events in Sri Lanka.

IMF and World Bank continues to provide economic aid to Sri-Lanka.

The MEDIA in Sri Lanka is gagged and censored.

Human Rights Lawyers are killed and many more have escaped persecution and are seeking political asylum in the west.

Since Sri Lanka gained independance in 1948 after 450 years of colonial rule the Sri Lankan Politicians who replaced their colonial masters have carried on the traditions of colonial rule and pursued a socio-economic policy serving the interests of a narrow elite group.

After 1977 on the diktats of the IMF and World Bank the government has pursued a policy of open market economy thereby strengthening massively the elite class in Sri Lanka. During this same period the IMF and World Bank as a condition of their aid ordered that subsidies on food items and cost of essential services like electricity, water, post, transport should be reduced thereby accelerating the impoverishment of the poorer classes. The anger of the ordinary people have been shown by way of strikes and demonstrations which were violently suppressed.

The MEDIA was suppressed and censored and undemocratic repressive laws like the notorious Prevention of Terrorism act were passed all in the name of democracy.

In 1982 the ruling United National Party facing the prospect of defeat deprived the leader of the opposition the former Prime Minister Madame Bandaranayake of her citizenship rights on extremely dubious charges and thereafter she was barred from standing for the Presidential Elections and the incumbent President Jayawardana even then only narrowly managed to avoid an ignominious defeat at the hands of an almost unknown candidate.

Then followed further undemocratic measures. Parliamentary elections which were to be held in 1983 were postponed and instead a referendum was held. There were massive protests by all the opposition parties including the JVP against the referendum. Rohana Wijeweera leader of the JVP contested the legality of the referendum in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. The JVP was banned and proscribed as a political party on the very day the petition was to be heard before the Supreme Court of Sri-Lanka. The government arrested one of the lawyers who was appearing for Mr. Wijeweera and a second lawyer was forced to leave the country. That is one more example of democracy UNP style.

In July 1983 the Government instigated riots against the Tamil minority. The fires that rased and destroyed hundreds of homes and thousands of lives of innocent Tamil people are still raging in the Island and it is the most important cause of the violence that has racked the Island for the last seven years. That is another example of the democracy practised by this brutal regime.

After July 1983 the JVP was illegally and unjustly forced underground and from that day onwards the University students and so called JVP cadres were systematically tortured and killed. The Governments decision to ban the JVP and force it underground was a abuse of the democratic process. This ruthless suppression of a party that was in the democratic process was one of the factors that led to the JVP taking up arms against the Government and Government supporters.

During the period of 1983 and 1987 the Island was tense with the violence of the Tamil separatist struggle. There were massacres of Tamil people by the security forces and massacres of Sinhalese civilians by Tamil separatists. There were bombs in Colombo killing many civilians. These acts of wanton terrorism were falsely attributed by the Government to the JVP. The media in Sri-Lanka and foreign press corp were fed with false counter information by the Government's Information ministry and these false propaganda was repeated by the western media and through out the world. These lies were once again an example of the Governments democracy at work.

In 1987 the Government with out consultation with the people or the opposition parties signed the Indo Sri-Lanka peace accord and invited the deployment of Indian troops in the North and the East of the Island. The opposition against this accord was wide spread and was led by the JVP but was also supported by most opposition parties including Mrs.Bandaranayake's SLFP. Only a small group of parties led by the Stalinist Communist Party supported the Government. During this period President J.R.Jayawardena called upon the ruling United National Party to help him to destroy the JVP and uttered the now infamous cry 'Kill kill and kill the brutes'. The JVP took up this challenge and started to kill Government supporters. The Government was by now ruling illegally having postponed the democratic elections and was increasingly faced by a hostile population who were seeing the JVP as an alternative force' to the Government. The Country was paralysed by one strike wave after another and law and order all but collapsed. The governments answer was to distribute more and more arms to its supporters and the formation of more and more' para military groups' and these death squads were responsible for the killing of many thousands of perceived political opponents.

