

# LTTE Child Combatants by Rohan Gunaratna

*Courtesy of Janes Intelligence Review of July 1998*

In defiance of mounting international opinion against the role of children in warfare, guerrillas and terrorists are increasingly using children in their military campaigns. As under-aged combatants are proving to be effective spies, couriers, suppliers as well as backup and frontline fighters, children in conflict-ridden areas are becoming a target for recruitment.

International and domestic conventions define childhood as life up to the age of 18. Currently, there is a debate as to whether compulsory or voluntary recruitment to the armed forces should be 15 or 18. Child rights activists are campaigning at international, national and local level to raise the age to 18. However, there is no international organization or mechanism either to regulate or lobby against guerrilla and terrorist organisations recruiting children to their ranks.

Child units have featured prominently in international and internal conflicts in recent years, serving both state and non-state forces in countries such as Liberia, Cambodia, Sudan, Guatemala, Myanmar. They featured in at least a third of the 50 odd internal conflicts that were ongoing in 1997, most of which have continued into 1998 and many with increasing intensity. Armed conflicts during the last decade left two million children killed, one million orphaned or separated, five million disabled, 10 million children killed, one million orphaned or separated, five million disabled, 10 million psychologically traumatised and 12 million homeless.

## **Cutting edge**

In the world's deadliest conflicts, children feature most prominently in the protracted guerrilla and terrorist campaign of Sri Lanka's Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlighted the Sri Lankan rebel group's practice of aiming its propaganda specifically at schoolchildren. The LTTE is a leading-edge rebel group fighting for an independent Tamil mono-ethnic state in northeastern Sri Lanka. The LTTE - estimated to be 14,000-strong - employs adults and children as rank and file. Both male and female fighters participate in guerrilla and terrorist attacks against military, political, economic, religious and cultural targets. Now in its 24th year of existence and 15th year of combat, the LTTE is assessed by the international security and intelligence community as the deadliest contemporary guerrilla terrorist group. It has built a tradition of senior personnel leading offensive operations and has a rapid turnover of new units. The LTTE is perhaps the world's first rebel group with cadres drawn from a younger age range. Sri Lanka's Directorate of Military Intelligence estimates that 60 per cent of LTTE fighters are below 18. Even if the figure is exaggerated, an assessment of the LTTE fighters that have been killed in combat reveal that 40 per cent of its fighting force are both males and females between nine and 18 years of age. Over the years, the combat efficiency, technological innovation, and leadership qualities of the LTTE have been integrated into the young fighting units.

## **Loyal to the last**

The Sri Lankan experience reveals that children are receptive to high levels of indoctrination, willing to engage in high risk operations and obedience. Modern weapons such as M16, AK-47 and Type 56 are light weight, easy to fire, and require minimum training. Conventionally trained soldier and policemen are also less likely to identify women and children as threats. In the same way that the media and the legal system is sympathetic to children, humanitarian and human rights organisations reserve different rules for when dealing with a potential threat from this source. Such factors and conditions make the child a perfect target for guerrilla and terrorist recruitment. Today, the LTTE deploys these units in direct combat against Sri Lankan troops both in Jaffna and Wannai in the north and Trincomalee and Batticaloa in the east. In addition to gathering first-rate intelligence and participating in ambushes, they also form the first wave of suicide groups, assaulting across the minefields and razor wire that encircle Sri Lankan military installations.

## **Origins of Child Cadres**

After the ethnic riots of July 1983, sparked by an LTTE ambush of 13 soldiers, there was a massive exodus of civilians to India. The LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran selected Basheer Kaka, an LTTE leader from the deep harbour city of Trincomalee to establish a training base in the state of Pondichery in India for recruits under 16. Initially, the child soldiers - affectionately referred to as "Tiger cubs" - received non-military training, mostly primary education and physical exercise. By early 1984, the nucleus of the LTTE Baby Brigade or Bakuts, was formed.

Until 1986, the LTTE had sufficient adult units in operation; as soon as a young recruit reached 16, he or she was put through the Tigers' standard grueling four-month training course. Many children from the Pondichery batch reached battle prominence. After the Pondichery stint, Karuna, a native of Batticaloa, received military training in Establishment 22, Chakrata, north of Dehra Dun. From 1984 onwards, Karuna rose through the ranks and assumed the mantle of District Commander for Batticaloa after the introduction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka in July 1987. Throughout, he displayed his loyalty to the LTTE leader Prabhakaran and showed a high

level of commitment to the LTTE goal. With permission from Prabhakaran, he married an attractive LTTE female cadre Nira, and was thereafter relocated to the north to lead LTTE special groups in direct battle against the Sri Lankan forces. Several members of the Baby Brigade also served as bodyguards of Pottu Amman, the LTTE Chief of Intelligence responsible for planning the assassination of two world leaders.

The LTTE began to seriously recruit women and children to its ranks only after it declared war against the 100,000 strong-IPKF in October 1987. Hitherto, the LTTE had trained only one batch of children in Pondichery in 1984 and one batch of women in Sirumalai, Tamil Nadu in 1985. The LTTE had to boost its rank and file to engage an overwhelming force in the India-LTTE war that lasted for two years. As an example, the Batticaloa 13th batch - trained in the jungles of Pondugalchenai, Pulipanchagal, comprised children under 15, some as young as nine years old. The only time that the LTTE engaged in forcible recruitment was just before and after the withdrawal of the IPKF, both to replenish its depleted ranks and to prepare for an impending offensive. After the March 1990 withdrawal and the resumption of hostilities between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces in June 1990, the LTTE continued to recruit women and children in unprecedented numbers. Today, a third of all LTTE recruits are women, and they serve in all units. Children too, serve everywhere except in leadership positions.

The child fighters were originally a part of the Baby Brigade commanded by Justin, a Pondichery-trained fighter. However, after 1987 the LTTE integrated children with other units to offset the heavy losses. Today, the overwhelming number of children in the fighting units has generated concern among many Tamils in Sri Lanka and overseas. Since April 1995, some 60 per cent of LTTE personnel killed in combat have been children. These trends are supported by, Olivichu, the LTTE monthly video release which announces its death toll. Unlike the government, the LTTE is prompt and accurate in announcing the death of its "martyrs". A study by a UK-based Sri Lankan researcher Dushy Ranatunge reveals that at least 60 per cent of the dead LTTE fighters are under 18 and are mostly girls and boys aged 10-16. Ranatunge also reveals that almost all of the casualties are from Batticaloa, but since the escalation in the fighting, the dead also include those from Jaffna. It is likely that the LTTE needs control of the Eastern Province to replenish both its supplies as well as its wastage in rank and file numbers.

