



## Parliamentary Elections a Turning Point?

The People's Alliance (PA) victory at the General Elections on 16 August and selection of Chandrika Kumaranatunge as Prime Minister seem to have inspired hope that a genuine attempt will be made to resolve the Tamil national problem and restore confidence among the minority communities.

PA won 105 seats in Parliament, eight short of overall majority, polling 48.9% of the votes. The United National Party (UNP), which was in power for 17 years, won 94 seats, receiving 44% of the votes. The PA gained the necessary majority in Parliament to form the government with the support of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) (seven seats) and the Upcountry People's Front (UPF) (one seat).

Island-wide, 76.2% of the 10,945,065 registered voters turned-out to vote. In the South the turn-out was 81.9%. In the North it was only 7.6% and in the East 75.2% and in the North-East together 41%. In the North-East the turn-out in the electoral districts is shown in Table (1).

Douglas Devananda's Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) won nine seats in Jaffna, after polling only 10,760 votes. Voting took place in Army-controlled Tellipalai and the island of Kayts where the armed EPDP had been given a free-

hand by the UNP government. The other seat in Jaffna was won by SLMC, which received over 2,000 votes from Jaffna Muslim refugees, now in camps at Puttalam. The numbers of people who voted in the Jaffna District are shown in Table (2).

The legality of election of ten MPs by a tiny minority of the

voters has been questioned and it appears that it would be challenged in courts.

In the Vanni electoral district, for the first time, a Sinhalese P. Sumathipala of PA and a Hill Country Tamil, V. Balachandran were elected. The political wing of militant group PLOTE Democratic People's Liberation Front (DPLF) led by D. Sitharthan won three seats and UNP and SLMC one seat each. Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leader M. Sivasithamparam was not elected. In Trimcomalee, where there was a low turn-out, UNP won two seats and SLMC one. TULF Secretary General A. Thangathurai was elected. TULF won three seats in Batticaloa, polling nearly 44% of the votes. SLMC and UNP won one seat each.

In the Amparai (Digamadulla) district there were, according to the 1993 electoral register, 126,496 Sinhalese voters, 125,487 Muslim voters and 59,115 Tamil voters. In the 1989 elections a Tamil was elected from Amparai. But because the Tamil parties failed to form an electoral alliance, no Tamil was elected in the 1994 elections. Massive displacement of people as a result of violence may have also been a contri-

TABLE (1)

District	Reg. voters	% polled
Jaffna	596,316	2.3
Vanni	178,697	25.3
Batticaloa	261,898	72.4
Digamadulla	312,006	81.3
Trincomalee	184,090	68.8

TABLE (2)

District	Registered voters	No. polled
Kayts	45,504	11,263
KKS	6,417	121
Manipay	58,392	12
Kopay	56,496	57
Udupiddy	52,153	8
Point Pedro	40,336	34
Chavakacheri	51,717	79
Nallur	62,372	19
Jaffna	50,045	1,208
Kilinochchi	55,995	66

buting factor.

Division among Tamils and inability of the Tamil political parties to unite in the interests of the Tamil people, cost seats also in Colombo. The Independent Group led by All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) leader Kumar Ponnambalam, fared disastrously polling only 9,251 votes. Mr. Ponnambalam's attempt to create a new identity for the so-called 'Colombo Tamils' has been rejected by the people. The two Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) candidates P. Devaraj and Y. Yogarajah who contested on the UNP ticket were not elected, as were the two PA candidates M. S. Sellasamy and T. C. Rajaratnam. Observers say, although there are 300,000 Tamil voters in Colombo District no Tamil was elected because the votes were fragmented among the 55 Tamil candidates. Voting in the North-East and Colombo indicate that the Tamil people have overwhelmingly rejected the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO). The TULF and DPLF have announced that they would remain independent and decide whether to support the government in Parliament on a issue-by-issue basis.

With CWC's support, the UNP performed well in the Hill Country. The UNP received 44% of the votes islandwide as against 48.9% of the PA. But in the Hill Country UNP polled 52% and PA 45%. There were an estimated 452,000 Tamil votes in the Hill Country. Observers say at least 15 Tamils could have been elected in the seven plantation Districts, but only eight became MPs including two candidates on the UNP national list, because of division of votes. Furthermore, concern also has been expressed that there is no one to represent the Hill Country Tamils in the current cabinet. Upcountry People's Front (UPF) leader and Deputy Minister of Trade P. Chandrasekaran may not have the political clout of CWC leader Mr. S. Thondaman, obser-

vers believe. However, his election no doubt will pose a threat to Mr Thondaman.

