

# TAMIL INFORMATION

NEWS BULLETIN OF  
THE TAMIL INFORMATION CENTRE

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1996

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Nos.59-62

## Widespread Torture by Security forces

Tamil Information Centre is concerned at continuing reports of arbitrary arrests, detention, torture and ill-treatment of Tamil detainees, at the prison conditions and the lack of facilities at detention centres. At the beginning of June 1996, there were 658 Tamils under detention orders in various prisons and detention centres throughout the country, some of whom have been held for long periods under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and Emergency regulations. Most of them were detained in Kalutara and Colombo Magazine prisons. Over 150 were held in Police stations alone in June 1996. Reports also say that details on the number of persons detained in unidentified military camps and makeshift camps were difficult to obtain.

According to MP Joseph Pararajasingham, in August 1996, over 1,100 Tamil youths were in detention, 300 in custody for over two years, some over four years. This does not include the 76 youths arrested in Jaffna after the Sri Lankan army occupied the peninsula. Forty seven of the detainees from Jaffna were produced in courts at Anuradhapura, a Sinhalese area, on 20 September. Large crowds had gathered outside the court and wanted to lynch the prisoners. Although President Chandrika has been informed of the danger the prisoners face, they are scheduled to be produced once again in a hostile environment before the Anuradhapura Court. MPs say that the 76 prisoners have been detained by police for over three months and confessions extracted from them under torture. According to sources, 20 Tamil women held in Welikade prison are suffering due to lack of sanitation and basic needs such as tooth paste, sanitary towels and clothes.

On 23 June, 29 hill country Tamil youths in Magazine prison launched a fast unto death protest demanding release or trial. Most of them are in detention for over 18 months. By 29 June, the number of prisoners fasting in the prison had increased

to 200. A further 183 from Kalutara prison also joined the fast. The fast ended after seven days following the intervention by Ceylon National Workers Congress President M S Sellasamy, who assured that the grievances of the detainees would be brought to the attention of the authorities and dealt with in six months. The Attorney-General's Department remarked that cases were often delayed because of lack of interpretation and translation facilities and gave assurance that they would deal with the cases as quickly as possible. The Department also agreed to make improvements in prison conditions.

Throughout August, a large number of Tamils were arrested from southern towns and from plantation areas, as attacks on the military by the LTTE continued in the North-East and a train was bombed near Dehiwala railway station. Jeganathan Chandramohan, 23 from Ragala in the Hill country who left home at 5 pm on 2 August to go to Colombo by train to visit his cousin Subramaniam in Ja-Ela has disappeared. Similarly, a 45 year-old Tamil woman who went to the Fort Railway station in Colombo to take the train to Vavuniya at 9.45 pm on 5 August has also disappeared.

Amnesty International says in an August report titled *Sri Lanka: Wavering commitment to human rights*, that at least 62 Tamils disappeared since April 1995 to the beginning of 1996 after arrest by the Sri Lankan security forces.

Disappearance in Sri Lanka is a major concern of human rights agencies. Since the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance was established in 1980, it has recorded 11,479 disappearances in Sri Lanka, the second highest after Iraq. In its January 1996 report, the Working Group says it is alarmed at the re-emerging pattern of systematic disappearances.

In Jaffna, student Krishanthi Kumarasamy disappeared on 7 September after she was detained at a checkpoint. Her mother, brother and a neighbour who went in search of her on the same day also disappeared after being detained at the same checkpoint. Later their bodies were found in shallow graves. Krishanthi had been gang-raped by nine soldiers before being killed. Amnesty says that the few court cases against security force members in connection with disappearances and extrajudicial killings are slow, as are investigations into other cases.

Tamil Information Centre continue to receive new information indicating that despite denial by the security forces many disappearances of men and women are tak-

**"The Layman's lament was, Doctors do little, Lawyers do less and Policemen and Analysts add to the mess" says Supreme Court Judge speaking out on Torture in Sri Lanka**

Addressing the meeting of the Medico-Legal Society of Sri Lanka, on 9 November 1996, Supreme Court Judge P Ramanathan said that the Court has made a number of judicial pronouncements against the use of torture and inhuman treatment by law enforcement officers but regardless, torture in police stations continued unabated. Where there is evidence of bodily injury caused to a person, when he was in the custody of the police, the court may presume that the injury was caused by the police officers, having custody of that person, during that period. The police force has concentrated power of recording statements, investigations and prosecution and tends to take short-cuts by assaults and torture, the judge said.

ing place after the military occupation of Jaffna. According to reports, young girls and female teachers are subjected to severe harassment by soldiers at military checkpoints. Young women are the principle victims of the army. The following excerpts are from information received from TIC sources in Jaffna alleging harassment and disappearance of women in the Jaffna District. (For fear of reprisals against them, their families or friends the sources are not identified).

"At a military checkpoint, a girl was openly asked by a soldier to marry him. She had refused. The next day she was accused that she is a "Tiger" and arrested by the army and raped. She was held in Jaffna for a while. The army deny the arrest".

"A young school girl was subjected to daily harassment by a soldier at a military check point. One day he planted a bomb in her schoolbag while checking which she was unaware. But another girl beside her saw what the soldier did. The girl was allowed to move on. The soldier had apparently called the next check point and informed that the girl was carrying a bomb. The bomb was discovered and she was detained. The girl who saw what happened came to her rescue and explained what she saw to the Military Commander who arrived at the scene. The soldier denied the accusation, but later admitted because of the girl's evidence."

"A girl from Kondavil went to inform her relatives of her journey abroad. She had not returned and the alarm was raised. A man had seen a girl being stopped at a nearby checkpoint and taken away by the army. The girl's whereabouts are still not known".

"At Meesalai, troops identified houses where there are young girls, during their patrol. They went into a house and raped and killed a girl in front of her father. The father was brutally assaulted when he tried to stop them. The dead body of the girl was taken to the Chavakadcheri hospital. Troops denied the incident at first but later admitted because of strong witness to the event"

The main reason for the disappearances seems to be the extensive powers granted to the security forces relating to arrest and detention. The Emergency regulations allow the Defence Secretary to detain any suspected person for a year on a detention order, without being produced

before a court. Thereafter the person may be held for indefinite periods on the orders of a magistrate. Those suspected of committing an offence under the regulations can be held in custody for upto 60 days in the North-East and seven days in Colombo and surrounding areas. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) allows detention for three months which can be extended upto 18 months. Often, charges are changed so that cases of those arrested under Emergency regulations fall under the PTA to prolong detention, incommunicado without charge or trial.

Under Emergency regulations, if the security forces claim that a death took place during an armed confrontation, inquest proceedings may be bypassed. Thereafter inquest proceedings may be initiated only by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the High Court is empowered to consider only the evidence placed by the IGP. Amnesty International says the provisions of the PTA and the Emergency regulations fall far short of international standards and in fact encourage security forces to commit human rights violations.

Tamils arrested in roundups in Colombo and the South are usually held in police stations and a list of their names are sent to the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and the Crimes Detention Bureau (CDB). Those detained must be cleared by these three agencies before release. Under Emergency regulations, a detainee can be held anywhere and taken to any place.

Human rights agencies say that the presidential directives issued last year, following concerns raised by Tamil political parties, are not followed in most instances. The directives say (1) the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) must be informed within 24 hours of arrest, (2) relatives must be informed within 24 hours, (3) receipts for arrests must be issued to the relatives (4) the detainee must be produced before a magistrate within 48 hours.

Torture in custody is a major concern of Tamils. New evidence from recently released prisoners and persons taken for questioning in round-ups suggest that torture is rife throughout the country and that anybody suspected of coming from the North-East is at risk. There are a number of applications before the Supreme Court alleging torture. Amnesty International has documented incidents of torture and says

it has received reports of torture in Colombo in the custody of the CID/CDB and the Special Task Force (STF). Amnesty has also documented several cases of rape by security forces.

In an application to the Supreme Court S. Ravichandran says he was severely tortured in a Batticaloa Army Camp in February and a confession was obtained from him under threat of torture in the Colombo Magazine prison. S. Sivalingam, currently in Magazine prison says he was tortured at the Jaffna Nadeswara College army camp in July.

The most frequent forms of torture described to the Tamil Information Centre by former detainees include various kinds of beating: punching, slapping (Telephone method, slapping across the ears), kicking, blows with plastic pipes filled with concrete, iron rods, gun butts and truncheons.

Other forms of torture include:

- Hanging by the thumbs or feet and tortured by means of "sumarino", by "dry" and "wet" methods: in the former, a shopping bag is placed over the head of the detainee and tied around the neck (chilli or pepper powder is sometimes introduced into the nose); in the latter, the head is lowered into containers of (usually polluted) water. Such practice is continued to the point of suffocation, and asphyxiation is possible.

- "Dharma Chakra", the prisoner's hands and feet are tied together and a pole is passed between the tied limbs and the body. The ends of the poles are placed on the edges of two tables, and the prisoner is rotated and beaten all over the body.

- beating of the genitals; and thrusting of bottles or other objects into female genitals.

- pulling out pubic hair with pliers

- forcing young boys to repeated masturbation.

- hanging by the feet and beating, hanging by the feet for many hours.

- pushing pins down finger nails, inserting spikes into the body, burning with lighted cigarettes all parts of the body including the tongue, slitting the skin and

pouring salt water.

- keeping without food for many days and giving salt water to drink or giving rice mixed with small stones.

- keeping with handcuffs throughout the night, not allowing to sleep throughout the night by flashing powerful light on the face, keeping in the nude for many days, forcing to kneel down on hot sand or gravel for many hours, forcing to swim in sand in the nude.

- If detainee faints after severe assault, reviving him by pouring water and then begin assaulting again.

- forcing to drink urine and water from the commode.

- stripping naked and repeatedly giving shocks with high voltage current on the shouldres, armpits and inside the legs.

Impunity also remains a major concern of the Tamil community. Although the Sri Lankan government has continued to stress that effective measures have been introduced to check and monitor human rights abuses by armed force personnel, the fact remains that since election of the People's Alliance government in August 1994, no security personnel had been punished for crimes committed. Some human rights lawyers say that only a few security personnel have been arrested and are doubtful that they will ever be brought to book. Twenty two policemen were arrested in connection with the murder of 31 Tamils in custody in late 1995. Most of the Tamils had been killed at the Colombo headquarters of the Special Task Force (STF) and their bodies dumped into lakes. The policemen have been granted bail and have returned to active service. In February two more bodies were found in the Mirigama Lake. The body of Trincomalee student K.Arulkumar was found in Bambalapitiya on 17 February. Three more bodies were recovered in and around Colombo in August.

The murder of Colombo trader Selliah Subramaniam is an example of the fate that may befall Tamils arrested by the the security forces. Mr. Subramaniam was arrested in Colombo by police officers from the Vavuniya Counter Subversive Unit (CSU) on 9 March. He was taken to Vavuniya and while in custody severely assaulted. He was released on 8 July by

### LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA

Your Excellency the President

My husband Nagamuthu Selvaratnam, age 57 of 43 Ponnambalam Road, Ariyalai is a government appointed co-ordinating teacher. He went to work in the morning at about 8 am. on 14.6.96. Yet he had neither been to work nor had come home that day. That is why I started looking for him. I was told that my husband was taken by the army at the Pungankulam barrier. So many had seen that. They had taken his bicycle also. The army barrier is on the Jaffna Road about 2km. away from our house. I went there and inquired them about my husband. They said that they did not arrest him. I made a complaint about this to the Director of Education, Government Agent and the police. The Director of Education and the GA have approached the police about this. But, it is disappointing that no favourable reply has been obtained up to now. We were wandering like refugees and when the army captured Jaffna we hoped we will have peace and protection. But this hope vanished after I lost my husband. Our place is under the control of the army and it is referred to as the liberated area. If such events, without any respect to a person's age, could take place in the liberated areas, it makes us feel lost. It also makes me shudder and confused. Because, you gave assurance that Jaffna people will be given peaceful and prosperous life.