## **Indoctrination**

The LTTE focused on the politicisation of its people through propaganda (public events, leafleting, print media, radio, TV etc) to encourage them to support the LTTE campaign for an independent Tamil state. Almost all of the public events are attended by parading LTTE units. School bands play at the funerals of dead LTTE fighters and the LTTE has established spectacular memorial parks and beautiful gardens with monuments of its "martyr's." A striking features of these parks are the children's see-saws with toy automatic weapons mounted on the handles. During the heroes' week in October of each year, the LTTE invites families to attend the high-profile ceremonies in the graveyards of the "great heroes." The LTTE portrayed these functions as celebrations and the cemeteries as temples; attending children are welcomed and often leave with a strong sense of nationalism. The "great hero families" received a special status wherever the LTTE were in control. They paid no taxes, received preferential in job interviews, and were allocated special seats at all the public functions organised in LTTE-controlled areas. Economically deprived families thus did not object to their children joining the LTTE. "Sometimes, parents felt that they must let children go in order to be fed," according to UNICEF's Colombo representative Brita Ostberg, who is critical of LTTE's role. The LTTE has an unwritten rule that every family should give a son or daughter to the cause.

Another feature that attracted the young minds to the LTTE was the glamour and the perceived respect it was paid by society. In the past, when a school teacher cycled in the narrow streets of the north, students would move to the side until he passed. Today, when a student who has joined the LTTE passes on a motorcycle or pushcycle, the situation is reversed. Interestingly, the appearance of the young recruits was a strong factor in attracting youngsters to the movement. Tiger-striped uniforms, polished boots and automatic weapons acted as magnets to the children.

LTTE members regularly visited schools, addressed students of the need to participate in the "struggle" and screened films of their successful attacks against the Sri Lankan forces. Those fighters entrusted with indoctrination and recruitment would often ask that students supporting the struggle for independence raise their hand and, without giving them an opportunity to hesitate, would then drive them to a training camp. The LTTE system of maintaining everyone's records would prevent a teacher from refusing the entry of enlisted children to a classroom. In their book "Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict" Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn (Oxford 1994) state: "Tamil children spend one or two hours per day out of school digging bunkers as a form of militarised civic duty and are eventually asked to join the LTTE. Enlistment is supposedly voluntary, meaning that no one is physically threatened. However, families are menaced with property confiscation or physical violence if they appear unwilling to contribute their sons for the cause." Other than projecting the military successes of the LTTE, a powerful image that attracted many youngsters to join the LTTE was the screening of films depicting Sri Lankan government atrocities. Although the state takes severe legal action against soldiers responsible for civilian atrocities, aerial bombing of LTTE public offices has damaged nearby churches, hospitals and schools. The LTTE has been partially successful in projecting these incidents as deliberate and calculated acts of genocide against the Tamil people.

In five years following the withdrawal of 100,000 IPKF personnel, the LTTE established its own administration in the Jaffna peninsula and in the Kilinochchi mainland. The Tamil Eelam Schools Board even introduced its own revised history. Separatist Tamil educationists, had a part to play in encouraging ethnic prejudice among children. The LTTE cultural section, headed by Puduvali Ratnadurai, supported the initiatives of the LTTE student wing - the Student Organisation of Liberation Tigers (SOLT) - giving a fresh impetus to its programs to build and sustain student support for the creation of an independent state. SOLT also set up branches overseas, producing an education syllabus and text books to teach Tamil and LTTE versions of history to all Tamil refugees, and also set up about 100 weekend schools, teaching traditional drama and dance, often with funding from host governments, local cultural and social bodies, and philanthropists.

## **Recruitment and Training**

A typical unit of children is trained for four months in the jungle. Woken at 0500hrs they assemble, fall in line, and their leader raises the LTTE flag. Following this comes two hours of physical training, after which the recruits engage in weapon training, battle and field craft, and parade drill. During the rest of the afternoon time is spent both reading LTTE literature and performing more physical training. Lectures on communication, explosives and intelligence techniques continue into the evening. There is no communication between the camp and the children's homes during the training period. There have occasions when parents have travelled long distances, braving both Sri Lankan military and LTTE ambushes, in search of their children in LTTE jungle training camps. Having spent days waiting outside the camps for a glimpse of their children, parents have been sent back, told that the cadets have chosen not to meet them. During training, sleep and food are regulated to build endurance. Recruits receive crew-cuts to ensure that deserters may be easily identified. The LTTE code forbids liquor and sex and offenders are punished with death. Homosexuality, which also occurs, is a punishable offence.

The LTTE training curriculum is frequently reviewed and modified to meet the changing nature of battle. After 1990, when children were pitched into battle against Sri Lankan forces, the LTTE made training tougher. The military office of the LTTE headed by Wedi Dinesh developed a training programme that would make the child fighters more daring than the adults. This included the screening of Rambo-style videos in which the daredevil approach is invariably successful.

The trained young fighters are prepared for battle by attacking unprotected or weakly defended border villages. In these attacks, several hundred men, women and children have been killed by LTTE child combatants armed with automatic weapons guided by experienced fighters. The raids on these soft targets no police-defended forward defence lines. Thereafter, the trained fighters are deployed in camp attacks.

The performance of the LTTE Baby Brigade, under the command of senior commanders, has become increasingly dramatic. The daring and bloody attacks to capture weaponry and strategic ground produced heavy fatalities and injuries. The Tigers have built their expertise over a period of time, developing measures to eliminate failures and maximise successes.

## **Operations**

The first major operation in which the LTTE deployed child combatants came after LTTE suicide bomber, Pork, rammed an explosive-laden lorry into the Mankulam army camp (north) on 22 November 1990. The pre-dawn LTTE attack from all flanks was initiated with indigenously produced Pasilan 2000 mortars, standard mortars, RPGs, machine guns and small arms and was followed by successive waves of LTTE fighters drawn from the Baby Brigade. The intensity of the attack led the commander to evacuate the camp at 1600hrs on 24 November. Of a total strength of 313 government troops, at least a third were killed and a few were taken prisoner. The LTTE lost 62 of their number, mostly child combatants.

