

TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND TAMILS OF SRI LANKA
INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE LAST REPORT1.0 JAFFNA

1.1 18.10.85: Perumal Kovil in Jaffna was robbed by unidentified persons; Rs.600,000/- worth of jewellery was taken away. Four days later a statement was issued in Madras by Tamil militants that they had identified the robbers and were investigating the matter.

1.2 23.10.85: A silent protest march was organised in Jaffna by the refugees from Trinco against the atrocities of the forces in the eastern province.

1.3 25.10.85: One Tamil civilian was injured when an army foot patrol shot at two men in the premises of the Jaffna hospital. The army also opened fire on houses near the hospital and 10 civilians were injured of whom 6 had to be admitted to the hospital including a 1-year old child.

2.0 KILINOCHCHI

2.1 24.10.85: 4 railway employees were kidnapped by unknown persons. Four days later they were freed into the hands of the Kilinochchi station master.

3.0 MANNAR

3.1 12.10.85: 2 Tamil youths were killed by the forces near the Thallady camp.

3.2 16.10.85: One Tamil civilian was shot dead and 2 others were injured at Nanattan.

4.0 MULLAITIVU

4.1 19.10.85: At Alampil, the village headman and a civilian were killed by unidentified persons.

4.2 23.10.85: One soldier died in a landmine explosion and another was injured at the army camp in Mullaitivu. It happened when they were inspecting the mines they themselves had planted around the camp as a security measure.

5.0 VAVUNIYA

5.1 09.10.85: An army camp was opened at Cheddikulam and the villagers in the neighbourhood have been chased away.

5.2 12.10.85: A Tamil Maha Vidyalayam in Vavuniya was damaged by Sinhalese refugees from a nearby camp.

5.3 16.10.85: A rest house at Parayanalankulam on the Vavuniya-Mannar road was blasted by unidentified persons. It was to be turned into an army camp.

CONTD/2

5.4 17.10.85: A Tamil woman was abducted from Soosaipillayarkulam. Such kidnapping and raping of Tamil women in Vavuniya by the security forces, particularly around the airport camp, has been going on for several weeks.

5.5 24.10.85: 3 soldiers died and 3 others were injured at Cheddikulam. Following this incident, hundreds of Tamil civilians were taken into custody by the forces in Vavuniya. Many of those arrested were released a few days later.

5.6 25.10.85: At Moonayamadu, the security forces opened fire on a van and 4 Tamils were killed.

5.7 30.10.85: The Vavuniya Kachcheri was robbed of stamps worth Rs.75,000/- and a sum of Rs.15,000/-, by unidentified persons.

6.0 TRINCOMALEE

6.1 23.10.85: A meeting was held at the Trincomalee Kachcheri headed by the Government Agent with a view to persuading the hundreds of families of Thambalagamam who had abandoned their village a few weeks ago, to return there.

6.2 26.10.85: At Srimapura, home guards threw grenades at vehicles passing through the village and several Tamil civilians were injured.

6.3 27.10.85: A few Tamil families moved from Trincomalee into Batticaloa. Bombs were thrown at some Tamil houses in Trincomalee and a few houses were set on fire.

6.4 During the middle of October two elderly Tamil civilians were killed when security forces opened fire on their bullock-cart.

7.0 BATTICALOA

7.1 10.10.85: The village Kiran was attacked by helicopters.

7.2 11.10.85: 54 Tamil civilians were rounded up at Aarappathai by the forces and 17 of them were detained.

7.3 12.10.85: 4 police commandos were wounded at Sithandi when grenades were thrown at them. 2 Tamil youths were killed near the Sithandi camp by the forces. 50 Tamil civilians were taken into police custody at Ariyampathai.

7.4 13.10.84: 24 Tamil civilians were arrested by the commandos at Punnaicholai.

7.5 17.10.85: At Unnichchai, the security forces killed 7 militants and several civilians.

7.6 18.10.85: A sum of Rs.75,000/- was stolen from the Batticaloa Kachcheri, by unidentified persons.

7.7 19.10.85: 4 Tamil civilians were killed by the forces at Mandur.

7.8 23.10.85: At Valaichchenai a Tamil youth was wounded when police commandos shot at him. At Kiran and Sithandi several Tamil women were raped by security personnel.