Mr. Thondaman has had several rounds of talks with Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunge, after a CWC high-level meeting decided that the CWC should now back the PA government. Mr. Thondaman says that his pre-election agreement with the UNP would lend a hand. The agreement provides that each party will be entitled to maintain its individual identity and act separately in Parliament on any particular issue. Reports say that Mr. Thondaman is now seeking legal opinion in order to enforce this agreement, although many CWC officials are appalled by these developments and say that CWC's credibility is at stake by this shameless opportunism.

Observers believe that the new government will not be able to proceed confidently with its plans because of the narrow majority and the drawback of having to do business with a President belonging to the opposition party and who retains the defence ministry.

The new government faces an enormous task after the 17-year misrule by the UNP. It has been estimated that over 80,000 people were killed during the UNP period and no tangible steps were taken to end the bloodshed. The most urgent issue facing the new government is the Tamil national problem. Prime Minister Chandrika has taken immediate measures to contact the LTTE, and following a positive response both parties have appointed negotiating teams. However LTTE is insistent on a ceasefire. Some observers say that a ceasefire is vital to check the moves of sections of the army which are against peace. These elements have been making enormous profit in the war with the connivance of top officials of the former government. The army is also against withdrawing troops from areas captured after June 1990. Many believe that the PA government in pursuing

peace will have to confront the army sooner or later.

Despite widespread optimism, there remain a number of issues that need attention, if peace is to be achieved with justice. Over 10,000 Tamils have disappeared after being detained by security forces and many thousands of Tamils have been executed. Amnesty International in its report titled "Sri Lanka: When will justice be done?" (ASA 37/1/94, July 1994) lists the number of cases which remain uninvestigated. These include the murder of 53 Tamil political prisoners at Colombo Welikada prison (1983) the disappearance of 159 refugees from the Eastern University refugee camp (1990) and the disappearance of over 160 villagers from Sathurukondan in Batticaloa (1990).

Amnesty International, among other recommendations, urged the then government to repeal the Indemnity (Amendment) Act 1988 which gives immunity to members of security forces and members of government from prosecution, ensure a return to normal inquest procedures under ordinary law, ensure public access to records of all inquiries into deaths in custody, make public the criteria used to determine which type of investigation is instituted into human rights violations, institute full and impartial investigations into human rights violations, minimise delays in trials of members of security forces and make public investigations already carried out.

Apart from these, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations such as Article 19 and Asia Watch have made a number of recommendations to improve the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. The PA, while in opposition, made full use of criticisms by international agencies to attack the UNP government and pledged to respect human rights of all citizens. People await implementation of all these recommendations without delay.

## ISFS: "Tamil Nadu Government ban violates fundamental Rights of Refugees"

The Condition of refugees in Camps in Tamil Nadu is deteriorating every day, according to welfare NGOs in the Indian state. The Tamil Nadu government continues to deny access to the camps to NGOs and the UNHCR. The UN refugee agency continues to promote repatriation of Tamil refugees to Sri Lanka and claims that it is voluntary despite the pressure brought on refugees by the Indian authorities to force them to leave.

Following a complaint by the Indo Sri Lanka Friendship Society (ISFS) regarding the ban of NGOs into refugee camps, the Indian

**UNHCR is fast losing its credibility as an agency established to protect and assist refugees and becoming impotent.**

National Human Rights Commission sought a report from the Tamil Nadu government on the status of refugees in early August. In its complaint ISFS says that the Tamil Nadu government ban violates fundamental rights of refugees and has accentuated the trauma suffered by them.

Refugee children have denied education and a rule that refugees must be in camps between 6pm. and 6am has reduced drastically employment opportunities for them outside camps ending supplementary income. Camp officers continually harass the refugees to force them to sign for repatriation. Some NGOs say the UNHCR is turning a blind eye to these developments. Many NGOs are beginning to say that UNHCR is fast losing its credibility as an agency established to protect and assist refugees and becoming impotent.

## TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by the Centre in August 1994

### SHR 3376

Chandrakanthan, A. J. V.

An exodus sans destination: refugees and the internally displaced in Sri Lanka

UK: Somerville College; 1994

32p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Refugees/Displaced — people/Statistics/NGOs/Sri Lankan Tamils/Muslims/History

### SGN 396

Peter Schalk

On the beginning of Buddhism in Tamilakam

Finland: TEMENOS; 1993

7p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Buddhism

### SHR 3382

Indictment against Sri Lanka

London: LTTE (Legal & Human Rights Division); January 1993

126p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Discrimination/Sri Lankan Tamils/Ethnic Problem/History

### SHR 3389

Somasundaram, D.J.

Dr. A. Sivapathasundaram 3rd memorial lecture

Jaffna: University of Jaffna; 30th March 1993

27p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Children/Trauma/Jaffna District/Statistics

### SHR 3384

Emmanuel, S.J.

Church, politics & war in Sri Lanka: theologising contextually amidst a war

Jaffna: Centre for Better Society; 19th March 1994

46p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Religion/War/

History/Ethnic Problem/Discrimination

Christianity/Sri Lanka.

### SHR 3381

Sri Lanka: Open letter to political parties contesting forthcoming elections

London: Amnesty International; 15th July 1994

6p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Election/Sri Lanka/UN Convention

### SHR 3392

Sriskanthan, Pa

Yalppanam: inraya yalppana nilaimaikal 1994

Ontario: Muncharie; June 1994

72p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Visit Report/Jaffna District/Situation Report

### SHR 3390

The Medirigiriya massacre: a report of the attack on three villages in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka on 15 October 1992

Colombo: International Centre For Ethnic Studies; 1992

34p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Attack on Muslims/Genocide/Polonnaruwa District

### SHR 3393

Wright, Gillian

Sri Lanka

Hong Kong: The Guidebook Company Ltd; 1994

296p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Sri Lanka

# AUGUST DIARY

**AUGUST 01**

**CABINET MINISTER SURRENDERS TO POLICE:** Cabinet Minister A.M.S. Adikari surrendered to the police in the presence of his counsel over the killing of an opposition activist.

**AUGUST 02**

**INFILTRATION OF BASE CAMP:** Air base at Palaly in Jaffna District was infiltrated by the LTTE who severely damaged a Bell helicopter and a Buffelo personnel carrier. One Airman and eight LTTE cadres died in this mission. In a separate encounter at Maviddapuram also in the same district two LTTE men were killed by the security forces.

**AUGUST 03**

**CIVILIANS KILLED BY ARMY FIRE:** A. Anthony (28 yrs) and Indran (20 yrs) engaged in fishing off the Mandaitivu coast in Jaffna District were killed when fired upon by the forces from the Mandaitivu army camp.

**AUGUST 04**

**CIVILIANS KILLED BY AERIAL BOMBING:** Two civilians were killed when air force planes bombed the Co-operative canteen building at Atchuveli in the Jaffna District. The planes also dropped bombs at the Mallakam junction too where three more civilians were killed and eight were injured. Several houses in the vicinity were damaged.

**AUGUST 05**

**FISHERMEN ABDUCTED:** Twenty fishermen were abducted by unidentified persons while at sea off the coast of Kalpitty in Puttalam District.

**SHELLFIRE PAST MIDNIGHT:** Shell fire directed after midnight from the Palaly base in Jaffna District damaged St. Anthony's Church and houses in it's vicinity at Alavetty South.

**AUGUST 06**

**CIVILIANS KILLED:** Mariyam-pillai Joseph (43 yrs), a father of seven and his son Joseph Moses Dayan (22 yrs) were killed by naval gunfire while fishing off the Sakkottai coast in the Jaffna District.

**AUGUST 07**

**ATTACK BY NAVY:** Security sources reported the killing of two LTTE cadres when a catamaran was targeted by the navy while off the coast of Kayts in the Jaffna District.

**AUGUST 08**

**WOMAN ARRESTED:** Miss Krishnaverni (26 yrs) was arrested by police from the St. James plantation in Badulla District on suspicion of LTTE links. She had temporarily resided with her brother at Batticaloa several years earlier.