The second major operation involving LTTE child fighters occurred on 10 July 1991 when the LTTE attacked the Elephant Pass Military Complex, located on both sides of the causeway linking the northern peninsula to the mainland. Improvised tanks - bulldozers plated with armour - were followed by waves of LTTE cadres drawn from the Baby Brigade attempting to penetrate the forward defence lines. The LTTE attempted to isolate the camp by building bunkers, trenches and other forms of strong defences around it. For the first time the child combatants who witnessed heavy casualties became reluctant to move along the open ground their positions and the target complex. The LTTE commanders shot their feet and humiliated them. At one point the camp defences were breached but the troops within the complex repulsed the LTTE by counter-attacking. The complex was then reinforced by a sea landing of troops. The LTTE lost 550 personnel, most of whom were children.

After the attack on the Elephant Pass Complex, the LTTE analysed their successes and failures. They then decided to develop small contained units for long-range reconnaissance and deep penetration to generate sound and timely intelligence on troop deployment and combat readiness. Equipped with this surveillance data on Sri Lankan government base complexes and detachments, the newly established LTTE map and model-making department built near life-size models of the targets to be used as practice exercises for their troops. To gain greater stealth, speed and surprise, the LTTE mixed Black Tigers - psychologically and physically trained-suicide units - with the Baby Brigade. The outcome shocked the Sri Lankan government, particularly when the LTTE overran two fortified base complexes in 1993 and 1996, killing 1800 troops and removing weapons worth about US\$ 100 million.

On 11 November 1993 the LTTE launched an amphibious strike, destroying the Poonaryn army/Nagathevanthurai navy base complex. In preparation, members of the Baby Brigade were trained for night combat, swimming long distances and striking forward defence lines. Seaborne Tigers assaulted Sandupiddy pier and the Nagathevanthurai naval positions before dawn using improvised floats and weapons wrapped in polythene. At the same time a land group staged a concentrated frontal assault, penetrating the forward defence lines, while a third group infiltrated the camp perimeter, creating confusion and overrunning artillery and mortar positions.

On 28 July 1995 LTTE units simultaneously attacked five camps in the Weli Oya military complex. Based on battle indicators, the Brigade Command alerted its troops to an impending attack. The predawn raid comprised at least 3000 Tigers, almost all from the Women's Wing and the Baby Brigade. Only one soldier and one home guard were killed and 22 soldiers injured. The military recovered 10 light machine guns, five light guns, four RPGs, 118 automatic weapons and ammunition. The aborted plan was to have concluded with LTTE vehicles and boats retreating with arms, ammunition and other equipment removed from the camps.

From October 1995, the Sri Lankan military launched a series of operations to deprive the LTTE of territorial control of the Jaffna peninsula: the Tamil heartland. The LTTE northern command engaged in a tactical repositioning of its troops, withdrawing the bulk of fighters to the Wannai mainland. The Baby Brigade was temporarily dismantled and its units were placed under the LTTE military intelligence directorate. The child forces were given training in small businesses - selling ice creams, newspapers, fruits, lottery tickets, and working in cafes and restaurants - and re-infiltrated into the peninsula. After a while, many of them began to live with the parents, relatives, and families of LTTE sympathisers, thus becoming the eyes and ears of the LTTE. With intelligence provided by members of the dismantled Baby Brigade, LTTE sparrow teams struck, killing Tamil informants and supporters of the government as well as Sri Lankan troops. Initially, it was difficult for counter-intelligence operatives to believe that the LTTE was using children to gather its intelligence on troop movements and dispositions. It was even harder for them to apprehend and prosecute children who were under 16 years of age. From late 1995 to mid-1996 the LTTE recruited and trained at least 2000 Tamils largely drawn from 600,000 Tamils displaced in the wake of the operations to capture the peninsula. About 1,000 of these were between 12 and 16 years old and they were dispersed among the other fighting units.

On 18 July 1996, the LTTE launched an amphibious assault on the Mulativu military complex. The LTTE operation, codenamed Oyatha Alaikal (Ceaseless Waves), deployed between 5,000 and 6,000 personnel both to strike the complex and to fight reinforcements. After fighting began, screaming waves of the Baby Brigade began to attack the complex. During the initial attack, to create confusion, many senior LTTE fighters were dressed in military uniform. Amid the fighting, an army major commanded his troops to surrender to the LTTE leader; after the Tigers had disarmed about 300 troops, they were gunned down by the child combatants. The fighting killed 314 Tigers and injured at least 1,000.

Of the government forces, only two officers and 67 other ranks survived the attack. In addition to the loss of 1,173 officers and men, 37 elite troops engaged in a rescue operation were killed and 61 injured. An LTTE suicide boat rammed Ranaviru, a Shanghai class gun boat, killing 31 crew and vessel's captain.

## **Enter the Leopards**

The physical and psychological war training of children as a formidable lethal weapon is an innovation of the LTTE. The high point of LTTE achievement in this direction was the formation of the elite Sirasu puli, or Leopard Brigade. The members of the brigade were children drawn from LTTE-managed orphanages. Within the LTTE ranks, this brigade is considered to be its most fierce fighting force. All LTTE recruits swear an oath of allegiance to the LTTE leader once every morning and evening but, Leopard fighters have an incomparable loyalty to Prabhakaran. Most see him as a father figure and equate a request from him to a directive from heaven. On 4 December 1997 the LTTE leopard Brigade encircled and killed nearly 200 elite Sri Lankan forces in Kanakarankulam in the Wannai, suffering heavy casualties themselves as well. Through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the army accepted 113 bodies of soldiers from the LTTE; the LTTE buried 20 decomposed bodies. Uptil this point Sri Lankan infantry had been relied on elite troops - special forces and commandos - as its vanguard. The unprecedented loss severely demoralised whole sections of the government's frontline troops. The mutual annihilation also impeded the advance of Sri Lankan troops trying to open a main supply route linking the Jaffna peninsula with the South in time for the golden jubilee celebrations of Sri Lanka's independence on 4 February 1997.