- 7.9 24.10.85: Police commandos rounded up many Tamil civilians at Veeramunai and finally took away 6 of them.
- 7.10 25.10.85: 7 Tamil school children in their teens were killed when commandos opened fire on their tutory.
- 7.11 28.10.85: More than 5 security personnel were killed in a landmine explosion at Vellavelly.
- 7.12 29.10.85: The Batticaloa Kachcheri was robbed of valuables worth about Rs.80,000/- by unidentified persons.
- 7.13 30.10.85: There was an exchange of gunfire near Kalladipalam between Tamil militants and the forces after some security personnel were wounded in a grenade attack.
- 8.0 AMPARAI
- 8.1 17.10.85: 10 Muslims and 5 Tamils were killed by home guards at Mallihaikkadu.
- 8.2 18.10.85: 6 Tamil civilians were killed by security forces in Amparai.
- 8.3 23.10.85: A Tamil woman was taken away, assaulted and raped by security personnel in Amparai.
- 9.0 GENERAL
- 9.1 The Nilaveli massacre described in the attached "Operation Nilaveli" was only the epicentre; the continuous exodus of Tamils from Trinco bespeaks the persisting disaster there. Among the 520 families who fled to India during the month of September and the 220 on 01.10.85, many were from Trincomalee. Some families fled to Batticaloa even as recently as 27.10.85.
- 9.2 Not that Batticaloa is any the safer. There does not seem to be an end to the appearance of new camps and the strengthening of forces in the district. Killings, arrests and rapes by the forces are daily phenomena, the ceasefire notwithstanding.
- 9.3 The Ceasefire Monitoring Committee has so far been visiting various places and people. How effective the committee is, still remains to be seen.


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REFUGEE DETAILS :

The estimate of the number of Tamil Refugees in Tamil Homelands and outside Sri Lanka as at 1st October 1985.

INSIDE SRI LANKA :

District	No. of Camps	No. of Persons In Camps	Estimate of Persons Rendered Refugees
Trincomalee	28	21,989	40,000
Batticaloa	(Not available)	8,450	30,000
Mullaitivu	17	5,449	12,000
Vavuniya	15	3,994	24,000
Mannar	2	1,100	5,000
Kilinochchi	4	486	3,000
Jaffna	(Not available)	(Not available)	20,000
		41,666	134,000

NOTE :

The figures do not include the persons who fled the country.

Over 150,000 fishermen are still affected partially in the northern province owing to restrictions in fishing.

Total number of persons directly or indirectly affected is 350,000.

OUTSIDE SRI LANKA

(The figures are reasonable estimates)

India	115,000
Fed. Rep. of Germany	20,000
France	19,000
The Netherlands	3,200
Canada	3,000
U K	2,000
Switzerland	1,800
Italy	1,000
Denmark	200
U S A	200
Norway	100
Sweden	100
Total	165,600

TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS AFFECTED 515,600

28th September 1985

OPERATION NILAVELI: Saturday WAR ON REFUGEES

Review SRI LANKA

by a Special Correspondent

Having just finished interviews with displaced Tamils from Trincomalee district who are now at refugee-centres in Jaffna and Mullaitivu my mind is haunted with many horrendous stories of brutality and hatred on the part of the security forces which has not been a totally unfamiliar experience, as far as the Tamils are concerned.

The attacks on Tamil villages in the Trincomalee district were started well before the cease-fire had continued after the cease-fire. Pankulam was the first village to be attacked. From April this year a series of attacks and 'intimidations' had been going on in Tamil villages with devastating effect. These Israeli-type actions demolished Thirukkadaloor, Salli, Kumpurupitty, Pallathoddam, Veeranagar, Pankulam, Sambaltheevu, Thuvarankadu, Kanniya, Kuchchaveli and Triyay. The government was so intent on wrecking the traditional homelands of the Tamil speaking people and their homogeneity.

The Tamil people from these villages were driven out by security forces and the Home-guards—a euphemism for UNP's goon squads.

On 12th September, the security forces and homeguards rounded up Thuvarankadu in a search operation. This left 20 people including women and children dead. A young nurse from Thirukkadaloor had the opportunity of treating these people from this area. They included about 25 people both women and children. Within days 2 of them died.

The Tragedy struck Thirukkadaloor too and the nurse along with village people fled Trincomalee and now they are refugees in a camp at Mullaitivu.

At Pankulam, 22 Tamils were killed by the guards and that resulted in a mass exodus from that area.

"We were living at Pallathoddam for generations. On the 13th morning we heard gun-shots, while a helicopter flew overhead. About 20 of us vanished into the jungles and helplessly watched a neighbour of ours, Sellathurai, who was put the sword by the home-guards. We somehow managed to escape but 3 unfortunate youths among us were caught. We walked through the jungle for 3 days without meals and reached Nilaveli. When Nilaveli was attacked by the security forces, we came to Mullaitivu by boats and now we are landless, hapless and helpless!" So said a middle aged man.

An old man from Veeranagar said that he had seen 3 of his family members burnt alive by security forces on the 4th morning when veeranagar was attacked. He along with 10 other families took refuge at St. Antony's Church, Nilaveli.

