

## KOKKADDICHOLAI MASSACRE

Nearly 2000 troops including the Special Task Force had participated in one of the worst Military Operation so far in extent and manner in Kokkaddicholai in Paduvankarai area in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The Military Operation started in the early hours of 28th January, 1987 and continued till 30th January, 1987 killing more than 200 innocent civilians including men and women. The death toll at Mahaludithivu alone is 63 and some of them had been used as a human shield and later lined up and shot dead. At Ambalanthura 45 were killed and the entire staff of 23 persons in the Prown Farm Project were lined up and gunned down.

Eyewitness reports indicate that Police Commandos went house to house killing young men supported by Helicopter gunship. At Karaiyaatranthivu, the Security Forces opened fire at a boat killing two on board and injuring the other two.

The survivors of this massacre state that special task force mounted an operation at Manmunai systematically killing all the males.

# Soldiers in Tamil protest

## Sri Lankan torture claims reveal new Whitehall links with mercenary row firm

by NICK DAVIES  
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BRITISH mercenaries in Sri Lanka have walked out after complaining that the Government troops they trained have committed a series of atrocities against the minority Tamil population.

Security sources say the men, most of whom are ex-SAS, were sent with Whitehall's approval. They work for KMS Ltd., the powerful London security company which has been implicated in the contra arms scandal in Washington.

The firm's links with the Prime Minister are being probed by senior Labour MPs who want to know whether she has been secretly helping President Reagan by authorising the company to support the American-backed contras in Nicaragua.

### Torture

The mercenaries walked out on their £20,000-a-year tax-free jobs after complaining that the Special Task Force, which they set up for the Sri Lankan Government in 1984, was running out of control and was indiscriminately killing and torturing Tamil civilians.

Amnesty International has gathered evidence that the force has kidnapped Tamil civilians who have never been seen again. Soldiers are also accused of executing detainees after ordering them

to dig their own graves, using nails and pliers to torture prisoners and burning the bodies of those who died under interrogation. The Sri Lankan Government has rejected the charges.

They said their lives would be at risk if they were returned to the island, which has been torn by civil strife for five years.

### Russians

Last week the ex-SAS major who runs KMS, David Walker, flew to Sri Lanka to try to salvage the company's contract.

Sixty of his men have now either walked out, refused to renew their contracts or been sacked. "The whole operation is a bag of worms," said one source.

KMS has been working from a base at Katukurunda, an hour's drive south of the capital, Colombo.

The company's role is believed to have been endorsed by the Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, in an attempt to bolster the Sri Lankan Government against overtures from the Russians,

who want naval facilities on the island.

Sri Lanka originally asked the Foreign Office for an SAS unit. But the Government declined for fear of alienating the Indian Government, which supports the Tamil separatist movement.

### Racist

Instead, say sources, the FO sent a squad of 12 KMS mercenaries, including an ex-SAS colonel and an ex-SAS adjutant.

The Ministry of Defence is also believed to have supplied sophisticated new automatic rifles which have been developed by the Royal Ordnance factory and are not yet available even for regular British Army units.

The mercenaries first got into trouble for indiscipline. One got drunk in a tourist hotel in nearby Kalutara and fired his gun into the ceiling. A group of former Rhodesian SAS men were sacked for making racist remarks to the Sri Lankans they were training and a South African pilot who disobeyed orders was transferred to the KMS operation with the contras in Central America.

But more serious problems followed. The Special Task

Force moved into the island's Eastern Province and the KMS men began to hear reports of atrocities.

The mercenaries, many of whom have long SAS experience of counter-insurgency, complained that this was a fatal error. They wanted the Task Force to win the "hearts and minds" of Tamil villagers to cut off the support they offered to Tamil guerrillas.

They complained the Task Force was making enemies of them all and made a series of protests to the senior mercenary on the ground, an ex-SAS colonel who joined KMS after being targetted by Irish terrorists.

He could do nothing. The mercenaries then pressed to be allowed to go into combat with the Task Force in an attempt to control them. But they were told this was unacceptable to the Foreign Office in London.

Discontent in the mercenary ranks grew. Less-qualified "cowboy" reinforcements were sent from London, including one man who has served a jail sentence for armed robbery.

Then Israeli security consultants arrived on the island

and, unhampered by restrictions from their own Government, began to take over parts of the KMS operation.

### Excesses

Now senior ex-SAS men have refused to renew their contracts and others have walked out.

David Walker, who is believed to still be in Sri Lanka, is reported to have sacked KMS teams who had been training other specialist army and navy units for the Sri Lankans, in an attempt to save the contract with the Task Force.

The Sri Lankan High Commissioner in London, Mr Chandra Monerawela, yesterday confirmed that his Government had hired KMS but said he was not aware that any of its men had walked out.

He denied that the British Government had approved the contract and rejected the reports of atrocities.

"There may sometimes be excesses or civilian casualties, but when you are dealing with guerrillas, anything can happen. They don't wear uniforms," he said.

A Foreign Office spokesman denied that KMS had been given any Government approval for its work in Sri Lanka. Labour's Foreign Affairs spokesman George Foulkes has tabled Parliamentary Questions asking Mrs Thatcher about meetings with David Walker and links between the company and Government departments.

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