The LTTE Baby Brigade lost heavily in two attacks: at the Weli Oya complex in July 1995 and during an assault on the Wannai defences on 1 February 1998. The Weli Oya victory, according to Sri Lanka's National Intelligence Bureau, was the biggest defeat the LTTE had suffered. Major General Janaka Perera, the then Brigade Commander of Weli Oya, said that all of the LTTE casualties, apart from the leaders, were teenagers. Perera, trained at Sandhurst and at the Royal College of Defence Studies in the UK, believe that LTTE suicide wave attacks can only be fought by developing advance intelligence and preparing to meet an impending strike. 5 August 1995 an Economist story entitled "Sri Lanka's under-age war", commenting on the attack, stated: "There was little rejoice by the army. Most of the dead were women and children, sent in by the Tiger generals as cannon fodder. The Tigers said 128 women had been killed, but they did not mention their child soldiers."

When the LTTE assaulted the Kilinochchi, Paranthan and Elephant Pass defences on 1 February 1998, at least 200 child fighters were killed assaulting near impregnable defences with 10-foot bunkers. An LTTE-captured South African buffel armoured vehicle, laden with 800kg of high explosives procured from Ukraine's Rubezone chemical plant, toppled before it reached the target. The LTTE was not keen to accept the bodies offered by the northern commander, Major General Lionel Balagalle, via the ICRC, and so the Sri Lanka Army buried the dead children. The LTTE could sustain a loss up to 200 personnel not because the leadership considers child fighters dispensable, but because from every debacle the LTTE learns a lesson and improves. However, LTTE domestic and international thinkers, using computerised databases, have alerted Prabhakaran to the possibility of having insufficient members of both adult or child combatants to continue the campaign without expanding LTTE's geographic influence. To prevent the exodus of youth from LTTE-controlled areas, they effectively enforced a law to regulate departures. Prabhakaran also directed that his eastern commands both expand their territorial control and recruitment. There are virtually no studies conducted by the government or foreign think tanks on LTTE kills and injuries as well as its potential for recruitment.

## **The International Response**

The LTTE has been able to conduct its under-age campaign away from the international gaze. Like their adult counterparts in the LTTE, child fighters are required to consume a Phial of Potassium Cyanide either when capture is imminent or when injured in the field. Enforcing the cyanide rule has, understandably, been difficult with children. John Burns of the New York Times, a regular commentator on Sri Lanka, highlights instances in which LTTE child fighters have failed to commit suicide. Acknowledging that the LTTE has been using "Tamil boys as young as 10" to counterattack the advancing government troops, Burns states: "Although the Tigers send their fighters into battle with cyanide capsules strung around their necks, many of the youngsters did not swallow the poison, as instructed by Tiger leaders, when shot." Burns also cites instances where LTTE units have withdrawn under fire "leaving wounded boys and girls lying in no-man's land, crying for help." As a result, there are more teenage than adult LTTE fighters in government custody.

The exposure given by Burns and an anti-LTTE web site by Umberto Gui has hurt the LTTE most. However, on the whole, there has been no international response to the LTTE attitude towards children. For example, when the LTTE expelled Muslims from the north and staged a series of massacres of Muslim civilians in the east, there was no outcry even within the Muslim world. Before launching their anti-Sri Lankan Muslim drive, the Tigers butchered all the Eastern Muslim units, including the child children - some as young as 9 - in July/August 1990.

The UN has repeatedly expressed concern over the misuse of children but without an impact at ground level. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women - Radhika Coomaraswamy, a Sri Lankan Tamil - has been a critic of the LTTE for its use of women and children in warfare. After reviewing statistics of LTTE injured personnel, Garca Machel, former first lady of Mozambique and adviser to the UN secretary general, stated that 20 per cent were between the ages of 10 and 14 during recruitment. London-based representatives of LTTE fronts - the International Federation of Tamils, UK, and the Tamil Centre for Human rights, France - attempted to lobby Machel during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1997, but she evaded them. The LTTE has a vibrant global network neutralising anti-LTTE stances and promoting Tiger propaganda.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, a Sri Lankan Tamil, believes that an entire generation of young Tamil children are being systematically destroyed by the LTTE. In response to Kadirgamar's impassionate plea to the 52nd UN General Assembly in September 1997, Olara Otunna, the UN Secretary General's special representative for children and armed conflict, sought to persuade "foreign governments not to tolerate the activities of the LTTE in their countries due to the heinous crimes committed by the LTTE against children." To give the issue an international profile, Kadirgamar travelled to the US twice in a month and briefed the US first lady, Hilary Clinton, on 29 October 1997. The designation of the LTTE as a terrorist group by the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright on 8 October, placed Kadirgamar, along with the Sri Lankan President and Deputy Defence Minister Ratwatte, high on the LTTE hit list.

Meanwhile in the Sri Lankan press, the use of child fighters is not a serious issue. Sri Lankan propaganda, soliciting Western opinion, argues that the LTTE uses Tamil children as cannon fodder. However, the overwhelming success of the LTTE, means that the Sri Lankan state is failing against a ruthless adversary.

## **Domestic Response**

Successive governments have failed to stem the exponential growth of the LTTE. To date, the LTTE's rate of recruitment of children is higher than its level of fatalities. The LTTE has concentrated on politically controlling, or at least militarily dominating, Tamil areas in order to recruit. Government troops have lacked the right training and quality leadership to deprive the LTTE of this territorial control. Similarly, Sri Lankan defence decision- and policy-makers, as well as military planners and strategists, have failed to understand the importance of psychological operations (psy ops) to drive a wedge between the Tamil public and the LTTE. Although there have been proposals to broadcast in Tamil and to leaflet Tamil areas, exposing the use of children as cannon fodder, lack of priority to psy ops continues to draw in children to join the LTTE. The only study on the role of the children in the LTTE is a sociological analysis by Peradeniya University's sociology student Chamarie Rodrigo. Her thesis, based

on published literature and interviews, confirms the failure of the state to address the "misuse of children by power-hungry leaders."

The Sri Lankan Government has failed to take on the LTTE on child recruitment both domestically and internationally. The failure is integral to the overall inefficiency of a politicised Sri Lankan security and the intelligence apparatus of the government. The replacing of intelligence and security professionals by novices to intelligence, along with the dismantling of the training branch of the National Intelligence Bureau, has prevented the state from correctly assessing as well as combating the LTTE. The bulk of the operatives posted overseas have lacked either the influence or the motivation to prevent LTTE propaganda, fundraising, procurement and shipping.

According to a foreign intelligence agency monitoring LTTE money transfers, the bulk of the LTTE funds raised under the banner of humanitarian and children's welfare organisations has been channelled to fund the LTTE war effort. Unlike the Hamas rehabilitation and reconstruction programme, the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) engages in large-scale projects to alleviate the suffering of 600,000 displaced Tamils. Despite the US designation of the LTTE as terrorist, the TRO raises funds there. In permitting funds raised for humanitarian purposes, Washington has earned the criticism of its own operatives because of the difficulty of monitoring how the money will be used in the affected areas.