I am devastated. I have lost my husband to the very same army who said that they have given us the freedom and protection. I have become mentally and physically weak. My husband has been in the government service for the past 25 yrs. He had never been involved in any activities against the government.

You are a very sympathetic person. Peace, conciliation and protection are the assurances that you gave during the election. Hoping that you will very well understand my mental agony, I appeal to you to take the necessary step to release my husband.

I am really scared that every second passing would result in danger to his life.

With thanks and expecting a reply I am closing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Sgd. Rasamani Selvaratnam

the Vavuniya Magistrate's Court. He disappeared on the same day when he went to the CSU to collect his passport and identity card. He had been killed and his body burned by police officers. His charred remains were found in Nickawaretiya. Six police officers from the CSU have been arrested. But no one believes that they will be punished for their crimes.

The plight of Tamil prisoners has been brought to President Chandrika's notice on several occasions. Amnesty says that there is clear evidence that Presidential directives are not being followed. Even the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) has no access to some of

the military detention centres well known for torture. There are also many unauthorised places of detention.

The police and military attitude seems to be that Tamil prisoners can be treated in any manner while the LTTE threat continues. Meanwhile the government has launched a massive campaign abroad, in which "improvement of human rights since it gained power" is featured as an important factor. International refugee agency UNHCR supports the government in this respect. But human rights agencies have made it clear that the human rights situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated.

# Repatriation of Tamil Asylum Seekers: What's in it for UNHCR

The world's refugee problem is of major concern today, with more than 20 million 'external' refugees forced to flee their countries and a further 25 million refugees driven from their homes and displaced within their own borders. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has moved increasingly toward assisting and protecting internally displaced persons, often in situations of ethnic conflict. UNHCR acknowledges the necessity of addressing the root causes of persecution and displacement to prevent exodus of refugees, but continues to place voluntary repatriation high on its agenda, often without regard to civil wars raging in the refugees' countries of origin. The current refugee crisis has led to tragic consequences. Firstly, the massive number of refugees has weakened the concept of burden-sharing by the international community and endangered the long tradition of granting asylum to those in genuine need of protection. Secondly, Western countries are increasingly subscribing to Europe's new fortress policy and are putting up barriers against the refugee influx. Lastly, a lack of funding continues to curtail all of UNHCR's initiatives.

There are around half a million Tamil refugees in Europe and North America and 150,000 in South India. Another half a million are internally displaced. The sheer numbers

have led the Tamils to become one of the most visible and controversial refugee communities in the world today without any attempt being made at understanding their problems in the national and international context. The Tamils have also become UNHCR's "guinea-pigs".

UNHCR became involved in Sri Lanka in 1987, when the Indian and the Sri Lankan governments signed an agreement to end the armed conflict. Clause 2.16 (d) of the accord, provided for the repatriation of displaced Sri Lankan Tamils from Tamil Nadu in southern India. On 31 August 1987, the UNHCR and the Sri Lankan government signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing an UNHCR presence with financial and operational co-operation for refugee relief and rehabilitation in Sri Lanka. Under UNHCR's Special Programme of Limited Assistance 25,000 Tamils were returned from India between December 1987 and April 1989.

In June 1990, three months after the withdrawal of the Indian military from Sri Lanka, the Tamil areas of the island were once again consumed by violent conflict and 16,000 refugees fled to India. The UNHCR, with assistance from the Indian Government, established a

Programme of Immediate Relief Assistance to Returnees and internally displaced persons, in September 1990 to prevent refugees fleeing abroad. The UNHCR instituted two Open Relief Centres (ORC), to provide temporary refuge to displaced persons, one on government-controlled Mannar Island, at Pesalai and the other at Madhu in Mannar mainland controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

In January 1992, the Indian and Sri Lankan governments began a second repatriation programme. UNHCR initially declined to assist with reception and reintegration of refugees returning on the new programme, citing continuing concern over the security situation in Sri Lanka and doubts over the "voluntary" nature of the return. But in June 1992 UNHCR agreed to monitor the camps for the returnees in India's controversial repatriation programme. In return, India offered to allow the UNHCR a token presence in Tamil Nadu. Without access to Indian refugee camps and limited operational ability to monitor returnees in Sri Lanka, UNHCR's policy on repatriation came under severe criticism by the Tamil community organisations, refugee agencies and other international NGOs.

UNHCR's operational capacities and objectives in Sri Lanka were further questioned, when in June 1992, it testified to the safety of the Tamils in the central and southern regions of Sri Lanka, thereby encouraging the return of rejected asylum-seekers from other countries. UNHCR said it would not object to the return of asylum-seekers "provided basic safeguards of a fair determination procedure have been observed and the possible consequences of return have

been assessed taking into account the relative risk of a changing mosaic of safe or unsafe areas". UNHCR added that "in general terms, the situation in Sri Lanka is marked by continued and protracted civil war and the absence, in the opinion of all observers, of any realistic expectation for any political settlement". While making these recommendations, UNHCR admitted that it lacked adequate monitoring capacity in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it stated that it would not be responsible for those who are returned to Sri Lanka, but that it would be involved in "passive monitoring". This would imply the close co-operation and co-ordination between the Embassies of governments involved in repatriation of refugees, the UNHCR branch office in Colombo and the Sri Lankan authorities.

UNHCR's position on the return of Tamil asylum seekers came under further criticism by all Tamil organisations and international NGOs involved in Sri Lanka. The Tamil Information Centre pointed out the involuntary nature of the returns of the asylum seekers, the deteriorating security situation in Sri Lanka and the inability of UNHCR to provide adequate protection to the returnees. USA-based human rights agency Asia Watch called on both governments of Sri Lanka and India to halt the repatriation of Tamils unless there are firm guarantees that refugees were returning voluntarily and they will not be subjected to persecution.

UNHCR, however, disregarded the concerns of the Tamils and the international community and began to take a more active role in relation to Tamil asylum seekers in the West. It recommended the return of rejected refugees to Sri Lanka declaring falsely that Colombo and

southern parts of the island are safe for returnees. This paved way for the Western governments to return rejected Tamil asylum seekers. UNHCR argued that among those seeking asylum, particularly in Europe and North America, there are persons who are not in need of international protection and who are becoming an increasing burden on the receiving countries, thus illustrating clearly that the UNHCR is not concerned about protection of refugees, but, about the refugees "becoming an increasing burden on the receiving countries". In other words, the Western countries are paying millions of dollars to the UN agency to relieve this "burden".

In assuming a proactive role to promote voluntary repatriation of Tamils, the international refugee agency UNHCR says in a September 1996 statement that the "impression of constant and general harassment of Tamils constitutes an exaggeration which is not compatible with reality". The continuing Tamil harassment in Sri Lanka has been pointed out by a number of NGOs. This issue of the *Tamil Information* provides information on the growing concerns over the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Past issues of *Tamil Information* have continued to highlight the situation in Sri Lanka.

UNHCR further says in the statement that Tamils are checked more frequently or exposed to investigation, not because they are Tamils, but because LTTE is a Tamil movement and draws support of Tamils. The second section of this statement confirms that Tamils are harassed because they are Tamils. The LTTE and the other Tamil militant groups emerged as a result of many years of discrimination and violence against the Tamil community. If UNHCR would care to read Sri Lankan his-

tory it would find that the UNP election manifesto of 1977 says that the "lack of solutions to their problems has made the Tamil-speaking people to support even a movement for the creation of a separate state". The main problems referred to in the manifesto, education, colonisation, employment and the use of Tamil language are yet to be solved. The Tamil Information Centre agrees with UNHCR that the situation is complex, in fact much more complex than UNHCR officials wish to present.

Furthermore, Amnesty International in a June 1993 report said that hundreds of Tamil people appear to have been detained solely on the basis of their ethnic origin. The situation has changed little since then. In its August 1996 report *Wavering commitment to human rights*, Amnesty says that thousands of Tamils were arrested since the resumption of the armed conflict and a significant number have been held without charge or trial. The Sri Lankan Movement for the Defence of Democratic Rights has already declared that security measures are leading to harassment of the Tamil community.

UNHCR says that the number of people rounded up and kept in detention in Colombo has not changed over the last few months and remained at previous low levels. UNHCR, in its misinformation campaign, has conveniently forgotten about the 1,500 Tamils in detention, 300 of them over two years and some of them for over four years. The provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the Emergency regulations are used to prolong detention without charge or trial, not because there is any evidence against them but because they are Tamils. UNHCR must realise

that these provisions are hardly used against the Sinhalese people. UNHCR has also not mentioned the assaults on Tamil prisoners by prison guards. Attacks by over hundred prison guards on Tamils in February received widespread publicity. UNHCR has also conveniently forgotten that a large number of Tamils over 15,000, have disappeared. A number of Tamils have been killed in custody in 1995 and 1996. Has UNHCR forgotten these incidents or does UNHCR believe that Tamil lives are expendable for some "greater cause"? UNHCR has also stated as follows: "It was confirmed (by human rights groups and monitoring bodies like HRTF) that particularly in Colombo the treatment of detainees remained correct and torture and other forms of mistreatment were not practised by the police or security authorities in Colombo". UNHCR makes this statement as though it has had access to all detention centres and has interviewed all those who allege torture.

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment are constantly made against the police and security forces. In February the Supreme Court awarded Rs. 20,000 in the torture application of R.G.P. Sugunapala. The Tamil Information Centre has documented a number of cases of torture while in custody. Amnesty International in its August 1996 report says that "in Colombo there were reports of torture in the custody of the CID, CDB and STF. Amnesty has also documented several cases of rape.

In the Amnesty International 1996 publication, *A Glimpse of Hell*, writing on torture world-wide, Mike Jempson says that in many countries the notoriety of the buildings where torture occurs strikes fear in people's hearts. He refers to several buildings around the world including the in-

telligence headquarters like 'the fourth floor' of the Criminal Investigation Department in Colombo.

Mr. Jempson further says as follows: "In Mexico the victim is suspended by the feet, knees, wrists or arms from the pole known as the *pollo restizado* or parrot's perch. The Sri Lankan variant is known as *dharma chakra*, "the wheel of Buddha's teaching". Duncan Forest says that in countries where a repressive government faced with armed rebellion, whole areas are subjected to periodic displays of power. In the North-East he says the Sri Lankan security forces raid villages and take all young males, after beating them up in view of the rest of the village, for interrogation that involves gross physical and psychological abuse.

According to reports received by the Tamil Information Centre, Selvaratnam Thanapalan of Jaffna claimed political asylum in Switzerland in July 1993. His claim was rejected and he was deported to Sri Lanka on 23 July 1996. When he was deported, Swiss authorities assured that he will be received by Red cross, UNHCR and Swiss embassy officials at the Colombo airport and provide him protection. When he arrived in Colombo no one received him.

Mr. Thanapalan was arrested on 12 August 1996 by army officers who called him out of the lodge on Sri Kathiresan Street where he was living. He was handcuffed, blindfolded and taken to a detention centre where he was interrogated. He told the officers present that he had no links with the LTTE.

He was then hung by his legs and his head immersed in water. As he suffocated an army officer continued to hit him on his back. He was thus tortured for five hours.

On 13 August he was taken to the Colombo Pettah Police station where he was held till 20 August. His statement was recorded by the CID, CDB and the NIB and before being released he was warned not to reveal information about his torture.

Mr. Thanapalan has informed the ICRC and the Swiss embassy about his detention and torture. Mr. Thanapalan says that he was interviewed by UNHCR officials who were interested only in finding out who helped him to prepare an affidavit on his torture which he had handed to the ICRC.