**AUGUST 09**

**LTTE CASUALTIES:** Security reports spoke of two LTTE cadres being killed in a confrontation at Poonahari in the Kilinochchi District.

**AUGUST 10**

**REFERENDUM ON MERGER:** Constitutional affairs Minister Choksy speaking at a news conference at Visumpaya in Colombo announced that a referendum on the demerger of the North-East Province would be held within twelve months.

**CLASH AT TRINCOMALEE:** The Home Guard station at Trincomalee came under LTTE attack resulting in the death of a LTTE member and a Home Guard.

**AUGUST 11**

**GUN SHOT VICTIM:** Rasiah Rasadurai (38 yrs), a lorry driver was discovered dead with gunshot wounds on the Vavuniyakulam-Horowpothana road in Vavuniya District.

**POLICE STATION UNDER ATTACK:** The police station sited at the BMC building in Mannar came under intense LTTE attack. Eleven policemen including two officers were killed and ten were injured in the attack.

**AUGUST 12**

**MILITARY CONFRONTATIONS:** Security reports claimed several incidents at Kattumuruvikkulam in Batticaloa, Kathiraveli in Trincomalee where forces clashed with LTTE. Twenty-five bodies were recovered by forces which lost eleven soldiers. Five soldiers were also injured in these attacks.

**AUGUST 13**

**CIVILIANS KILLED IN SHELLING:** S. Laxumy (55 yrs), S Akilan (12 yrs), I. Leelavathy (25 yrs), I. Vanithadevi (2 yrs) and P. Vinitha (12 yrs), all from one family in Atchuveli were killed by shells fired from the Palaly army camp. In Valikaman North a ten year old boy was killed. Over twenty-five others including women and children were injured by over one hundred shells fired from the camp. Around thirty houses were damaged.

**NAVAL BOAT ATTACKED:** One sailor was killed and four went missing after a naval boat was attacked off the Karainagar coast in Jaffna District.

**AUGUST 14**

**KILLING IN VAVUNIYA:** Chandrakulasingham (21 yrs) from Ukkulankulam in Vavuniya District was gunned down at Koomankulam at 8.30 pm by unidentified persons. Sivagnanam, his companion escaped with injuries.

**AUGUST 15**

**BOOBY TRAP CLAIMS LIVES:** Two policemen lost their lives when they stepped on a booby trap just outside their police station at Uppuveli in Trincomalee District.

**AUGUST 16**

**NAVAL VESSELS SUNK:** A naval boat and a tug boat were sunk by underwater explosions in a LTTE attack. One LTTE cadre was reported killed in this mission.



# AUGUST DIARY

AUGUST 17

**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS:** Elections to the 10th parliament held on 16th. resulted in the United National Party being ousted from power after a 17 year rule.

AUGUST 18

**DEATH BY RABIES:** In the last three months 1715 people were bitten by stray dogs in the Jaffna District according to the Northern Region Health Department. One person died of rabies.

AUGUST 19

**PRIORITY TO ETHNIC CONFLICT:** New Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaranatunge, at her first press conference promised to give top priority to solving the ethnic problem politically.

AUGUST 20

**SHORTAGE OF DENTAL EQUIPMENT:** Reports said that there is an acute shortage of medicines and equipment used in dental care in the Jaffna District hospitals. A team of health officers from Jaffna recently made representations to the Dental Services Director in Colombo.

AUGUST 21

**LTTE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE:** Reports said that the LTTE has begun administrative services in areas under its control in Vavuniya, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi districts. Administration centres have been established in these areas and a Public Administration Officer will be in charge of each office. All government officers have been requested to function under the direction of the Public Administrative Officers.

AUGUST 22

**NEW PORT IN AMPARAI:** Shipping Minister MHM Ashraff announced that a new port will be constructed in Amparai. A team of experts will make a feasibility study. Action will also be taken to improve the Jaffna Kankesanturai and Trin-

comalee ports.

AUGUST 23

**OPERATION IN POONAHARI:** Defence Ministry reports spoke of six LTTE cadres being killed when the army camp at Poonahari in Kilinochchi District came under attack.

**SOLDIERS INJURED BY TIGERS:** An Officer and two other soldiers were injured in a dawn raid on the Oyar Sinnakulam Army base in Vavuniya by the LTTE.