In most cases, the hard currency is not transferred but instead buys weapons and domestically raised money is used in humanitarian activity to show that the funds have been used properly. Since no mechanisms are available for monitoring expenditure in the affected areas, the US decision is perceived as naive. The TRO, registered as a charity in most Western states, has massive fund-raising campaigns in France, UK and Canada. Inadvertently, the German Government provided a substantial grant to the TRO. Similarly, only a fraction of the funds raised by other LTTE front and cover benign organisations - including those in support of San Cholai and Kantha Ruban child orphanages - have been channelled for humanitarian purposes. These two orphanages, founded and managed by the LTTE, received frequent visits by Prabhakaran himself.

In many Sri Lankan Tamil shops and ethnic restaurants throughout the world, the LTTE has placed charity donation boxes, ostensibly used for funding orphanages. In response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo released a book in January 1998 entitled "LTTE in the Eyes of the World" in which they request donors to channel their humanitarian aid through Oxfam, Save the Children's Fund, CARE, The ICRC, UNICEF and so on. One of the few respectable Tamil organisations that has fought LTTE infiltration and funded orphanages and other children's projects in the war-ravaged north and east of Sri Lanka is the London-based Standing Committee of the Tamil Speaking People (SCOT) founded in 1977.

In the history of the Sri Lankan conflict, 38 Tamil groups and three Sinhala groups that has advocated or used terrorism to achieve political goals. The LTTE remains the only rebel group to use children in warfare, stemming from the innovative capability and potential capacity of this resource. Those children captured in combat has been effectively transformed into non-combatants. The Sri Lankan Government has established a number of homes to provide education and vocational training. After a period of time, they are released to their parents. Unlike the constraints precluding the transformation of criminals and adult rebels, child fighters can be rehabilitated.

The fear invoked by the LTTE prevents the criticism voiced by the Tamils against the LTTE leader Prabhakaran from being heard. Prabhakaran's unwillingness to bring his son Charles Anthony and Dwarka, his daughter, into the ranks of the LTTE is hurting the image of the suprema domestically and internationally.

The LTTE has fought the criticism at home and abroad by stating that these are the sacrifices the current generation of Tamils will have to make so that the future generations can live in peace and happiness. The LTTE has no qualms about the means used to accumulate political influence, military strength and economic power to advance its goals. In that light the LTTE will continue to disregard domestic and international pressure and continue its avowed goal fighting for a mono-ethnic Tamil state.

## **The Future**

The ideological experiment of motivating children as combatants has been a highly successful one. The LTTE has been able to enhance its performance in battle by deploying child units. Therefore, it is likely that other contemporary groups will now emulate the success of the LTTE.

The most devastating result of this practice has been the recovery of small-sized suicide body suits - denim jackets with concealed explosives to be worn beneath the garments of an innocent-looking guerrilla or terrorist to create heavy casualties. As these LTTE-manufactured suits, recovered by the Sri Lankan security forces, could even fit a child, there is concern as to whether the LTTE will use children as suicide bombers. The LTTE, at the cutting edge of creation, innovation and invention, has deceived both the Indian and Sri Lankan security agencies by assassinating two heads of government. After garlanding the former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, on the eve of the Indian elections in May 1991, a female suicide bomber killed him. A male suicide bomber, who infiltrated the presidential household, killed Sri Lanka President Ranasinghe Premadasa on May day in 1993. Security and intelligence agencies monitoring the LTTE claim that the faction retains the potential to use unsuspecting children as suicide bombers to target VIPs in the near future.

Unlike on governments, the influence of international organisations on guerrilla and terrorist organisations is likely to remain limited. The persistence of child guerrillas and terrorists, as a phenomenon is therefore likely to remain a feature use in the international system.

Governments, both the weak and the influential, and the international community as a whole, have lacked the political will to change the status quo and to impede an emerging trend. By permitting their support structures for generating funds to weaponry to flourish in their cities, the West - the guardians of democracy and human rights - have tacitly supported many child-employing guerrilla and terrorist groups. For instance, the LTTE has a significant presence, by way of offices and cells, in the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Australia. These groups are all engaged in propaganda, fundraising, procurement and movement of weapons. The host states of the West retain the potential to instigate sanctions against them; until they do, the Tamil Tigers - and other groups witnessing some of their success - will continue to break accepted civilised standards in deploying child combatants.

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Sujet : **[SRILANKA MUSLIMS] Resettlement of internally (forcibly) displaced Muslims in the North-East Sri La**  
Date : 10/12/03 09:02:25 Paris, Madrid  
De : [seyed100@hotmail.com](mailto:seyed100@hotmail.com)  
A : [srilankamuslims@yahoogroups.com](mailto:srilankamuslims@yahoogroups.com)  
*Envoyé via Internet (afficher l'en-tête)*

Resettlement of internally (forcibly) displaced Muslims in the North-East Sri Lanka

by M.I.M. Mohideen

The main focus of the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at the peace talk held in Thailand during 6-9 January 2003, was on the urgent humanitarian needs to improve the day to day lives of the North East people. To this effect the parties have agreed on an accelerated Resettlement program of the Internally Displaced people.

At the LTTE leaders' International media conference on 10th April 2002 Mr. Balasingam repeated his previous apology on behalf of the LTTE for the forcible expulsion of the Muslims from the North in 1990 and said that it was a political blunder that could not be justified and wanted the Muslims to forget and forgive the mistakes made in the past. But the LTTE attack on Muslims in the East came within three months of Mr. Balasingam's public apology and six weeks of SLMC leader and Minister Rauff Hakeem reaching an agreement with the LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran for the settlement of the problems faced by Muslims in the North-East. How can the Muslims forgive and forget while the LTTE keep on murdering the Muslims and destroying our economy?

The ethnic conflict in Sri-Lanka has had a terrible effect on the Muslims, particularly in the North-East. The forcible eviction of more than one hundred thousand Muslims, the attack on the mosques and killing of hundreds of Muslims while in prayer, the confiscation of land and attack on un-armed Muslim civilians have caused fears among the Muslims. The violence perpetuated by the Tamil militants against the North-East Muslims during the last two decades has cautioned the Muslims to be vigilant in the future. The primary concern of the Muslims in the North-East is the safety and security of our people, claim for our homelands and our inalienable right for internal self-determination.