UNHCR reiterates in its statement that complaints of abuse are a gross exaggeration and that in general terms as far as the normal Tamil is concerned the measures taken by the authorities do not manifest themselves either in the form of persecution or other forms of human rights violations. UNHCR, which has admitted in an earlier statement that it has no adequate monitoring capacity, may make such false claims for political reasons. Tamil MPs have repeatedly highlighted in and outside Parliament human rights violations against the Tamil people. They have also written hundreds of letters to President Kumaratunga about disappearances, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests and bombing and destruction of entire Tamil villages by security forces. Local and international NGOs continue to press the Sri Lankan government to end the war and bring an end to torture, arbitrary detention and other violations under Sri Lanka's long running state of Emergency. UNHCR is wilfully blind and contributes to the persecution of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

# Health of Children in Conflict Zones of Sri Lanka

Children are the passive recipients of the atrocities of the war around them. Without alternative vision, children have little choice but to join the cycle of repression, retaliation and fear. Children react to traumatising events in much the same way as adults. They have strong memories of the events. Where children differ from adults is they often cannot express their distress. Instead it is reflected in behavioural patterns. In many cases, children's distress goes undetected or is misperceived. In other instances reactions are inappropriate. These formative experiences can leave scars which persist throughout a person's life.

Previous studies on the impact of war on children have shown that they can recover much more easily from major traumatic incidents if they have strong social and emotional support through which behavioural abnormalities are approached sensitively. The basic need, however, is that family relationships need to be maintained wherever possible. In this respect, governments have a greater responsibility in preventing collapse of family systems. The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides clear guidance on the role of the state. The Convention entered into force and became part of international law on 2 September 1990. It underscores the child's right to priority care in zones of armed conflict and provides clear guidance on the role of the state. But, whether the governments adhere to these guidelines or respect the law is another matter. Sri Lanka ratified the Convention in 1991. Articles 38 and 39 of the Convention apply specifically to the psycho-social needs of children.

In Sri Lanka children have been

exposed to violence for many years and little attention had been paid to their psychological needs. Reports indicate that over 400,000 children have been affected by the war in Sri Lanka. There is growing concern over the magnitude of the mental health problem of children. The crisis could deepen further if priority is not given to the problem.

The "Health Reach" programme based in McMaster University of Canada in collaboration with Family Rehabilitation Centre in Sri Lanka and other medical professionals from the University of Sri Jayawardenepura's medical faculty and the professional Psychological Counselling Centre, carried out a study on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from January to February 1995 during the time of the cessation of hostilities between the LTTE and the government forces. The results of the study were published in July 1996 drawing attention to the need for discussion on psycho-social care for children affected by the armed conflict. Addressing the psycho-social needs of children exposed to armed conflicts is an ongoing process rather than a one-time intervention. The study's findings have significance for government policy-makers and for NGO programme strategies.

A total of 308 children (11 - 14 yrs) from eight schools from the Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim communities were selected in Batticaloa, Kurunegala and Polonnaruwa districts for this study. The selected schools were located in communities known to be highly traumatised. Tamil-speaking children from four Batticaloa schools and Sinhalese-speaking children from four schools from Polonnaruwa and Kurunegala had been selected. A total of sixty women at local level were selected and trained in interviewing skills, child trauma psychology and the use of the War Trauma Questionnaire. Foreign personnel were also involved in administering the questionnaires. The interviews were held for four consecutive days at each school. The

children who were part of armed groups and actively involved in the fighting were not included in the study as access to them was not possible. The children studied were those resident in settled communities with their families.

The study has revealed that mainly children at 13 years of age are affected. Of this category 51% are males and 49% females. The War Trauma Questionnaire used in this study showed that there was a difference in the level of war trauma stress among children in Tamil-speaking Batticaloa and other two Sinhalese-speaking areas. Comparing the two Sinhalese-speaking areas, the children in Polonnaruwa had witnessed massacres or been exposed to violence at a higher level than Kurunegala. In Kurunegala victims were few and comparatively held as none.

The study has revealed that there was a high level of school dropouts and more than half of those exposed to the conflict were from the Batticaloa schools. A quarter of the 308 sample children had personally been victims of violence, especially in Batticaloa and 4% had suffered torture.

The study also reveals that 88% of the children have PTSD. A second test, the Bireleson Depression Inventory showed that 27% of children in the sample had suffered symptoms of depression to warrant professional intervention. Of this group 8% had scored sufficiently high on the Bireleson Depression scale to indicate that a clinical syndrome existed and intervention was highly necessary.

It should be noted that children in the high trauma group were more likely to have lost family members and been separated from their parents or main carer. On the other hand, those witnessing violence to others, being forced into hiding or to change residence and more general exposures to armed conflict were less likely to suffer PTSD.

There was an appreciable difference in

## TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by the Centre in June - September 1996

the general level of trauma reported by children in different districts. However, the sampling was not meant to be representative of larger communities due to problems of access in view of the precarious security situation. Therefore, the results cannot be used to describe effects on the population beyond the local communities.

The study recommends that children be screened and assessed for psychological problems and provided support before secondary problems begin to develop i.e. wreck the social relationship and disrupt education.

In its final analysis the HEALTH REACH has recommended that participatory and non-medicalised approaches towards working therapeutically with children be developed and has proposed the following HEALTH REACH plans for the future:

- 1) Develop the butterfly Garden in Batticaloa as a Model for community-based child focused health initiative (possible twin sites outside of Colombo and in Jaffna peninsula).
- 2) Facilitate Teacher Sensitisation and Training Workshops on identification of symptoms of trauma and appropriate responses.
- 3) Assist in the co-ordination of regional conference in Sri Lanka on psycho-social needs of children in armed conflict.
- 4) Develop and pre-test Genogram with children in Batticaloa Butterfly Garden.
- 5) Establish linkages with local universities regarding Methods Development for Rapid Assessment and Peace Studies Collaboration.
- 6) Conduct participatory research/ intervention regarding the effects of armed conflict on women (mothers of the children surveyed).

### SHR 3958

Statement of the Secretary of State's views of the current situation in Sri Lanka  
London: Home Office Sri Lanka Policy Unit; July 1996  
5p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Situation Report / War / Displaced People / UNHCR / Refugees / Asylum in the UK / Tamils

### SHR 3959

Peace possibilities and obstacles: Proceedings of the International conference on the conflict in Sri Lanka: Peace with justice  
Australia: 1996  
8p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Situation Report / Peace Initiative / Trade Unions / Strike / Freedom of Expression / Elections / Recommendations / Nava Sama Samaja Party

### OHR 341

Peace Brigades International Annual Report 1995  
London: Peace Brigades International; 1996  
13p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Human Rights / NGOs / Sri Lanka / Guatemala / North America / Haiti / Colombia / Bosnia

### SHR 3960

Dawn of Freedom by Nidahase Arunalu  
Sri Lanka: The Publication of Department of Government Information; August 1996  
36p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Emergency Regulations / Commission on Human Rights / Convention on Prevention of Torture / Prevention of Terrorism Act / Commission of Inquiry / Freedom of Expression / Devolution of Power /

### Foreign Policy / Development / Economy

### SHR 3961

Sri Lanka: political and human rights update: question and answer series  
Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board; August 1996  
51p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Arrests / Detention / Women / Children / Media / Repatriation / India / Politics / Negotiations / Chronology / Economic Blockade / Commission of Inquiry / Disappearance / Ceasefire / Muslims / Killing / Detention Centres

### SHR 3962

Jaffna: the contest between man & the beast within  
Sri Lanka: The University Teachers For Human Rights, Jaffna, 29 August 1996  
23p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Situation Report / Northern Province / Torture / Disappearance / War / Killing / Civilian / Security Forces

### SHR 3965

Peace with justice: international conference on the conflict in Sri Lanka  
Australia: Australian Human Rights Foundation; 27th July 1996  
171p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** History / Muslim / Ethnic Problem / War / Peace Initiative / LTTE / Human Rights / Self-determination / Tamil Nationalism

### SHR 3873

Tamil as official language by A Theva Rajan  
Colombo: International Centre For Ethnic Studies; 1995  
126p.



# TIC ACCESSION LIST

A selection of documents received by the Centre in June - September 1996

**DESCRIPTORS:** Official Language / Sixteenth Amendment / Provincial Council / Education

**SHR 3964**

Deliberate and Arbitrary killing / Fear of further killing

London: Amnesty International; 13 June 1996  
2p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** LTTE / Killing / Women / Children / Sinhalese

**PC 4866**

NGO legislation : the Sri Lankan case by Koen Van Brabant

London: Refugee Participation Network; May 1995

Issue 19, 4p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** NGO's / Sri Lanka

**PC 4867**

The legal status of LTTE by Karan Parker

New York: Tamil Voice; 1996  
1p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Self Determination / LTTE / Terrorism

**PC 4868**

The Sri Lankan ethnic crisis in the light of global capitalism by Ameer Ali

Sri Lanka: Pravada Publication; August 1996  
8p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Ethnic Problem / Economy / Statistics of destruction of infrastructure / LTTE / Terrorism

**PC 4869**

The EU and conflict prevention

London: New Routes; 1996  
Vol.1, No.2, 2p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** International Security / European Union /

Intra-State Warfare / Humanitarian Assistance / Refugee / Role of EU Early Warning

**PC 4870**

Women's Rights - Human Rights by Nimalka Fernando

Sri Lanka: Law & Society Trust Review; June 1996  
11p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Women / Human Rights

**SGN 447**

Out and About by Lakshmi Srikantha Rajah

London: Merton Young Poets; 1995

7p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Poems / Children / English

**SGN 448**

Population statistics of Batticaloa District

Colombo: Ministry of Health, Highways and Social services, August 1995

30p

**DESCRIPTORS:** Population / Statistics / Batticaloa District

**OHR 342**

Barriers to protection: Turkey's asylum regulations by Bill Frelick

Washington: US Committee for Refugees; July 1996

21p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Asylum Procedure / Refugees / Turkey / Iranians / Iraqis / UNHCR

**OHR 343**

The Asylum & Immigration Act 1996: What it means, Related measures, Timetable

London: Refugee Advisers Support Unit; September 1996

9p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Refugees / Asylum Appeal / Employment / Shortened Determination

**Procedure**

**SER**

Sarvadesa Tamiler (International Tamils)

Norway: N.S.Pirupu; September 1996

48p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Short Stories / Health / Tamil Development / Tamil Literature / Ethnic Conflict / Male Fertility / Computers in Medical Profession

**SER**

World Bank Environmental Projects

Washington: World Bank Environment Department; July 1995-June 1996

20p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Protection of Environment / Profile of Projects / Investment Work Program / Ozone Layer

**SER**

Law & Society Trust Fortnightly Review

Sri Lanka: Law & Society Trust; February 1996

35p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** Sri Lanka / National Human Rights Commission / Civil Rights

**SER**

AMPO: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review

Japan: Pacific Asia Resource Centre; August 1996

56p.

**DESCRIPTORS:** US-Japan Security Treaty / Asian Region / Super Power Interests / Human Rights

## JUNE DIARY

**JUNE 01**

**OPERATION SHOCK:** The government launched "Operation Shock" declaring the power supply service as an essential service. Electricity Department strikers were escorted by the police to the work places. Trade Unions complained about police brutality. The President of the Joint Council of Telecommunications Trade Unions Dissanayake who had expressed support for the strike was shot at by gunmen.

**LTTE SETTLEMENT:** A new model settlement colony at Puthukudiyiruppu and Kaiveli areas in Vanni was opened by the LTTE political leader Karikalan. The settlement colony includes a housing scheme, a first aid centre and a commercial complex.

**JUNE 02**

**KILLED BY MINES:** Eight people including children were killed and four seriously wounded when their tractor ran over a landmine at Puthur in the Jaffna District. According to TIC sources over 39 civilians were killed in anti-personnel mines during the last two months in the north.

**JUNE 03**

**DISAPPEARANCE IN COLOMBO:** N.Kirupanandamoorthy, 37, an Electrical Superintendent disappeared from the Ramakrishna Mission Hostel in capital Colombo where he was resident.

**JUNE 04**

**APPEAL FOR HELP:** Chairman of the Union of Non-Governmental Organisations in Mullaitivu District Rev Fr Crusz urged the local people and NGOs to generously support the initiatives of their member organisations and the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation involved in relief work in the District.