AUGUST 24

**REPATRIATION SUSPENDED:** UNHCR announced that the repatriation programme of refugees from Tamil Nadu was being suspended following the uncertainty as to the safety of returnees. This followed two returnees being killed, two others disappearing and another being injured in security operations in the Jaffna District to which they were returned.

AUGUST 25

**AIR ATTACK ON CIVILIANS:** Four civilians were injured when two attack aircraft and a helicopter bombed Sondakkarankulam and Koliyakulam in Vavuniya District in the afternoon. One person died of shock following this air raid.

AUGUST 26

**BOMBS DAMAGE BUILDINGS:** A shop and two houses were damaged when three bombs exploded at Sainthamaruthu in Amparai District. Police believe political party rivalry is the cause for the explosions.

AUGUST 27

**MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS:** According to Rehabilitation Minister MHM Ashraff tens of millions of rupees had been misappropriated from international aid for rehabilitation. A Commission of Inquiry will be appointed for investigation.

AUGUST 28

**SOLDIERS INJURED:** Two soldiers, Dissanayake (32 yrs) and Sirisena (29 yrs) were injured when LTTE launched an attack on army defence lines at Poovarasankalam in Vavuniya.

AUGUST 29

**DEAL DELAYED:** Reports said that the government has delayed the signing of the agreement with French Airbus Industries for the purchase of A340-300 jet planes. A government spokesman said that the agreement was now being reviewed.

AUGUST 30

**MISCARRIAGES SHOW STEEP RISE:** Records at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital indicated that between January and July 1994 the figure exceeded 374 for miscarriages whereas it was 587 for the whole year 1993.

**OWNERSHIP CERTIFICATES WITHDRAWN:** National Union of Workers General Secretary P. V. Kandiah said that line-room ownership certificates given to plantation workers before the general elections had been withdrawn after the elections. Workers have also been prevented by estate managements to carry out repairs to line-rooms.

AUGUST 31

**COMMISSION OF INQUIRY DEMANDED:** In a letter to Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike, NSSP demanded the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the burning of the Jaffna library in 1981.

**REMOVAL OF BAN:** The government removed the ban on 28 of the 42 items prohibited for transport to the North, including medicines and fuel.

## MASSACRE AT MYLANTHANAI

On 9 August 1992 thirty-five Tamil civilians were massacred at Mylanthanai village by soldiers of the 7th Gajaba regiment of the Sri Lankan army from the nearby Poonani camp in Batticaloa District. Twelve persons were seriously injured in this attack. The youngest to die was a one year-old girl and the oldest a 72 year-old grandmother.

Twenty-four soldiers were indicted by the police after an identification parade and 37 witnesses were noticed by the prosecution. Although the case was listed to be heard in the Batticaloa Magistrate's Court, on 31 March 1993 the Magistrate informed that the case had been transferred to the Magistrate court in Polonnaruwa District by the Attorney General. This decision was based on the fact that all the soldiers were Sinhalese and the victims and witnesses were all Tamils. The Attorney General felt that this endangered the safety of the accused.

Two witnesses petitioned the Court of Appeal claiming that as Tamils the witnesses would be insecure if they went to Polonnaruwa, a Sinhala area. The Appeal Court, however, rejected the petition on the grounds that the terrorist situation prevailing in Batticaloa was sufficient to shift venue of the trial. Non-summary proceedings began on 11 October 1993 at Polonnaruwa, 15 months after the massacre. Several witnesses including a few who survived with injuries testified. Daya Perera, President's Counsel appeared for the defendants at the proceedings and cross-examined witnesses. The trial was concluded by the Magistrate on 8 March 1994 on which date three of the accused were discharged and 21 committed to stand trial in the High Court.

The move to have the trial in a different area from where the crime was committed, has been condemned by several groups as it bestowed a preferential status to the accused. The fact that soldiers, as an arm of the government, took precedence over the victim was a travesty of justice and the Court of Appeal in upholding it has made a mockery of the judicial system. The Attorney General had acted contrary to law or aided in such acts on several occasions and it appears that this was one of the reasons for his resignation immediately after the defeat of the UNP at the elections. Justice would continue to be denied in the Mylanthanai massacre until the trial is held in a place where witnesses will be able to appear without fear. Such an act would also be a deterrent to officers of the government assuming immunity from the law.