The Muslims in the Northern province were forcibly evicted from their houses in the third week of October 1990. The ultimatum in many places was that the Muslims have to leave the region within 48 hours. The 75,000 Muslims forcibly chased out by the LTTE continue to live in abject conditions outside the North. The losses suffered by the Muslims were estimated to be more than US\$ 110 millions. The Tamil militants forcibly took nearly 45,000 acres of agricultural lands belonging to the North-East Muslims and agricultural produces confiscated.

A politico military strategy of the LTTE has been to weaken the economic strength of the Muslim community. In order to realize this object, the LTTE as was the case of other Tamil militants, have targeted economic ventures and business places of the Muslims. Robbing of business goods and abduction of businessmen for ransoms remain the common spectre in the North-East.

Many Muslim fishermen have been killed while at sea by the sea



tigers. Muslim fishermen in the Eastern Province are not allowed to sell their catch in Tamil areas by the LTTE nor are they permitted to engage in fishing activities in waters adjacent to Tamil villages. In many instances in the North-East, the cultural and religious symbols of the Muslim community have come under heavy attack from the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups. The grenade attack on a mosque in Akkaraipattu, massacre of Muslims while at prayers in the mosque at Kattankudi and Eravur, cold-blooded murder of Hajj pilgrim returnees in a place called Kaluwanchikudi demonstrates the extent of intolerance shown towards the religion and culture of the Muslims by the Tamil militants.

Even after the ceasefire agreement, the Muslims have been denied access to mosques during mass agitation promoted by the LTTE. Further, the recent incident at Valachenai during June 2002 where the LTTE have abducted 13 Muslims and the dead bodies of two Muslim youths killed by the LTTE were burned in front of their parents and government security forces thus denying them the burial according to Muslims rites, which clearly demonstrate the scant respect LTTE has for the religion and the culture of the Muslims.

The parties to the ceasefire agreement dated 22nd February, 2002 the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have accepted that the groups that are not directly party to the conflict have also suffered the consequences. This is particularly the case as regards the Muslim population in the North East.

But the LTTE Leader of the combat unit of the Eastern province Karuna speaking in a recent meeting in Switzerland had said that the MoU that was signed by the Government and the LTTE was prepared by the LTTE having only the interest of the Tamils in mind. Speaking further Karuna said the Economy of the Eastern province is in the hands of the Muslims and this should be changed. At present Muslims are taxed only 5% of their income, it is only to keep them happy for a while but soon we must levy a Tax of at least 20% from them. Karunas speech was broadcasted by IBC, a broadcasting station maintained with LTTE sponsorship

From the behavior of the LTTE, the Muslims are beginning to suspect whether the Federal State of Tamil Eelam had already been established in the North-East. The opening of LTTE political offices in the cleared areas, the system of taxation and extortion, the operation of Tamil Eelam Police Force and its own judiciary give rise to many questions. For example who is responsible for the safety and security of the Muslims during the period of Peace Talk, which is dominated by the LTTE. President Jayawardena proclaimed the temporary merger during emergency subjected to a referendum in the East at the end of the year. The referendum had not taken place for the last 15 years. Since the emergency is not in force now, is the temporary merger valid any more? Should the Muslims accept the North-East merger without a referendum in the East for the establishment of the Federal State of Tamil Eelam.

LTTE has been trying various methods, first it was the Interim Administration in the North East, then the Special Task Force and later the Sub-committee on De-escalation and Normalization (SDN) and now the Sub-committee on Important Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN). The primary object of all these arrangements is to transfer the powers vested with the Centre to North East or rather to LTTE with international recognition. By this Process the LTTE is trying to get legitimacy and international support for its role as the sole representative of the North-East in the area of historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking peoples - Tamils and Muslims. Following the financial support pledged by the international

community in Oslo the parties decided to move from planning to implementation of humanitarian and rehabilitation programs SIHRN has been recognized as the Implementing Agency and the World Bank has been accepted as the custodian of the North-East Reconstruction Fund (NERF).

Works that have to be carried out urgently in the Muslim areas before the commencement of the resettlement of forcibly displaced Muslims from the North.

01. De-mining –  
Mannar District:  
Musali DS Division –  
Chelavathurai, Kondachchi.  
Mannar DS Division –  
Talaimannar Pier.  
Manthai DS Division –  
Vidathalthievu, Periyamadu, Minuka.  
Mullaithievu DS Division –  
Mullaithievu Town, Hijirapuram.  
Jaffna District –Pommaveli, Manku-man, Chavakachcheri.

02. Clearing of unlawful occupants from all residential, commercial and Industrial buildings belong to Muslims.

03. Clearing of unlawful occupants from all Religious and Cultural buildings.

04. Clearing of all unlawful occupants from all Muslim Agricultural land and preparation of such land for cultivation.

05. Clearing of shrub jungles covered in the residential premises.

06. Clearing of the jungles on the access road and internal lanes.

07. Renovation of Tanks and Irrigation channels.

08. Reconstruction of all residential, commercial, cultural and religious buildings.

09. Reconstruction of Infrastructure ñ Electricity, Water, Roads etc.

10. Reconstruction of Civic centres and public buildings, Schools, Hospitals, Market, Bus Stands, Post Office, Police Station and Secretariat Offices.

11. Puttalam- Mannar Western Coastal Highway and bridge should be repaired and opened immediately.

12. The railway tract from Mathawatchi to Talaimannar should be repaired and the train services should commence immediately.

13. The bridge connecting the Mannar Island with the main land should be reconstructed.

14. The Mannar Causeway should be reconstructed.

15. The road from Mankulam to Mullaithievu should be reconstructed.

The proposal submitted by the Sri Lanka Government to the Oslo Donors Conference on 25th November 2002, for immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation support did not mention the losses suffered by the Muslims and the funds required for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction works in Muslim areas. The proposal gave the impression that it was only the Tamils have suffered in the North East conflict.

The Muslim Unit authorised by the Prime Minister in the Government peace secretariat to prepare the detail Plans and Estimates for the urgent works that have to be carried out and the register of Muslim lands that are unlawfully occupied by the Tamils in the North-East have not yet been established. World Bank will not release any funds without proper plans and estimates for the rehabilitation works in the Muslim areas in the North-East.