**STUDENT PROTEST:** Tamil students in the Vanni organised a protest march against government's disinterest in their education. A petition was handed over to the Kilinochchi Government Agent and aid agencies working in the Vanni.

**JUNE 05**

**FOOD RESTRICTION BY THE ARMY:** Soldiers stationed in Mannar Island informed the people that no food or non-food items should be taken to the Mannar mainland controlled by the LTTE.

**JUNE 06**

**LTTE STRIKES IN JAFFNA:** Seven soldiers were killed when an army patrol was attacked at Meesalai in Jaffna District. Two LTTE cadres were also killed in this encounter. After another clash at Puthur soldiers recovered the body of an LTTE member.

**TAMIL YOUTH DISAPPEARS:** S.Sridhar, on his way home from his work place at 5th Cross Street in Colombo, went missing before reaching Sri Kathiresan Street, a few hundred metres away. People expressed fear that he had been abducted by an army death squad.

**JUNE 07**

**CONFRONTATION IN THE EAST:** Nine policemen, four Home Guards and one civilian were killed in an LTTE attack on a police roadblock at Welikande in Polonnaruwa District. Two soldiers were killed when their guardpost at Cheddikulam in Vavuniya District was raided by the LTTE.

**JUNE 08**

**TRO OPENS HOUSING COLONY:** A new housing colony in the name of Ankayatkanni, the first woman Black Tiger, was opened at Kolunthupulavu in Kilinochchi District. The opening ceremony was presided by the vice-president of the Kilinochchi Refugees Development Society Mr Vinayagamoorthy.

**JUNE 09**

**BUSINESSMEN KILLED:** Security forces shot dead Chelvanayagam, a jeweller from Viyaparimoolai and Suntharalingam, a firewood mer-

chant from Kamparmadam in the Jaffna District. They were accused of supporting the LTTE.

**JUNE 10**

**DESTABILISING THE EAST:** Fourteen soldiers including an officer were killed when a troop patrol was ambushed by the LTTE at Jayanthiyaya on the border of Trincomalee and Polonnaruwa districts.

**JUNE 11**

**SINHALESE MASSACRED:** Fourteen Sinhalese villagers, including five women and four children at Ilavankulam in Puttalam District were massacred by unidentified persons in a night raid. Security sources blamed the LTTE for this attack.

**ARMY SHELLING:** Security forces launched air and surface attacks on villages surrounding the Elephant Pass military camp causing villagers to flee their homes. Reports say, artillery shelling continued throughout the day.

**JUNE 12**

**ATTACK BY NAVY:** A boat carrying people to Vanni was attacked by the navy off Vetrilaikerni. The boatman escaped by jumping into the sea. The passengers were fired on at close range and seven people were reported killed in the attack.

**JUNE 13**

**MOUNTING DEBT:** The government negotiated a loan agreement for \$14 million with the World Bank.

**JUNE 14**

**CIVILIAN KILLED IN JAFFNA:** The Defence Ministry reported the killing of a civilian when an agricultural tractor carrying passengers ran over a mine.

**JUNE 14**

**DISAPPEARANCE:** Nagamuthu Selvaratnam, 57 was arrested in front of number of witnesses at Punkankulam military checkpoint. The army had denied the arrest to his wife.

**JUNE 15**

## JUNE DIARY

### FAILED INFILTRATION:

Operational Headquarters of the Defence Ministry announced that three LTTE cadres were killed at Pulopalai and another three at Karanavai in Jaffna District.

### MORE LTTE CASUALTIES:

Two LTTE cadre were killed in a troop ambush at Mailambaveli in Batticaloa District. Two more LTTE members were killed in a confrontation with troops at Iyakkachi in Kilinochchi District.

JUNE 16

### HUNDREDS OF TAMILS IN PRISON WITHOUT TRIAL:

Fundamental rights applications in respect of 44 Tamils from among 500 Tamils held in prisons at Kalutara and Colombo were filed in the Supreme Court.

**DISAPPEARANCE:** ICRC received complaints that Vavuniya Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society officer, Sinnathamby Nagenthiram who went to the Thandikulam military checkpoint with Rs.200,000 had not returned and was feared killed by the security forces.

JUNE 17

**AMBUSH IN TRINCOMALEE:** An LTTE member was killed in an army ambush at Pallikkudiyiruppu in Trincomalee District.

JUNE 18

**TRAVEL RESTRICTED:** Army in Vavuniya announced restriction of travel to young Tamils through Thandikulam military checkpoint to the south between 19th to the 22nd. Reports say that the announcement followed large-scale round-up of young Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula.

JUNE 19

**CLASHES IN THE EAST:** Troops recovered the bodies of two LTTE cadres after a confrontation at Janakapura in Polonnaruwa District. Two LTTE cadres were killed in another skirmish at Siththandy in Batticaloa District.

JUNE 20

**AIR-RAIDS:** Airforce planes bombed northern sea coast of Mullaitivu District at dawn. There were no casualties reported in the attack. The attack continued for over an hour and civilians took cover in bunkers.

JUNE 21

**TROOPS KILLED BY MINE:** A tractor carrying troops near Kilali in Jaffna District was blasted by a landmine killing six soldiers and injuring two others. One LTTE cadre was killed earlier in the day in an encounter at Mirusuvil.

JUNE 22

**LANDMINE EXPLOSION:** Four soldiers were killed and two injured in a landmine explosion at Saththurukondan in Batticaloa District. **DISAPPEARANCE:** Ahileswaran Amalraj, 22 from Punkuduthivu was taken away by the army from Vepankulam military camp in Vavuniya. His father has complained that he had visited several military camps in the region but no information was available.

JUNE 23

**ARRESTS BY ARMY:** Troops surrounded Urelu and Urumpirai villages in the Jaffna District and arrested a number of young Tamils. Troops refused to provide information to parents on the whereabouts of their children. **ATTACK ON ARMY:** An army post was attacked by the LTTE in Kinniya in Trincomalee District. One soldier was reported killed and several others injured. Re-enforcements were also ambushed by the LTTE.

JUNE 24

**TAMILS DETAINED:** Reports said 736 young Tamils are currently held in the Vepankulam army detention centre in Vavuniya District. According to a young Tamil who was released, many detainees had been subjected to torture by the security forces and some detainees are said to have been killed

and their bodies disposed by the army.

JUNE 25

**ATTACK BY AIRFORCE:** Airforce planes bombed Mayanaru village in the Kilinochchi District. The attack took place around 6.30 am. Reports said houses were destroyed and a number of elderly people were seriously injured.

JUNE 26

**ICRC TRAINING:** Reports said that the ICRC was conducting training courses for soldiers and LTTE cadre on international humanitarian law.

JUNE 27

**BRIEFING DIPLOMATS:** A meeting was held by President Chandrika Kumaratunge in Colombo to brief foreign diplomats on the current situation in Sri Lanka and the government's devolution proposals.

JUNE 28

**PRISONERS FAST:** A representative from the Attorney General's Department met fasting Tamil prisoners in Magazine prison.

JUNE 29

**DISAPPEARANCES COMMISSION EXTENDED:** The President announced that she had granted extension of three months to the two commissions probing disappearances. The mandate of the third commission, the one enquiring into disappearances in the North-East, expires at the end of July was also expected to be extended.

JUNE 30

**INDESCRIMINATE SHELLING:** Nedunkerni village came under continuous shelling by the army from Samalankulam military camp. The attack which began at 9.30 am continued the whole day. A number of properties, including a school was badly damaged in the attack.

## JULY DIARY

**JULY 01**

**CHILD DIES OF SEPTICAEMIA:**

A 4 year-old displaced child named Kumaresan Pirintha from Punakari died of septicaemia due to lack of medical treatment in Kilinochchi District. The child was living with her parents at Purakadai in Ramanathapuram.

**LTTE AMBUSH:** Over 30 soldiers were reported killed in an LTTE ambush at Meegasodella in the Trincomalee District.

**JULY 02**

**MEDICAL CENTRE OPENED:**

According to LTTE reports, a media service centre for the distribution of films and for information and research was opened at Mankulam.

**JULY 03**

**AERIAL BOMBING:** The airforce bombed areas surrounding the military camp at Punakari.

**UNP REJECTS GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS:**

Opposition United National Party in a meeting with five Tamil parties declared formally that it rejects the ruling People's Alliance devolution package saying that it threatens the territorial integrity of the country.

**JULY 04**

**ATTACK ON GOVERNMENT MINISTER:**

Twenty people were killed and over 70 injured in a Black Tiger attack on the motorcade of Housing and Construction Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva on Stanley Road in Jaffna town. Eleven of the Minister's motorcade including Jaffna Military Commander Brigadier Ananda Hamangoda were killed. Jaffna District Co-ordinator, Suhanthan Rajakulendran of the White Lotus organisation promoted by the PA government was also killed. The Minister narrowly escaped with minor injuries.

**JULY 05**

**BLACK TIGER DAY CELEBRATIONS:**

Black Tiger day celebrations were held in LTTE-controlled areas in Vaharai and Paduvankarai in the

Batticaloa District.

**JULY 06**

**FORMER GOVERNMENT AGENT SHOT DEAD:**

Former Assistant Government Agent Thambu Ramalingam was shot dead by the LTTE at his house in Jaffna. Mr Ramalingam took part in government and military ceremonies following the capture of Jaffna by the army.

**JULY 07**

**TENSION IN THE EAST:** Security forces sealed off all entrances to Batticaloa town and people were checked. Residents of the town trapped outside were denied entry and forced to spend the nights elsewhere.

**JULY 08**

**NEDUNKERNI SHELLED:** The army at Kent and Dollar Farms fired shells at Nedunkerni in Mullaitivu District causing damage.

**JULY 09**

**ATTACK ON SOLDIERS:** Four soldiers were killed and seven injured in a landmine blast in Karaveddy in the Jaffna District.

**JULY 10**

**WOMAN KILLED:** Ms Arulammah a 33 year-old widow, was shot dead by unknown persons at night at her house in Valaichenai in Batticaloa District.

**JULY 11**

**ATTACK ON TROOPS:** Six Special Task Force commandos were killed in an LTTE attack near Pannalagama military camp in the Amparai District. LTTE also destroyed two military vehicles carrying the commandos. Lt. Mathai of LTTE was killed in the attack.

**JULY 12**

**LTTE BUILD UP IN THE EAST:** Reports said that large number of LTTE women cadre have crossed over to Batticaloa from Vanni and most were concentrated in the Vavunathivu area.

**JULY 13**

**RAPE BY NAVY:** A young Tamil

woman who booked in at a Colombo lodging house prior to a trip to Canada was raped by two navy personnel. The Malighakanda magistrate has issued orders to hold the sailors in remand for 14 days.

**JULY 14**

**INDIAN SUPPORT TO THE NAVY:**

A government source confirmed that Indian navy provides escort to Sri Lankan navy plying between Jaffna and Trincomalee.

**JULY 15**

**TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS BY MILITARY:**

Reports said North-East Provincial administration employees have been instructed to obtain permission from military officers to travel to Vavuniya. Permission should be sought from the military commander of the 4th regiment in Vavuniya city. Cheddikulam travellers should seek permission from the commander of the 8th regiment stationed in Cheddikulam.

**JULY 16**

**EPRLF ACCUSED OF EXTORTION:**

A group of businessmen from Batticaloa Town accused EPRLF leader Raszik and his men for harassment and extortion. Razik operating from former MP Sam Tambimuttu's house in Batticaloa has been accused of several other crimes in the area. EPRLF leaders in Colombo have said that Razik and his men have left their movement.

**JULY 17**

**SECURITY REMOVED:** Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalitha criticised the Indian government for withdrawing her security cover, and said that she continued to face death threats from the LTTE.