## PLANTATION

### Management Hit Hard on Plantation Workers

Observers from plantation areas point out that workers continue to suffer because of various measures taken by plantation managements. Number of work days has been drastically reduced. Workers are offered only four days work in a week and they are refused work on pay-day and the day on which wage advance is paid.

Women workers are refused full pay if they do not pluck 20 kilos of tea, in all seasons. On many estates children of working age have not been registered for work for the last three years and those registered earlier continue as 'casual workers' and have not been made permanent.

Plantation Tamils say that in areas estates were affected by election violence, line-rooms have been attacked and workers' vegetable gardens destroyed. Those who supported the UNP at the elections have been threatened with death by the new rulers.

Plantation workers point out that a number of issues taken up with the former UNP government by its 17-year ally CWC were never fulfilled. The UNP agreed that workers will be made owners of line-rooms and gardens in the vicinity. Certificates of ownership issued by former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe were found to have no legal validity and even these were withdrawn after the general elections.

Several discussions were held for the appointment of Grama Sevakas (village headmen) from the plantations, but no appointments have been made. Although the UNP government boasted that the citizenship problem had been solved by legislation in 1986 and 1988, practical problems in granting citizenship still continue. Government departments continue to demand the production of citizenship registration certificates. Plantation Tamils continue to be discriminated in the issue of identity cards and registration as voters. Many plantation youths arrested in the past four years still languish in prison without any reason despite representation by trade unions.

## International Observer Group Report Dissatisfied with Elections in Vanni and Jaffna Districts

nifying the unrepresentative nature of the election. The dissenting note by the eight members characterises the elections in these two districts as severely flawed.

The 33 page report by the 44 members from 12 countries invited as individuals and not representing governments also made recommendations so that improvements could be made for the forthcoming presidential elections. The Group was received by President Wijetunge, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and Sirimavo Bandaranaike while they were briefed by the Elections Commissioner and Inspector General of Police on the machinery set up for holding the polls. The Observer Group was met also by the EPRLF, UNP, TULF, SLMC and a group of NGOs. Replying to a query by the Group Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe had maintained that all ministers would continue in office until the end of the election. Earlier only Cabinet Ministers did so. However, they would have to pay for any government facilities used for political purposes, added the Prime Minister. At these meetings prior to the polls the position taken by the President, Prime Minister, UNP, Elections Commissioner and Police Chief was that Jaffna and Vanni Districts presented special problems but the courts had decided to reject petitions demanding that polls should not be held in Jaffna.

The terms of reference to the Group by the Commissioner of Elections covered the pre-poll period, and addressed, among others, the following issues:-

1. *Complaints on the provision of equitable facilities to all contestants.*
2. *Media*

3. *Integrity of peripheral staff*

4. *Freedom from harassment*

5. *Enforcement of provisions relating to display of handbills, posters, etc.*

In his briefing to the Group the Elections Commissioner emphasised that they were completely independent and free to make their own observations. He also referred to their observer status which was not monitoring the elections.

The report made the following observations:-

1. *Widespread complaints were made regarding the use of state facilities by Ministers MPs and members of Provincial Councils. These related chiefly to the alleged use of government vehicles in the campaigns of UNP candidates. The number of UNP candidates who were ministers standing for re-election was substantial, as 91 of the 125 UNP MPs held ministerial office.*

2. *A direct pre-poll observation which the Group was able to make was the extent to which the government-owned newspaper group exclusively favoured the UNP in its reporting.*

3. *No complaints were received regarding the manner in which election staff had carried out their pre-poll duties.*

4. *The police provided a list of 2119 election related incidents from 11 July to 7 August to the group but no analysis was made available on the result of police investigations.*

5. *The law regarding the display of posters, flags etc. was widely infringed by all parties.*

Eight members of the 44-member international election observer group have submitted a dissenting report, alleging that the report of the wider group does not sufficiently emphasise the manner in which the elections in the North have distorted the allocation of seats in parliament, while sharing the strong reservations of the majority of the group regarding the elections.