Mr.R.Premadasa became President in December 1989. He continued the brutal undemocratic policies of the former Government. In actual fact he increased the killing rate and many thousands of innocent students and youth were killed tortured and burned. These killings were of a very barbaric and horrifying nature and was unrivalled in the history of Sri-Lanka. Heads decapitated, Eyes were gorged out, Nails were driven to the skulls, and bodies tortured and burned. This is a another example of the Government's democracy at work.

The Government is able to maintained this institutionalised state terror with the aid of repressive legislation, the Prevention of Terrorism act and a large number of Emergency regulations were passed. They even passed an Indemnity Act which gave an indemnity to security forces against crimes committed by them during this period. The most notorious Emergency Regulation 55F

which empowered cremation of dead bodies without an autopsy or inquiries has been repealed but most of the other Emergency Regulations are still in force. Human Rights lawyers appearing in habeas corpus applications have been killed and over 30 have sought political refuge in the United Kingdom alone. Lawyers and Judges have been terrorised and the rule of law has ceased to have any meaning.

The Government continues to totally disregard world wide protest about their Human Rights violations. Amnesty International has been branded a terrorist organisation. Well known violators of Human Rights have been promoted to high office and several posted to Embassies in many Western Countries. Five well known opposition members of parliament have recently received death threats and there is an actual fear for their safety. Several dissidents abroad have also recently received death threats. The Government is determined to stamp out opposition both internally and externally. The Government's Allies in the North and East of the island the LTTE Tigers recently killed a well known member of parliament belonging to rival Tamil group the EPRLF and it is reported that over 500 EPRLF supporters have been killed during the past three months. Other Tamil and Muslim groups opposed to the Tigers in the North and East like the PLOTE and the SLMC are continuing to be harassed and several of their supporters have also been killed.

Aid donors in the West including West Germany Britain France, the IMF and the World Bank continue to underwrite this tyrannical and undemocratic Government. We appeal to the people and the Governments of these countries to stop giving aid to this regime. Aid donors have a responsibility to ensure that undemocratic Governments should not benefit from Western Aid. We appeal to these Governments to ensure that there is a nexus between giving aid and the maintenance of democratic norms. The Cold war is now over and Western Aid donors do not have to distinguish between pro-western tyrannies and pro-eastern tyrannies. There should be an end to all tyrannies and no aid should be given to tyrants East or West.

## IS IT A SO CALLED FIVE "STAR DEMOCRACY" (SRI LANKA)

AT LAST THOUGH BELATED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS TAKEN THE FIRST STEP TO ISOLATE SOUTH ASIA'S FIRST ELECTED TOTALITARIAN POLICE STATE.

Thus for the first time in its history, Sri Lanka under the notorious Premadasa regime has failed to win a seat in the 43 member forum of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights (UNCHR). Three countries Japan, China, and Sri Lanka sought re-election. Sri Lanka failed to get the necessary number of votes to be elected.

Ranasinghe Premadasa regime's human rights violation record came in for universal condemnation at the 46th session of the UNCHR meeting held in Geneva (29 January to 9 March 1990).

Amnesty International distributed a six page report of the gross human rights violation by the regimes security forces in the southern Sri Lanka.

The report stated that "In southern Sri Lanka thousands of people [disappeared] or were the victims of extrajudicial executions committed by uniformed members of Sri Lankan security forces and plain-clothed death squads believed to be associated with them, or with politicians of the ruling party". (AI Index ASA 37/03/90)

World University Service based in Geneva stated that "they strongly regretted, despite Sri Lanka being one of the main countries of gross human rights violations now for some years, this Commission has done very little to monitor and/ or to take measures against the situation".

David Housegoe wrote that "Sri Lanka takes its place in the annals of savagery". (FT 18n January 1990)

The former BBC World Service Sri Lankan correspondent Chris Nuttall said that "An enormous number of people have been killed by the government forces and this will have an effect on generations to come". (Guardian 25 January 1990).

Diplomats of the aid donor nations estimated that during the last one year over 30,000 youths have been killed. (FT 19 January 1990)

Fifteen lawyers engaged in filing habeas corpus petitions on behalf of those detainees have been assassinated by government death squads. A total of twenty six lawyers have been threatened and they have fled to the West. Artists and journalists have been gunned down. The regimes death squads are now targeting their activities on the opposition members of parliament.