**JULY 18**

**INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING:** In a reprisal attack following the fall of Mullaitivu garrison, soldiers stationed at Elephant Pass Army camp indiscriminately fired artillery shells into Kilinochchi. Five civilians were killed

# JULY DIARY

and 16 others and  
lost their lives  
hospital  
Patients

**SHELLING:** Mrs  
JULY 19 dead by LTTE  
extruding from a temple  
Sarofj accused of betraying  
while

**NAVY:** A navy patrol  
in Jaffna soldiers to secure a  
the Mullaitivu military  
ATig board near Mullaitivu military  
beas attacked by an LTTE suicide  
over 40 soldiers were reported  
killed. Another 22 of the elite Special  
Force were also killed in a mortar  
attack on a landing craft at the same  
place.

JULY 20

**PRABHAKARAN INJURED:** All  
Sinhala newspapers published in  
Colombo, carried front page news  
items saying LTTE leader Prabhakaran  
had been injured in his forehead in the  
Mullaitivu attack. Some papers quoting  
army sources said that Prabhakaran  
was seen injured and fleeing when the  
army repulsed the attack.

**MILITARY HELICOPTER SHOT  
DOWN:** A Sri Lankan military

helicopter was shot down by the LTTE  
and all 37 soldiers on board were  
reported killed, at Alampil, a coastal  
village 10km from Mullaitivu military  
camp.

JULY 21

**ICRC CONCERN OVER SHELL-**

**ING:** Soldiers at Elephant Pass army  
camp continued to fire artillery shells  
into thickly populated areas of  
Kilinochchi. ICRC expressed its  
concern over indiscriminate shelling to  
the Ministry of Defence and also  
brought the issue to the notice of its  
headquarters in Geneva.

JULY 22

**URGED:** At a meeting with a  
delegation, TULF leader M  
ithamparam urged the party to

give up its demand to maintain  
continue the unitary state and accept  
the concept of 'Union of Regions'  
proposed by the Sri Lankan govern-  
ment.

JULY 23

**ARMY BRUTALITY:** Sinnathurai  
Chellathurai a patient at Kilinochchi  
hospital who was critically injured in  
the army shelling, being transferred to  
Vavuniya hospital in a Red Cross  
vehicle was refused permission to  
proceed by soldiers at Thandikulam  
checkpoint. He died because of the  
delay and his body was brought back  
to Kilinochchi.

JULY 24

**LTTE DEATHS:** LTTE announced  
the names of 260 members who died  
in the Mullaitivu attack. Ninety of  
them were women.

**PASSENGER TRAIN BOMBED:**

Two bombs exploded in a packed  
commuter train at Dehiwala station in  
the suburb of Colombo killing over 60  
people. Over 450 people were injured.  
The government accused the LTTE  
for the attack. LTTE has released a  
statement denying involvement.

JULY 25

**TROOPS AMBUSHED:** Troops  
trying to enter Mullaitivu through the  
jungles of Manal Aru were ambushed  
by the LTTE. Seven soldiers were  
killed. Arms and ammunitions carried  
by the soldiers were taken away by the  
LTTE.

JULY 26:

**MAJOR DISPLACEMENT:** Over  
200,000 fled from Kilinochchi town  
following an army offensive. Indis-  
criminate shelling and bombing  
caused damage.

JULY 27

**AIRFORCE BOMBING:** Sri  
Lankan supersonic fighter planes  
bombed civilian targets in the  
Mankulam town causing extensive  
damage to buildings. People were  
ordered to find shelter in makeshift

bunkers by the LTTE during the  
attack.

**SOLDIERS KILLED:** Two soldiers  
travelling in a motorcycle to Velanai  
bus stand were shot dead by the LTTE.

JULY 28

**RETURN OF DISPLACED PEOP-**  
**PLE:** Over 3,000 people were reported  
to have returned to their homes in  
Alampil, Thanneerutru and  
Mulliyavalai following the fall of the  
Mullaitivu camp. More people are  
expected to return.

JULY 29

The European Union condemned the  
attack on a train in Dehiwela and  
urged the LTTE to begin dialogue with  
the government.

JULY 30

**BODIES RECOVERED:** Two young  
Tamils arrested by the security forces  
in Jaffna were beaten to death and  
their bodies buried. Local residents  
have recovered the bodies. One of  
those killed has been identified as  
Sivalingam from Manthuvil.

**FISH VENDOR KILLED:** Selvam, a  
28 year-old fish vendor and a father of  
two children was arrested by the Sri  
Lankan army at Thanankilapu in  
Thenmaradchi where he went to buy  
fish for his business. He was tortured  
and killed at the military camp at  
Nunavil.

JULY 31

**ARREST OF TAMILS:** Security

## AUGUST DIARY

AUGUST 01

**RAPE BY SOLDIERS:** A mother, daughter and mother's sister were raped by the soldiers in their homes in Manthuvil in Thenmaradchi in the Jaffna District. The soldiers attacked a male member who came to the rescue of the women.

AUGUST 02

**KILLED BY LANDMINE:** Three people travelling in a bullock cart at Erlalai in Valikamam were killed by a landmine.

AUGUST 03

**INDISCRIMINATE SHELLING:** Troops based in the Elephant Pass military camp and at Paranthan shelled the Kilinochchi town and its surroundings for long hours forcing the people to flee their homes.

AUGUST 04

**LTTE RESISTANCE:** Troops advanced further towards Kilinochchi from Paranthan town supported by heavy artillery shelling and air-force bombing. Stiff resistance by the LTTE slowed army advancing. Indiscriminate bombing and shelling caused severe damage to Kilinochchi town infrastructure. Over 200,000 people fled southwards from Kilinochchi.

**ATTACK ON FARMERS:** Three farmers from Nelunwewa in the Aralaganwila area in Polonnaruwa District were killed while on their way to their fields. The LTTE was blamed for the attack.

AUGUST 05

**DEAD BODY:** A decomposed body of a male with cut injuries was recovered by the Welikada Police from a tributary of the Diyawanna Oya, near the Ethul Kotte Junction in Colombo District.

AUGUST 06

**ATTACK ON PUBLISHER:** Robert Perera, publisher of the UNP party organ *Siyarata* was admitted to the Colombo General Hospital with injuries following an attack by unknown persons near Torrington Square, Colombo. The attackers had told him to stop working for the opposition

United National Party (UNP).

AUGUST 07

**NO RELIEF TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED:** Kilinochchi GA Thillainadarajah announced that the displaced people in his area had not received relief supplies since May 1996, and that Kilinochchi District Cooperative Societies had not received supplies since July, 1996.

**STATEMENT ON MULLAITIVU:**

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte made a statement in Parliament that military records showed 1,407 persons in the Mullaitivu army camp at the time of attack by the LTTE. Of these 1,268 were army personnel, 9 Navy, 49 Police and 81 were civilians engaged in administrative and other work. He added further that the military recorded only 83 persons being killed in action. All others remained classified as "missing in action". The 415 dead bodies handed over to the GA Kilinochchi were also not clearly identifiable, and therefore had not entered military records.

AUGUST 08

**CAPTURE OF ARMS BY LTTE:**

UNP MP Dr Jayalath Jayawardena placed before Parliament a list of the arms and ammunition valued at Rs. 2.73 billion captured by the LTTE in the Mullaitivu military attack.

**FREEDOM OF SPEECH:** The Free Media Movement (FMM) accused the PA government for condoning and conniving in actions which fundamentally undermine the freedom of media in Sri Lanka. FMM was responding to a speech made by President Chandrika Kumaratunge at a public meeting in Nittambuwa on 4 August. She said that newspapers such as *Divayina* and *Island* were to be closed down on the advice of the military on the basis that the government could not allow newspapers to hinder war efforts with their malicious, false and damaging reporting.

AUGUST 09

**LTTE BOAT DESTROYED:** The Navy destroyed a large LTTE craft close to the Mullaitivu beach, killing

30 Sea Tigers a

AUGUST 10

**AIR RAIDS:** Sri bombed Thirunaga villages in the Kilinochchi. Villagers fled their homes as the bombing began. Many reported destroyed in the

AUGUST 11

**DISTRIBUTION OF DRINKING WATER:** LTTE commenced distribution of drinking water to the people affected by drought in Mullaitivu District.

AUGUST 12

**LTTE DENIES INVOLVEMENT:** LTTE in a statement denied responsibility for the bomb attack near Mamangam Pillaiyar temple in Batticaloa District. Sources in Batticaloa say the security forces were involved but attempted to implicate the LTTE.

AUGUST 13

**DEAD BODY IN A GUNNY BAG:** A highly decomposed and decapitated body of a young man in a gunny bag was recovered by the Gampaha police from a waterway at Medawathugoda near Bemmula road.

AUGUST 14

**FLOATING BODY:** A dead body with cut injuries on the head and neck was found in the Kelani river in northern Colombo.

**ARRESTS OF POLICEMEN:** Seven policemen including the officer-in-charge of the Counter Subversive Unit in Vavuniya were arrested by the CID investigating the deaths of Colombo trader Subramaniam and another man who were shot and burned on tyres at Giribawa in the Kurunegala District on

**LTTE DENIAL:** The LTTE denied attack on South Korean Telecommunication facility in Trincomalee District.

AUGUST 15

**ARRESTS IN COLOMBO:** Twenty five Tamils including 10 women were arrested in Wolfendhal street in Colombo.

## AUGUST DIARY

**AUGUST 16  
ANNIVERSARY OF PA GOVERNMENT:** The second anniversary of the People's Alliance government gaining power was celebrated on a low key by state institutions amidst "poster war" between the PA and the opposition parties, in particular the anti-devolution groups.

**AUGUST 17  
TEACHER KILLED:** The LTTE accused the army for killing of S Saravanapavan, 25 year-old teacher at Sarasalai in Southern Thenmaradchi in the Jaffna District.

**AUGUST 18  
RETURNEES ARRESTED:** Two Tamils on their way to Germany to claim asylum were deported from Singapore and were arrested on their return at the Colombo airport.

**AUGUST 19  
MILITARY ROUNDUP:** Over 600 people were rounded up by the army in Kokuvil East in the Jaffna District. Reports say many have been ill-treated and abused. The military also threatened to kill people if they did not support them in their efforts to kill Tigers.

**AUGUST 20  
PLOTE OPPOSE GOVERNMENT SCREENING:** Tamil group PLOTE renounced its security role in Colombo in protest against the government methods in screening Tamil civilians rounded up in the capital.

**AUGUST 21  
DEATHS DUE TO SEPTICAE-MIA:** Five deaths within 30 days due to septicemia were reported by Mallavi hospital in the Vanni.  
**ARMY OPERATION:** Pesalai in Mannar District was cordoned off by the army around 6 am and people were ordered to assemble at the Fatima School playground and interrogated. The schools in the area were asked to shut down and houses

were searched. Three people were taken away by the army.

**AUGUST 22  
MILITARY OPERATION IN THE EAST:** Army distributed hand-bills to villagers of Kannankadu, Kothiyapulam, Kokaddicholai, Illuppadichenai, Periakollaimadu and Kanchikuda asking them to vacate their areas as the army was planning to launch a military operation.

**AUGUST 23  
CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN JAFFNA:** An advisory committee consisting of 28 people from Jaffna District met for the first time in Jaffna to discuss plans to resettle displaced families in the District. Special attention was given to sanitation facilities and cleaning of wells before the onset of the north-east monsoon.

**AUGUST 24  
STUDENTS ARRESTED:** University student Krishnamoorthy Thavanesan, 22, Thirunavukarasu and T Suthakaran, 23, were reported to have been arrested by the army at Thanankilapu in Thenmaradchi. The army has denied their arrests.

**AUGUST 25  
POLITICAL VIOLENCE:** Police fired teargas to disperse a UNP meeting following a clash between supporters of the PA and the UNP at Matugama.

**AUGUST 26  
ATTACK ON TELO:** K Baskaran, the Trincomalee District leader of TELO was killed and several others injured in a bomb attack. The TELO leader and the Secretary General of TELO narrowly escaped in the attack.

**AUGUST 27  
ATTACK ON POLICE PATROL:** A Police patrol was attacked by LTTE in Vavuniya town killing a policeman, a PLOTE cadre and a civilian. Fourteen others were wounded.