The international observer group invited by the Elections Commissioner arrived in the country on 11 August and submitted its report on 19 August. The 10th parliamentary elections held on 16 August were considered as fair and free on the whole by this Group. The electoral districts of Vanni and Jaffna have been referred to as where their general observation needs to be qualified. The report has dwelt at length on the polls in the Jaffna and Vanni electoral districts and in fact has marginalised coverage of the balance twenty districts. The underlying thread in the two reports is that there was inadequate security for the conduct of polls in a fair and free manner. These two districts are also unique in the polls process in that they were using an electoral register of 1987 instead of the 1993 register used elsewhere thus defrenchising those between the ages of 18 and 25. The abysmally low voter turnout of a mere 2% in the Jaffna district has been concluded as sig-

## VANNI AND JAFFNA DISTRICTS REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

The report says "it was observed that there is a serious problem concerning the casting of votes by refugees and displaced persons. This was evident by the great difference between the large number of such persons, the low number who are registered and the extremely low number who actually cast their votes".

### VANNI DISTRICT

The election held in the "cleared" areas were free and fair says the report. The area so described covers less than 40% of the registered voters and therefore the report says "in these circumstances one must conclude that the results cannot be viewed as reflecting the will of the people of the District as a whole". Only 70 of 169 polling stations were active covering 34% of registered voters thus shutting out 65% of registered voters.

"The tragedy of the Vanni Districts elections lies in the fact that insufficient areas and voters were able to benefit from this impartial and efficient administration (referring to the election staff) for the overall District results to be considered free and fair. The total turn-out of voters 23.8% reflects the atmosphere of insecurity which prevails in the District".

### JAFFNA DISTRICT

The report for the district begins thus: "The election in the Jaffna District was overshadowed by serious problems that lead the observer team to the conclusion that the election in this District was neither free nor fair". The following reasons have been cited for this ascertainment:-

a) The main problem was that a large proportion of the electorate is displaced persons and thus unable to vote. This problem also affected the islands where there was an extremely large portion of the voters who due to the threat from the LTTE, were mostly elderly.

b) Much of the voting in the District took place under the total control of the EPDP, an armed political group that also presented candidates for election under the guise of Independent Group 2, and which used its weapons to intimidate both the voters and, in at least one occasion on the islands, the polling staff.

c) Serious voting irregularities took place in the island of Delft, the most serious being at Subramaniya Vidyalayam. One voter voted twice whilst the Observer was present. When it was pointed out by the International Observer to the Presiding Officer, that a person being allowed to vote already had his finger marked the Presiding Officer responded that "yes, but he has not voted here before", although the voter had been observed voting at that polling station before. Voters who had voted at other polling stations voted at this one. Underage voting also took place.

d) It was admitted to the observer that the EPDP had supplied photocopied voting certificates to voters who had already voted. All these problems were brought to the attention of the presiding officer who failed to act.

e) It was noted that a helicopter and the ambulance at Kayts army camp was used by Dr. Jayalath Jayawardene, the Assistant Secretary of UNP, to visit some of the polling stations on the day of the election.

## A Series of Lectures/ Discussions at the School of Oriental and African Studies University of London Jointly organised by

Human Rights in Sri Lanka; Campaign for Democracy and Human Rights in Sri Lanka; Lawyers (in exile) for Human Rights in Sri Lanka; International Tamil Foundation; Campaign Against State Terrorism in Sri Lanka; Church of Ascension; and Tamil Coordinating Committee.

**Tuesday 4 Oct. - 6pm**

Elections and after - How the General Election in August affect the major problems in Sri Lanka.

**Tuesday 18 Oct. - 6pm**

The party political system in crisis in Sri Lanka.

**Tuesday 8 Nov. - 6pm**

What is Culture? Nationalism and Internationalism - are they opposites?

**Tuesday 22 Nov. - 6pm**

Do National Liberation struggles lead to Secession and Peace? Does the state of Eelam exist?

**Tuesday 6 Dec. - 6pm**

Respect for Nature and Life (Human Rights and Environmental Studies) - Should these be core-curriculum subjects from primary education?

**Transport:** Russell Square Underground and 5 minutes walk to Thornhaugh Street WCI.

No bookings necessary and no charge is made. The series would be of special interest to students, cultural and religious groups and those interested in environmental and human rights issues.

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