LTTE's political leader Tamilchelvam in a recent statement outlining the structure of the SIHRN has stated that it would function at district level and decide the area for development, allocation of funds, etc. The composition of the committee according to him will comprise LTTE-2 members, government-2 members and the District

Secretary (GA). No mention about Muslim representation. The SIHRN's powers would definitely bypass all the functions of existing line Ministries and Rehabilitation Authorities in the North-East. Muslims should have equal representation in these committees because the need for rehabilitation of Muslim refugees and the reconstruction of Muslim areas devastated by the war is in no way second to that of the Tamil areas.

Unless we have equal representation the Muslims will not be able to resettle the 102,867 Muslims forcibly displaced by the LTTE from the North-East and claim our agricultural lands and establish our property rights on residential and business premises.

This is the opportunity for the Muslims to prove our rights to look after our own affairs in the predominant Muslims areas independent of Tamils interference.

This would also give an opportunity for the Muslims to prove the Government of Sri Lanka as well as the International Community the feasibility of administrating the non-contiguous predominant Muslim areas in the North East independently by the Muslims, and to establish our rights for internal self-rule.

People's Alliances (PA) General Secretary and former Agricultural Minister D.M. Jayaratna had said that they are not satisfied with the manner in which the peace process is being carried out by the Government and the LTTE. The President may dissolve the parliament at anytime.

LTTE chief negotiator Dr. Anton Balasingam in a recent press interview had stated that in the event of the PA coming back to power under President Chandrika Kumaranathunga, the LTTE would go back to war again. He also said that the LTTE would not surrender arms before a final settlement of power sharing arrangement.

The 'Eelanadu' published in five counties carried in its January 20th issue an account of a meeting held in Batticaloa addressed by LTTE commanders. The basic undertones of the speeches were that they have no faith in the current peace initiative. They said that the current peace process is merely to expose to the world that the Sinhala people are not interested in a settlement that would be acceptable to the Tamil people. The current development demonstrates that they will not agree to an alternate political framework in order to solve the conflict and no Sinhala party is capable of mustering the required 2/3 majority and the approval at a referendum to amend the constitution.

Elamparathi who lead the LTTE ethnic cleansing of Muslims in 1990 is now back as the political chief in Jaffna. The main concern of the few Muslims who have return to Jaffna is about their security, and lack of attention to Muslim IDPs. In 1990 nearly 18,000 Muslims lived in Jaffna in 3537 houses and 194 Government quarters, sent their children to four primary schools and two secondary schools and conducted prayers in 16 Mosques. All that are changed now by the LTTE and the present ground situation in Jaffna is quit different. The few Muslims who have returned mostly do pavement hawking, tailoring, run meat stalls or engage in scrap iron business. But the LTTE middlemen have now taken control of the trade and it is extremely difficult for the Muslims to survive in Jaffna. Also the Muslim returnees have found that their houses are being occupied by the Tamils authorize by the Government agent.

Under the present situation there is serious security threat for Muslims in the North-East. However, the SLMC leader Rauff Hackeem has said that the forcibly displaced Muslims should have confidence in

the assurance given in the joint statement signed by him and the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran in April last year and go back. But the Government continues to remain silent with regard to the security and the rights of the Muslims in the North-East.

Young Muslims in the North-East are very much concerned about their security and ethnic rights, some even talk of taking arms to protect themselves and the community interest at large.

Details of the internally (forcibly) Displaced Muslims from the North East who are now languishing in the following districts ñ

Year 2002

Districts	Families	Peoples
Puttalam	15,500	74,140
Anuradhapura	865	4,070
Kurunagala	487	2,311
Gampaha	1,050	4,725
Colombo	425	1,912
Kalutara	395	1,856
Matale	85	517
Kandy	110	517
Galle	5	23
Kegalle	32	150
Ampara	110	523
Trincomalee	2,207	10,492
Batticaloa	343	1,631
Total:	21,614	102,867

The value of assets robbed by the LTTE during 1990 ethnic cleansing is more than Rs. 10,256

Million or US\$ 110 Million. The donor countries should put a condition for the LTTE to pay this amount to the forcibly displaced Muslims.

Description	Quantity	Value in Millions (Rs.)
Residential properties	22,000	5,500
Commercial and Industrial establishments	2,4002	2,100
Religious and Cultural Institutions	340	1700
Agricultural Lands	39,400 Acres	200
Gold Jewelleries	475,000 Grams	300
Cattle	211,000	150
Motor Vehicles	320	160
Motor Cycles	800	20
Carts	750	4
Bicycles	4000	25
Fishing Boats	850	40
Engines (Boats)	400	16
Fishing Nets	1200	8
Refrigerators	200	2
Television sets	2000	40
Radio Sets	600	1
Total: Rs.		10266

<http://origin.island.lk/2003/02/07/featur01.html>

LTTE and Eastern Muslims in dialogue : Regaining Muslim lands in the East  
by Kumar Rupesinghe

The recent announcement by the LTTE to allow Muslims to cultivate the lands belonging to them in the Eastern region is an important landmark in the evolution of the peace process in Sri Lanka. This means that Muslims will be able to return to their lands in time for the next cultivation season. It is a concrete manifestation of steps taken by the LTTE to restore good relationships with the Muslim community and open the way for reconciliation and co-existence. The first step in the process has begun with the restoration of agricultural land to Muslim in the Eastern region. This article will only examine some of the complexities surrounding the land questions as it involves Tamils and Muslim relations in the Eastern region.

#### Historical background

The land question in the Eastern region is different when compared to the land question in the Northern region. In the Northern region over 100,000 Muslims were forcibly evicted and given 24 hours to leave their homes. This was a traumatic experience for the Muslims. The question of the return of the Muslims to their former place of habitation is a complex and difficult question, which will not be the purview of this article. This article deals with agricultural land appropriated by the LTTE in the Eastern region.

With regards the agricultural land belonging to the Muslims the question of the title to the land is not in question since the Muslims have possession of the land deeds, unlike the hapless Muslims in the North who were compelled to leave their property within 24 hours. In the case of the Muslims in the Eastern region it was never a question of losing title to their land but their inability to cultivate their land due to coercion exercised by the LTTE and sometimes by the armed forces. In most cases the land is located in the low-lying areas, which are not habitable but are only used for agriculture or animal husbandry.