**AUGUST 28  
HOSPITAL STAFF TURNED**

**AWAY:** Staff at Valvettiturai Government Hospital were turned away by soldiers from the nearby camp after signing the attendance register. They were told to come daily and sign, but warned not to work in the hospital.

**AUGUST 29  
POLICE POST ATTACKED:** A Police outpost providing security for the border village, Kudapokuna in the Welikanda area in Polonnaruwa District was attacked by the LTTE at dawn. Twenty four policemen and five civilians were reported killed in the attack.

**AUGUST 30  
APPROVAL TO RATIFY OPTIONAL PROTOCOL:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the Cabinet had approved a proposal to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which enables individuals to seek redress for grievances directly from the Human Rights Committee which monitors the implementation of the Covenant, provided that all domestic avenues for redress have been exhausted.

**AUGUST 31  
MUSLIM IDENTITY:** The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress held its 14th Annual Convention in Sammanthurai, Batticaloa, with a public meeting. Speaking at the meeting, SLMC leader M H M Ashraff spoke of the need to create an environment conducive for Muslims to live with dignity within a unitary Sri Lanka.

## SEPTEMBER DIARY

### SEPTEMBER 01

**ARREST OF LTTE:** Police announced that they had arrested a Tiger named Savarimuttu Loganathan, 23, from Kilinochchi with arms and ammunition in a safehouse at Dharmarama Road in Dehiwala in Colombo District. Police said they also recovered more arms in another safehouse in Puttalam from information given by Loganathan.

### SEPTEMBER 02

**PASS TO ENTER TEMPLE:** The occupying army in Jaffna imposed restrictions on entry to the Vishnu Hindu temple in Vallipuram in Vadamaradchi. People above 45 years of age with passes are only allowed to enter the temple and they could stay within the temple only for a specified period of time.

### SEPTEMBER 03

**IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME:** LTTE declared 6th and 7th of September and 11th and 12th of October as days of tranquillity to facilitate the implementation of the Polio immunisation programme for children following requests made by UNICEF representative in Colombo Ms Brita Ostberg.

### SEPTEMBER 04

**COLOMBO ARRESTS:** Security forces launched a major search operation in Colombo and arrested over 100 Tamils. Similar operations are expected in coming months following information that LTTE infiltration into Colombo has increased.

### SEPTEMBER 05

**GOVERNMENT AGENT ACCUSED:** EPDP MP M Chandrakumar in Parliament accused the Sinhala Government Agent in Trincomalee for bringing refugee relief under his supervision, using an outdated electoral register to deny relief for many displaced Tamils in the region.

### SEPTEMBER 06

**LTTE LEADER ARRESTED:** Security forces announced that they have arrested an important member of the LTTE named Ilango at Kalaoya near Anuradhapura.

### SEPTEMBER 07

**WOMAN KILLED:** Nagarajah Hemalatha, 26, mother of two children, was killed by unknown persons at Vinayagapuram in Valaichenai in Batticaloa District. **DISAPPEARANCE:** Krishanthi Kumaraswamy, 18, arrested by the army at a check point in Kaithady disappeared. Her mother Rasammah Kumaraswamy, her brother Piranavan Kumaraswamy, 16, and a friend of the family K Sithamparam, 35, also disappeared when they went in search of her.

### SEPTEMBER 08

**FLIGHT OF REFUGEES:** A further 132 refugees from Mannar District fled to Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka. Some of them were from the UNHCR-run Open Relief Centre at Pesalai.

### ATTACK ON MILITARY PATROL:

The LTTE attacked a military patrol at Thunnalai in the Jaffna District. One soldier was killed and six others injured.

### SEPTEMBER 09

**ATTACK ON FISHERMEN:** The navy attacked fishing boats off Mullaitivu. One fisherman was reported killed and several others injured. M Arulraj, 14, was seriously injured in the attack.

### SEPTEMBER 10

**INJURED BY MINE:** Six military personnel were injured when their tractor was blown by a LTTE claymore mine at Imayanan in Vadamaradchi.

### SEPTEMBER 11

**DAMAGE TO FUEL STORE:** LTTE launched an attack on a petrol store at Muhathuvaram road in the Batticaloa in an attempt to curtail troop movement. Six policemen were injured in the attack.

### SEPTEMBER 12

**REPRISAL ATTACK:** Following a raid on a military post by the LTTE, army retaliated by shelling the

surrounding villages indiscriminately. Several people, including two children V Ramesh, 2, and S Ithyarani, 3, were killed.

### SEPTEMBER 13

**PASSENGERS KILLED:** A bus carrying passengers from Amparai to Kandy came under gunfire at Aranthalawa in the Amparai District. Six men, three women and two children were killed. The dead were all Sinhalese. Twenty seven others were injured in the attack. The LTTE was blamed for the attack.

**ATTACK ON SEA TIGERS:** Navy announced that Five Sea Tigers were killed and two navy personnel injured in a confrontation off Trincomalee. **TROOPS KILLED:** LTTE launched an attack on a military camp between Chavakachcheri and Kodikamam. Five soldiers were killed.

### SEPTEMBER 14

**ARREST IN COLOMBO:** Kulanthaivel Nadarajah, 35, from Hatton in the Hill country was arrested on suspicion by the Matale Police. His whereabouts are not known. **ATTACK ON LTTE:** Security forces launched attacks on several suspected LTTE hideouts in Murukkanthivu and Saraveli in the Batticaloa District. Reports said four LTTE fighters were killed and 23 wounded. Eight civilians were killed and seven wounded in crossfire.

### SEPTEMBER 15

**ATTACK ON SECURITY FORCES:** The Central Camp in the Amparai District was attacked by the LTTE. One home guard was killed and two policemen on duty at the entrance were injured.

### SEPTEMBER 16

**MILITARY AMBUSHED:** LTTE ambushed a military patrol at Uddupiddy in the Jaffna District. One soldier was killed and two injured.

### SEPTEMBER 17

**KILLED BY LANDMINE:** A military vehicle ran over a land mine at



## SEPTEMBER DIARY

Nunavil in the Jaffna District. Two soldiers were killed and three others injured. A girl who happened to be cycling in the vicinity was also killed in the explosion.

### SEPTEMBER 18

**UNFAIR DETENTION:** Kandasamy Thiyagarajah detained in Colombo's Magazine prison began a fast demanding his release. Thiyagarajah announced that after a habeas corpus application in the Court of Appeal on his behalf, he was forced to sign a confession to justify detention.

### SEPTEMBER 19

**CIVILIAN KILLED:** One farmer was killed and another seriously injured when their tractor ran over a landmine at Kopay South, Valigamam in Jaffna District.

**ATTACK ON POLICE:** Five policemen were seriously injured when gunmen fired at the police at Vavuniya police station. Police sources said that the attackers fled when police opened fire at them leaving behind a 9mm handgun and eight rounds of ammunition.

### SEPTEMBER 20

**MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE KILLED:** K Lurthumary, a woman employee at the Batticaloa Town Council was killed while collecting rubbish near Thandavan Junction in the Batticaloa District.

### SEPTEMBER 21

**CIVILIANS KILLED:** Soldiers fired indiscriminately in panic when a band of cattle strayed into the sentry post at Eluthumadduval in Thenmaradchchi in the Jaffna peninsula. Six civilians were killed and 10 seriously injured.

**ACCESS TO LTTE PRISONERS:** The Tigers allowed Marco Welli, Deputy Head of the ICRC mission in Sri Lanka to meet prisoners held by them, including Lt. Cdr. Ajith Doyagoda and the eight-member crew of the passenger vessel "Iris Moana" seized by the LTTE in August 1995. The prisoners are currently held in the Vanni.

### SEPTEMBER 22

**SATH JAYA III:** Troops mounted a fresh attack codenamed *Sath jaya III*, on LTTE fortifications and advanced 3 km to take control of both west and east of

Paranthan. Defence Ministry sources announced that the military lost 22 soldiers, including an officer and 58 others were wounded

### SEPTEMBER 23

**TIGERS KILLED:** Military sources reported that they had listened to the LTTE communication saying 35 of their men were killed and over 100 injured in clashes at Murasumoddi south-east of Paranthan. The report said 15 soldiers were killed and 21 injured. Meanwhile in another confrontation at Navaladi, north of Valaichenai in the Batticaloa District, five soldiers were reported killed.

### SEPTEMBER 24

**ATTACK ON MILITARY:** LTTE attacked a military post west of Putthur in the Jaffna District killing three soldiers and injuring two.

**AIR FORCE BOMBING:** Sri Lankan Air force bombed Kilinochchi town and its suburbs the whole day to drive the civilians out of the area. Helicopter gunships fired rockets indiscriminately. Several people were seriously injured in the attack.

### SEPTEMBER 25

**BODIES FOUND:** Three people who travelled to Vavuniya in a van from Trincomalee were killed and their bodies were recovered at

Rasenthirankulam on the Vavuniya-Mannar Road. Sources in Vavuniya said, they were associated with the police Counter Subversive Unit and had committed atrocities against Tamil civilians, including rape and murder.

**ATTACK ON CIVILIANS:** Security forces continued to attack settlements surrounding Kilinochchi town. Jayanthinagar, Uruthirapuram, Puthumurippu, Ananthanagar, Erukadu and Konavil were the villages that took the brunt of the attack. Reports suggest over 15 civilians including women and children were killed and many more seriously injured.

### SEPTEMBER 26

**LTTE DENIAL:** LTTE denied government reports of killing over 450

Tigers in Kilinochchi, in a statement issued from its headquarters in the Vanni. The LTTE said that only 26 fighters died in the military offensive in Kilinochchi from 22 to 24 September.

### SEPTEMBER 27

#### MUSLIM HOME GUARDS

**KILLED:** Some Muslim home guards were abducted by armed men at Maruthamunai in the Batticaloa District and killed. Their bodies were found in a cemetery. LTTE was blamed for the killings.

### SEPTEMBER 28

#### LTTE CHALLENGES RADIO

**BROADCAST:** The LTTE in a press statement condemned the government for hiking up LTTE casualties in *Operation Sath jaya III*.

LTTE argued that it was the government's intention to cover up heavy military losses. The LTTE also accused the government for using ICRC for its image-building exercise.

#### ANTI-TAMIL VIOLENCE:

Abduction and killing of Muslim homeguards from Maruthamunai in the Batticaloa District fuelled anti-Tamil violence in the area. Over 30 Tamils were reported killed in the violence.

### SEPTEMBER 29

**LTTE RESISTANCE:** The military which changed its troop movement eastward from Kilinochchi met with stiff resistance from the LTTE. A battle tank was destroyed and according to the LTTE 16 fighters died in the battle.

**FLIGHT OF CIVILIANS:** Heavy bombing and shelling continued to force the civilians sheltered in jungles to flee from Kilinochchi District. Around 50,000 were reported to have fled the District.

### SEPTEMBER 30

**FALL OF KILINOCHCHI:** The military captured Kilinochchi town with troops surrounding it. Road junctions west and east of Paranthan also came under military control.

# Life under uncertainties

**F**ighting between the Sri Lankan army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the North-East continues to cause immense difficulties for the civilian population. International humanitarian assistance is not reaching many people because of government blockade on food, medicine and other essential needs. There are currently over 400,000 Tamil refugees in the Vanni. Around 280,000 of them are from the Jaffna peninsula displaced following military operation *Riviresa* (Sunray). In July 1996 the Army launched operation *Sathjaya* and captured Kilinochchi in September. Around 200,000 people in Kilinochchi fled southwards and most have taken refuge in and around Mankulam and Akkarayan. Many refugees are living under trees with only sarees and plastic sheets to keep out the rain. The rural and poorly developed Vanni region has nothing much to offer to the displaced population in terms of infrastructure. Relief workers say that the future of the displaced looks bleak if they remain in the present environment for a longer period of time.