The Tamil people who fled from the troubled areas felt that Nilaveli was a relatively safe place.

By the beginning of September several thousands were herded at Nilaveli and were temporarily accommodated in Churches and Hotels which were virtually jam-packed.

It is said that Operation Nilaveli was the reprisal for the attack on Srimapura, a Sinhalese area in Trincomalee by a certain group of Tamil guerrillas. Well before this said attack, it is reported that the government had removed women and children from the Sinhalese areas. Most of the able youths had been provided with arms.

If the cease-fire in its real sense is in operation, naturally the Tamil guerrillas will be very much in control of the Northern Province and several areas of the Eastern Province. Nilaveli also could have been one such area. If the government calls all such areas as the 'base areas' or

'militants' 'territories', virtually the north and most parts of the East are under the control of the guerillas, from the inception of the cease-fire.

It is pertinent to recall here what the present army Commander, who was then the Brigadier of Jaffna told a foreign newsman that their effective control ended at the confines of the camps.

The bridge that linked Nilaveli and the mainland at Sampaltheevu, was earlier blown up by the guerillas. This left Nilaveli disconnected. Nilaveli could only be reached by the other way that goes through Kanniya. Fearing landmines and ambushes the Security Forces did not make any attempt to go to Nilaveli where hundreds of Tamils had taken refuge. Most of the refugees came to Nilaveli either through jungles or by sea.

The Security Forces are reported to have reached Nilaveli through jungles. On the way they accidentally met with an encounter with the Tamil guerrillas, it is reported. The encounter did not last long.

On 16 September, 'D-day' had started—it was 'Operation Nilaveli' according to Government sponsored 'Daily News of 18th. September. "This operation described as the biggest in recent times was aimed at a camp in Nilaveli". "46 'terrorists' were dead, 84 surrendered in a 12 hour offensive."—It is true and more true that as far as the security forces were concerned that it was the biggest offensive yet because 12 armoured cars, 6 tanks, 2 Helicopters and gun boats took part.

The details of the "operation" is best seen through the eyes of a refugee now at Mullaitivu. "We came to Nilaveli, as refugees from Veeranagar after the attack there and we were temporarily housed at the premises of St. Antony's church, my husband,

myself and 3 children along with 10 other families." At about 5-30 a. m. on 16th. September, we heard gun shots and immediately after, several soldiers rushed into the church premises. We ran in panic only to find that the whole area had been cordoned off. Later, all of us were 'arrested' by the security forces and herded inside the church. They asked my husband whether he could pluck some king coconuts but as he could not climb, Thurainayagam (35) came forward and plucked some king coconuts for them. We were kept inside the church till about 7-30 p. m. without food or drink. In the meantime some of our youngsters were taken away. The security forces left us about 7-30 p. m. and we decided to leave the church and vanish into the nearby Kochchithoddam. Thereafter, we reached the sea-shore through the jungles."

On the way we saw about 40 brutally stained bodies of women, youths and children. Among them I could identify the body of

Thurainayagam who plucked king coconuts at their bidding to quench their thirst. On the sea-shore I saw a burnt plastic boat with 3 partially burnt bodies."

An old man who was in the Pilot Hotel Refugee camp narrated this story: "On 16th. morning I saw several soldiers approaching the hotel. They surrounded the hotel and divided us into groups, as girls, boys and old men ran helter skelter. They killed my neighbour. Subramaniam's son right in front of me. I saw 3 middle-age persons from the refugee camp burnt alive. They took away all the males between the ages of 15 and 40."

Finally, the 12-hour offensive, left several hotels including Pilot, Rainbow and Varatharajah Hotels and several hundred houses in ashes. At the moment we are unable to estimate the actual number of people killed. But from the reports and interviews we had, the number could be well over 150.

The government's statement :

"The 'Hindustan Times', 'Statesman' and 'Patriot' of 18th. September have carried reports to the effect

that during the recent operations carried out at Nilaveli in the Trincomalee district, the security forces 100 women and children who were refugees and took away about 40 youths and killed them after interrogation and some among them were girls who were allegedly raped before being killed.

The government categorically denies these charges and wishes to state that the operation carried out recently was against terrorists who were in in Nilaveli".

Well! Was Mr. Krishnapillai (54) who was shot inside the Nilaveli public library along with 6 others, a terrorist?

Was that two year-old child who was killed at Indrani Thoddam, a terrorist?

The sessile media-men in Colombo and the insensate authorities in power may not know the answer simply because of the fact that Tamils are synonymous with 'refugees', terrorists' or 'Kottiyas'. We are not sure whether such parlance entered the playing fields too!



LAWASIA

SRI LANKA : A COUNTRY IN CRISIS

Report to the LAWASIA Human Rights Standing Committee

By

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