In these circumstances access to safe water is a major concern due to waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea. Water carrying vehicles are needed to ensure distribution of water. The government continues to deny permission to take chlorine into Vanni for water purification. The Ministry of Defence resumed issuing travel permits to humanitarian agencies on 17 August to enter Vanni. Restrictions on water containers and well drilling equipment remain. Beginning from 8 August people began fleeing to India from Mannar Island after army shelling and attack on refugee camps as LTTE infiltration continued. The Indian authorities have announced that up to end of September, over 6,000 refugees had reached Tamil Nadu.

The government has placed restrictions on people in transit camps in Vavuniya to prevent them entering Colombo fearing LTTE infiltration. According to reports, some access to the Jaffna peninsula has been granted to UN agencies. Fighting between the LTTE and the army in Jaffna continues. Ill-treatment of civilians by the army in Jaffna has intensified leading to demonstrations in the peninsula and Colombo. Over 700 youths have been taken into custody in roundups. Reports of rape, torture, extra-judicial killings and disappearances are continually being received.

In the Vanni a new Kachcheri (District Administration office) has been established at Skandapuram, and Welfare Centres have become larger. All the houses are overcrowded with several families.

The 280,000 displaced Jaffna citizens are unable to go back across the lagoon due to security restrictions imposed by the government. The LTTE allows Jaffna families who have no accommodation in the Vanni to cross to Vavuniya, but many people are worried about the security procedures for crossing to the South, and the deteriorating security situation in the peninsula.

By end of August around 1,800 people had reached government welfare centres in Vavuniya. Government Agent K. Ganesh, announced that 600 would be transported from Vavuniya to Tricomalee by train on 28 August and then to the Jaffna peninsula in a government chartered ship arranged by the Northern Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority (NRRA).

According to reports, 79,000 people live in the military-occupied part of Vavuniya District, while 44,000 live in the thinly populated countryside of the LTTE-controlled area, where the LTTE has its own civil administration.

According to Government Agent Ganesh, due to military operations, very little infrastructure development can take place in the LTTE-controlled areas of the Vanni. He has urged that the main Kandy-Jaffna and the Puliyaankulam-Mullaitivu roads be

cept in good repair, particularly for food convoys. Otherwise, he says there will be serious implications for the population. The war is taking its toll on the economy of the Vanni region. The failure to maintain irrigation systems has seen the erosion of agriculture. Tanks and tube wells have not been repaired since 1990. The recent drought has drastically reduced water supply and has greatly affected the Maha cultivation. Earlier the Vanni produced food for the rest of the country, but now people have to depend on food rations.

Being the Government Agent of Vavuniya is the most difficult job says a government officer. The Vavuniya District is divided between three authorities: the Government, the military and the LTTE. The GA has to deal with all three. The GA deals with his officials, the AGAs and Village Headmen who in turn will work in cooperation with NGOs, Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation and a number of social organisations controlled by the LTTE.

Many of the 4,000 refugees who fled to India since August from camps on Mannar island, had previously fled to India but came back to Sri Lanka with UNHCR assistance. Others are displaced people from northern Sri Lanka.

Indian officers have promised refugee status to the people arriving, but it is unclear whether such status would be similar to that under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees. India is yet to become a signatory. India wants to prevent LTTE infiltration. The Indian Navy and Coast Guard have intensified checks in the Palk

Strait and over 100 refugees have been returned to Mannar.

### Shelter

Shelter materials are in urgent need in the Vanni as rains have begun. UNHCR has over 8,500 pieces of plastic sheeting in Vavuniya ready to be dispatched to the Vanni, but has difficulties in obtaining clearance from the Ministry of Defence. Reports in late August said NGOs had 35 lorry-loads of cadjans in Vavuniya awaiting clearance. UNHCR has recommended adequate shelter for around 20,000 families as an immediate measure.

Reports say that UNHCR and NGOs have made application to the Defence Ministry and are awaiting clearance to transport plastic sheeting. NGOs have provided cadjans to people at Thunukai, Oddusuddan, Marittimepattu and Manthai East Assistant Government Agents' (AGA) divisions. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) is also supplying cadjans and requesting people to settle in areas it has selected. Shelter provision is being delayed by military operations and people are in great hardship.

### Health

Health workers say with the onset of the rains the level of waterborne diseases is rising.

The Kilinochchi hospital has been relocated to two smaller medical centres at Akkarayan and Mallavi, west and south west of Kilinochchi. The Akkarayan centre receives over 1,200 patients daily. The main diseases are diarrhoea 14% respiratory infections 5.5%

and Malaria 5%. Main morbidity is malaria, dysentery, diarrhoea and respiratory infection.

The third quarter medicines have not been sent to the Vanni by the government. This has caused acute shortage in Mullaitivu hospital and the medical centres at Akkarayan and Mallavi, including anti-malarial medicines and antibiotics. No medicine has been allowed into Vanni from June 1996.

The medical centres at Mallavi and Akkarayan have been scaled up to deal with the displaced population. Oxfam has promised that they would provide some funding for the local volunteers to help with the planned mass national immunisation. The first Polio immunisation programme began on 17 September. In Kilinochchi District 98.03% of children under the age of five and in Mullaitivu District 98.62% and 450 women were immunised for measles and over 40 women for Tetanus.

The Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) and the Government Medical Officer of Health have planned to begin nutrition centres and have begun training volunteers for 14 nutrition centres in Kilinochchi District; six in Mullaitivu; two in North Vavuniya and one in Mannar District. NGOs have offered some teaching materials and guides to the TRO. Meanwhile the Ministry of Defence has refused permission to MSF and ICRC to take drugs into the Vanni.

### Water and Sanitation

Occasional heavy rains in

the Vanni in July and August were insufficient to replenish water levels in wells and tanks affected by drought. The rise in the water level has been reported to be inadequate.

Because of the urgent need for clean water, NGOs have recommended drilling of new wells and deepening ones that are in use. But the Defence Ministry has thus far refused to allow drilling equipment.

The Kilinochchi Government Agent and international agencies involved in water sanitation work, have emphasised the need for water bowsers, portable water tanks and repair of equipment for handpumps. NGOs have also continually stressed the urgent need for chlorine to purify water. The NGOs and ICRC stock of chlorine was exhausted in July 1996. Reports say that the government is reluctant to allow chlorine into the North fearing that it can be made into a toxic gas and used against the army.

The military has drastically cut down the fuel quotas to the NGOs working in the North. NGOs say their current work is thus being limited affecting future planning.

Health workers are concerned that the situation could be worsened by rains flooding the open defecation areas that are currently being used by the displaced resulting in the contamination of water supply. Health workers say soap is needed urgently.

Oxfam is assisting to repair handpumps, drilling tubewells and cleaning tubewells near welfare centres. Lack of water pump spare

parts and equipments are said to be hampering repair works. Oxfam workers say that they have been successful in funding boreholes in Oddisuddan, Vadakadu, Utrupulam and Akkarayankulam and continue to fund log-lined wells, rock-lined wells and palmyrah-trunk wells in Poonakary division of Kilinochchi, Maritimpeattu and Mullaitivu. However, water remains a major need in the Vanni. The restrictions in allowing materials and fuel into the region by the Ministry of Defence is the main stumbling block. Lack of lauryl Sulphate broth powder is another factor affecting safe drinking water in the region.

### Food Supply

In August the Government resumed food and shelter relief supplies to the Vanni disrupted in July. ICRC provided temporary escort service beyond Vavuniya into LTTE controlled areas. The resumption of food convoys have improved stocks of Multi-Purpose Co-operative Societies (MPCS) which have been forced to shift south of Kilinochchi. According to UNHCR the displaced people who had received dry rations before and those who followed "their" MPCS in their displacement appear to have received rations. The newly displaced people and those going from one area to another changing divisions face new registration or problems of delays or have no access to any rations.

NGOs say many displaced people are living only on one meal a day as no cooked meals are provided in many camps and most of them are dependent on individual cooking. No severe malnu-

trition has been reported but it is said that under-nutrition is common making people vulnerable to disease.

Vavuniya GA Ganesh says, 1,330 tonnes of food mainly rice and wheat flour were sent to the Vanni region during the week 12, August-18 August 1996. UNHCR had confirmed the arrival of food convoys to the Vanni.

According to the Commissioner General of Essential Services (CGES), in June 6,600 tonnes and in July another 6,850 tonnes of food were sent to Jaffna. The food supply was stopped following the LTTE attack on the Mullaitivu army camp in July 1996. In addition to food items, the Government says it has sent 5,500 barrels of kerosene monthly since June to Jaffna peninsula. The food items sent include rice, wheat flour, milk, food, fish products, sugar, tea, coconut oil, and soft drinks. The other items sent to Jaffna include bicycles, bicycle parts and textiles.

In August the government announced that 12,500 tones of food was sent to Jaffna. Reports suggest that the distribution system remains without improvement making it extremely difficult for people to obtain food. Jaffna people say increasing human rights violations by the army makes travel outside their homes hazardous and they have to stand in lengthy queues for many hours to get food and fuel.

### Non-Food relief items

The Vavuniya Government Agent says that a number of items are urgently required, including mats, buckets and

lanterns. Clothing to people in refugee camps is also in short supply.

Reports say that in August the ICRC had distributed cooking utensils, mats, soap, plastic sheeting and buckets to approximately 6,000 families in Vanni with difficulty as registration of displaced people had not been completed.

The road conditions for transport of relief have deteriorated following heavy rains. Roads have become impossible for heavy vehicles. Storage facilities in the affected areas is also a concern and, NGOs are said to be currently using a store rented by Care International in Mallavi.

Reports say that the movement of people and international agency personnel in the Jaffna peninsula has been further restricted by the government. Recent permits have been cancelled. The movement of civilians from Valikamam West, where large areas remain under the control of the LTTE to Jaffna town has been suspended indefinitely.

ICRC is having six "Mobile Clinics" in the Districts of Vanni, two in Kilinochchi, two in Mullaitivu, one in Vavuniya and one in Mannar. It also provides support to seven Primary Health Care centres in the northern region. Volunteers trained for three months perform preventive work, visit families and assist with basic first aid. The ICRC is also involved in installation of hand-pumps, deepening of wells, and distribution of health education leaflets. ICRC is carrying out evaluation of the situation on Kayts Island west of the Jaffna

peninsula, including the medical situation and security of the people.

In the East the ICRC is conducting a study in Muthur in Trincomalee District and in Vakara in Batticaloa District for a paddy and ground-nut seed programme. These areas have been identified as in dire need of assistance for food production.

Quaker Peace and Service (QPS) has been denied permission to operate in the east by the government. No proper reason has been given. According to reports allegations of LTTE links have been adduced. Reports indicate that Swiss *Terre des hommes* and Dutch *ZOA* are under pressure from security forces to close down their projects.

#### UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES IN THE NORTH

Somapala Gunadheera, the Chairman of the Northern Province Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority (NPRRA) said in August that United Nations agencies are being allowed to begin their operations in the Jaffna peninsula. He also said that international NGOs, working in collaboration with the UN agencies would be allowed to begin their work shortly.

UNHCR made arrangements to provide more supplies into Mannar Island to avert the exodus of people to India. UNHCR has also plans to establish a temporary office in Mallavi, following the Kilinochchi military offensive. Reports say that UNHCR plans to review the micro-projects in Mullaitivu District and provide funds towards increasing the

capacity of the local population to support the displaced people, improve water supply and for labour intensive projects providing income to both the displaced people and the local population.

Two projects officers from UNICEF visited Jaffna to make an assessment of the situation with a view to implementing UNICEF's current national programmes and its emergency programme. UNICEF has allocated US \$ 900,000 for the North for education on conflict resolution, water and sanitation, health, nutrition, pre-school education, emergency relief, unaccompanied children, trauma, child soldiers and landmine disabilities. UNICEF also continues to support the upgrading of four hospitals in Amparai District.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has prepared a proposal to support the Health Ministry for a nation-wide programme of emergency preparedness. The programme is expected to look into the situation of the internally displaced. In addition it hopes to consider training modules for health volunteers in camps and welfare centres.

The UNDP is expected to sign an agreement for support to further technical assessments and consultation in Jaffna and to prepare project proposals for the Jaffna Resettlement and Rehabilitation Programme particularly in agriculture.

#### DISPLACED POPULATION MOVEMENT

Reports suggest significant movement of displaced population in the Vanni region. Large number of displaced families from

Puthukudiyiruppu and Maritime Pattu AGA divisions are reported to have returned to Mullaitivu District. Families displaced from Kilinochchi have moved into Mankulam, Panikankulam, Mallavi and Puthuvadduvan areas. Mankulam has become a major town in the North with many private sector business houses opening up branches there.

As the military intensified its operations in Vanni and due to fighting between the LTTE and security forces and landmines people wanted to move away from the North. Most displaced still do not see Jaffna peninsula as a safe location. There are increasing reports of harassment, gang-rape of young women, arrests, torture and disappearances in army occupied Jaffna. Landmine is causing serious threat to civilian movement. A number of deaths including that of children have occurred in various parts of Jaffna due to anti-personnel mines. According to reports, in August and September, up to 3,000 displaced people a day were congregating at the crossing point at the front defence line north of Vavuniya. Most were trying to go to Colombo or other places away from the fighting.

There are still restrictions on civilian movement. People under 35 years of age from the North are strictly checked and monitored before they are allowed into Vavuniya. They are held at a transit centre while the police check addresses and identities. They are also interrogated by the police. Reports say, on 22 June 1996, 767 young Tamils both men and women were held by the security forces at Veppankulam detention centre in Vavuniya.

Reports also confirm torture and ill-treatment of the detainees.

The government, is keen to prevent people moving out of Jaffna. Reports say various dubious methods have been used by the government to stop people fleeing. The government also announced the restoration of civilian ferry services between Trincomalee and Jaffna.

On 18 July, the LTTE launched a large-scale offensive against the Mullaitivu army base, killing over 1,400 soldiers at this base. The army shelled Kilinochchi town and surrounding areas in Kandavalai division in retaliation, eventually causing the international NGOs based in the town to hurriedly evacuate, along with the thousands of town residents, leaving behind all supplies and equipment. Since then, they have found it extremely difficult to address the water and sanitation problems in relocation sites, welfare centres and other population centres in the Vanni. The main relief needs were again, shelter, the lack of safe drinking water and food in both Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi Districts. Murukandy Development Society distributed rubber-sheets, clothes, buckets and cooking utensils to around 600 displaced families. On 12 August, after three weeks of blockade, the military authorities allowed some food to pass through due to pressure. According to Kilinochchi GA Thillanadarajah army allowed 21 lorry-loads of wheat flour to the Multipurpose Co-operative Societies at Karachchi South, Akkarayan, Velanai, Kayts and Karachchi North. International

NGOs say, "people are definitely still hungry and are selling belongings to buy food".

### Welfare Centres

Approximately 200,000 people have been re-displaced from Kilinochchi town and surroundings, filling previously emptied welfare centres, and crowding existing ones. Numbers are difficult to count, and government officers are attempting again, to take effective censuses. Many welfare centres have approximately 60 - 70% of the occupants under 16 years of age, with the remaining 20-30 % being women 18 and over.

Reports say that there are around 32 welfare centres in Mullaitivu district and 58 in Kilinochchi. It was estimated around 60,000 in welfare centres in Kilinochchi, and over 8,000 in Mullaitivu.

Welfare centres were also temporarily evacuated to house GCE 'O' Level and 'A' level students to take national examinations. But, in the nights people living close to the centres returned to sleep. Reports say some Welfare centres have only dry wells or wells containing low water levels with water that is either turbid or with plant life, algae and other unhealthy debris. Rare water sources such as ponds, connecting the old tank irrigation canals, are being tilled from time to time from water tanks which still have water available. The majority of welfare centre occupants, as well as others living with friends and families, are using these ponds for washing and cleaning.

# Life for Tamils in Amparai

The war in the Northern Sri Lanka has plunged the eastern region into turmoil. There is resentment in Amparai at the presence of the Police Special Task Force (STF) which has a history of ruthlessness. The war of the STF is mainly against Tamil civilians, intimidation, harassment and threats forming primary weapons. Fighting between the security forces and LTTE is almost nil. But, much of the terror is carried out against civilians says a social worker who spent a month in Amparai in May 1996.

Alaiadivembu is a village situated between the two trunk roads namely, Akkaraipattu-Amparai Road and Sakamam Road. At dawn on 14 May 1996, the Special Task Force announced over loudspeakers for all the residents of Alayadivembu village and wards 7 and 8 should stay indoors. If anyone is found outside they will be shot-dead, the STF declared.

After a couple of hours another announcement calling all males above 10 years of age to come out on to the main road, threatened that those who disregarded the call would be considered as terrorists and accordingly dealt with. All government servants, students, labourers and other males assembled on the main road. They were taken in army trucks and buses to a Special Task Force camp, 3km, from the village. The whole village was terrified. Around 2,000 males were taken to the camp and at 10 am, the old people and some students were released, followed by another loud-speaker announcement calling all the

mothers to come to the STF camp to collect their children. The scared mothers walked all the way to the camp.

Later the empty village was searched by the STF assisted by the police, village Headmen and school teachers. No one knew what was going on. It was said that a cache of arms hidden in a trench was found by the STF. A girl living next door was also taken to the STF camp for questioning. Around 4 pm the commander-in charge of the STF came and addressed the people gathered in the camp. He said that this action was necessary to make the people understand the activities of the terrorists. If the terrorists continue their destructive activities, he warned, the civilians would have to bear the consequences. The identity cards were checked and at around 5 pm most people were allowed to return to their homes. Others were asked to remain in the camp. They were asked to stand under the scorching sun.

As a result of this action, around 1,500 labourers had lost their day's earnings and their families were placed in difficulty of getting their day's meal. On the same day Kanapathipillai Thambiah, aged 32, a resident of Pottuvil was brutally attacked by five drunken police constables. Another Tamil, Selvan David from Kundumadu at Pottuvil was also assaulted by drunken policemen.

A similar incident was reported on the same day at the neighbouring Kundumaduvil village where 50 year-old Manikkamuthu while returning home with his provisions was severely assaulted by the police at a checkpoint.

Tamil women passing through the police checkpoints are daily subjected to verbal insults and humiliation by the police.

The STF surrounded the Pottuvil

town on 17 May and took away all Tamils to the STF camp. They were released after interrogation. On the same day, Tamils at Inspector-Bund village were brutally attacked with bayonets and batons by drunken policemen. Three people, Miss R Rupa (22), Kandan Kalpagasothi (35) and Rasiah Sasikala (25) were seriously hurt in the attack.

On 23 May at 1.30 pm all the males in Komari village were rounded up by the STF. They were ordered to sit in the hot sun and warned that no one should go to the forest to pick fireworks thereafter. These men earned their living by selling firewood and now they are without any earnings and undergo severe hardship.

The state transport bus carrying passengers from Pottuvil to Akkaraipattu was stopped by the STF at Thandiyadi STF camp for unknown reasons on 25 May from 6.15 am to 9.15am causing unwarranted delay and inconvenience to school students, government officers and private sector employees. Harassment of civilians by soldiers at Thandiyadi has become regular.

On 26 May at 2 pm, acting on the instruction from the Officer in Charge, the Thirukovil STF rounded up 25 Tamil men who had come for shopping to the Thambuvil Central Market. They were ordered to stand in the hot sun until 3.45 pm and released.

It is usual for people from Panamai village to travel to Pottuvil market to buy their weekly provisions. The STF, without any warning has imposed restrictions on essential items for Panamai residents. Soldiers also use Tamil civilians as human shields whenever they want to travel. The normalcy in Panamai is said to have been badly affected by the army's strategy.

## Health Care in Jaffna

Returning home after being away from Jaffna for some time is always an emotional experience, and often it is marked by extraordinary surprises.

The images Dr Rajah saw when he returned to Jaffna were too painful to ignore. The war in the North had destroyed the entire way of life of the Jaffna people and the infrastructure. "I was struck by the devastation of Jaffna", says Dr Rajah.

The General Hospital, Jaffna is the only hospital for the people in the AGA's division of Jaffna, Nallur, Sandilipay, Uduvil, Tellipalai and Kopay which has an estimated population of 234,142 people.

Access to the hospital for people

living in the AGA's division of Chankanai, Sandilipay, Uduvil, Tellipalai and part of Jaffna and Nallur is through one entry point at 'Thattar Theru' junction where everyone is checked, by the army. The checkpoint is open to the public only on Mondays and Wednesdays between 7am and 5pm. The sick can only enter on these days. It sometime takes about four hours to pass through the checkpoint.

People who attend clinics held at Jaffna Hospital on days other than these days have to enter the Jaffna town on Mondays and Wednesdays remain with friends and relatives and attend the clinic. Those who do not have these 'facilities' have to live without drugs and finally die due to lack of treatment.

The District Hospital at Tellipalai has been shifted to building at Green Memorial Hospital in Manipay. But the Ministry of Health uses it to house only

psychiatric patients and has shown no interest in admitting other patients. Other patients are not admitted. The OPD is conducted in a private house outside the hospital.

Cancers ranked sixth in the causes of admission to hospitals in the Jaffna district in 1986. Today all cancer patients have to be treated in Colombo and the only quick way to go to Colombo is by military aircrafts. Tickets for flights are issued by the military. A list of those who are booked to travel is put up on a notice board the previous evening. A person wishing to travel has to visit the booking office every evening to check whether his name is on the notice board. Flights are often cancelled when there are military operations and there is a long waiting list. There have been many instances where by the time a seat is allocated the patient is dead or unfit to travel.

### Jaffna District Population (as at 21.8.96)

AGA's Division	Estimated percentage inside 'bund'	Number inside 'bund'	Number outside 'bund'	Total
Jaffna	90%	31,211	3,468	34,679
Nallur	70%	30,586	13,108	43,694
Chankanai			28,474	28,474
Sandilipay			31,975	31,975
Uduvil	50%	20,596	20,595	41,191
Tellipalai	100%	5,131		5,131
Kopay	100%	48,998		4,998
Delft	A/O/A			4,100
Velanai	A/O/A			5,695
Kayts	A/O/A			7,263
Chavakachcheri	90%	62,822	6,980	69,802
Point Pedro	80%	25,136	6,284	3,142
Karaveddi	50%	20,459	20,459	40,918
Maruthankerny			4,736	4,736
Palai (Kilinochchi District)				4,877
<b>Total</b>		<b>244,939 (60.7%)</b>	<b>136,079 (29.3%)</b>	<b>402,953</b>

### POPULATION OF JAFFNA (AS AT 21.08.1996)

A.G.A's DIVISION	FAMILIES	MEMBERS
Jaffna	8,627	34,679
Nallur	13,682	43,694
Chankanai	8,572	28,474
Sandilipay	8,946	31,975
Uduvil	11,757	41,191
Tellipalai	1,520	5,131
Kopay	13,530	48,998
Delft	1,200	4,100
Velanai	1,766	5,695
Kayta	2,423	7,263
Chavakachcheri	20,814	69,802
Point Pedro	10,605	31,420
Karaveddi	13,481	40,918
Maruthankerni	1,387	4,736
Palai	1,522	4,877
<b>Total</b>	<b>119,832</b>	<b>402,953</b>
<b>Total Population in Jaffna District</b>	<b>Families: 118,310</b>	<b>Members: 398,076</b>
<b>Total Population of Jaffna Peninsula</b>	<b>Families: 119,832</b>	<b>Members: 402,953</b>

\* Source : C.Pathmanathan, Government Agent Jaffna District  
A/O/A = Army occupied areas

TAMIL INFORMATION is published by Tamil Information Centre, Tamil House  
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SUBSCRIPTION: UK £7.00

All Other Countries: £12.00