When the Muslims were forced to abandon their lands the LTTE either leased the land to Tamil landlords or to the labourers working on the land or to the families of martyrs who had lost their lives in combat. In quite a few cases Muslims sold the lands to Tamils albeit at a lower price.

#### Chronology of events

The appropriation of agricultural lands from the Muslims took place during the year 1983-1991, when the LTTE was engaged in serious violence against Muslims as retaliation for Muslim support to the armed forces and the Sri Lankan government. region. The Ceasefire Agreement, through the good offices of the Norwegian Ambassador, provided a basis for a delegation of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by its leader Minister Rauf Hakeem to meet the LTTE delegation led by Mr. V. Pirapaharan in the Wannu on the 13th of April to discuss the Muslim land question.

The leader of the LTTE gave an assurance that all lands belonging to the Muslims that are now being occupied by the Tamils would be returned to the Muslim landowners as soon as possible. Unfortunately the agreement between the two leaders did not come to effect immediately.

The land question was taken up at the second meeting of the peace talks in Thailand between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 31st October to 3rd November 2002, the LTTE announced that they would be interested in returning the agricultural lands to the owners soon after the harvest was over.

At this second meeting of peace talks in Thailand, an agreement was reached on a working arrangement between Hon. Rauf Hakeem (Sri Lanka

Muslim Congress, SLMC) and Mr. Muralidaran alias Karuna (LTTE) to address issues relating to the occupation of agricultural land belonging to Muslims and areas of mutual concern in the Eastern region.

In pursuance of the above, at the fifth meeting of the peace talks in Berlin, it was agreed to establish three committees, one in each district of the Eastern Province to address the issues mentioned earlier. These committees are meant specifically to address issues relating to ownership of occupied agricultural land belonging to Muslims and to facilitate the return of such land.

The Committee established for the Batticaloa composes of 6 members of the LTTE and 6 members from the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress. Meetings were held in Vavunathivu between the committees, Chaired by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and attended by MPs for Batticaloa, and the Government Agent for Batticaloa, Mr. R. Mounagurusamy. Subsequently meetings were held in Pondugalchenai, Karadiyanaru and Kokkaddicholai in the Batticaloa district. Agreements were reached to allow the Muslims to return to their land. Mr. R. Ramesh, the LTTE special commander for the Batticaloa Amparai District stated that "Our leader Pirapaharan has given us clear direction that Muslim people should have the equal and same rights as the Tamil people. Our senior commander Karuna is strict that the directive is implemented in practice. The decision to hand over the land to Muslims is not only a fulfilment of a promise made by the LTTE leader in April of last year but removes one of the major grievances which affect the relations between Muslims and Tamils.

Based on these agreements the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress has requested the Muslim Rights Organization to carry out a survey of the land claims by the Muslims. The LTTE actually requested such a register to verify claims of the Muslims... Currently the Muslims Rights Organization would undertake the study with the following objectives:

The land register

- \* Systematically enumerate the land claims of the Muslims in the North and East by visiting each location in the 3 districts.?
- \* Prepare a register based on field investigations on professional basis. The methodology of the study would consist of 18 enumerators who would be resident in the areas concerned. They would be required to fill a comprehensive questionnaire with regards their claims. The actual date of the acquisition, the manner in which the land was acquired, the extent of the land, their deeds to the land, the extent of property and livestock kept in the land are some of the questions, which will be recorded. The Muslim Rights Organization will obtain the assistance of the North East Muslim Assembly, the Ullemas, Muslim Theologians and the Trustees of the Mosques.

Mediation and co-existence

Apart from the political committees, which have been created a framework, needs to be created which can provide for the widest possible public participation of the process.

Whilst the LTTE has promised to hand over the land to the Muslim owners, there are bound to be disputes. Whilst a land register may provide the basis for future determinations, there will be intractable issues which would have to be dealt with.

It is likely that some of the land would have been sold to the Tamil during this long period of occupancy. In other cases Tamils may not have alternative land to cultivate since Tamils are already occupying and working on the land. Therefore alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, mediation and arbitrations may need to be put in place.

Alternative dispute resolution means that ways need to be found which would avoid long and protracted cases in Court. This means alternative lands or alternative means of livelihood needs to be secured. There is currently a working group of concerned institutions and actors who act as an informal advisory group for this work. Such a working group has as its mandate the study and implementation of the question of land rights in the North East. This working group has been established under the Triple R Program, which is under the Commissioner for Reconciliation.

#### District committees

To assist the work of this committee another working group will be created at the district level under the leadership of the Government Agent, district development officers and other relevant agencies. Such agencies will include religious organization from communities, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and other relevant organizations.

These committees will assist in deal with awareness building programs amongst the communities.

#### Communications

Clear communications between all the stakeholders is essential for the success of the exercise. The communications strategy should keep all stakeholders fully informed and ally any fears and rumours, which could incite conflicts.

Alternative dispute resolution means that measures should be found which would avoid a long and protracted case in Court. In Sri Lanka it has been suggested that a Mediation Commission be appointed to deal with land disputes. Special mediation boards could be appointed in each village composed of individuals from each community who can mediate on the issues.

Currently the Ministry of Justice is framing legislative provisions to create such a Mediation Commission for the North Eastern region. Another instrument, which can be used, are the Arbitration Boards, which are normally used for industrial disputers. A special team of lawyers will be requested to go into these questions.

#### Peace committees

Currently there exists peace committees in most of the villages in Batticaloa, Ampara and Trincomalee who can assist in the process of reconciliation. And these committees can be guided by the Mosque Federations, the Chambers of Commerce, and other Tamil Voluntary Organisations. The peace committees need to be trained in mediation and reconciliation work.

#### Mediation centers

Eventually mediation centers will have to be established in each of the three centers. A special paper needs to be commissioned to explore the best practice available and recommend structures of a permanent nature. The establishment of mediation centers of a permanent nature is essential since the region is composed of a multi-ethnic population.

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Muslim lands forcibly occupied by the Tamils in the Eastern Province

by M. I. M. Mohideen

A peculiar phenomenon in the North East is that a Muslim village is interspersed with a Tamil village and vice versa. Substantial share of lands owned by the Muslims are adjacent to the Tamil villages. Due to the increase of population, Muslims and Tamils are facing shortage of lands. As scarcity of lands become acute, tension between the two communities increase, mainly because of the fears of expansion. As a result of this particular socio-economic factor new rules and regulations evolved among both communities, which forbade members of one ethnic group to sell the land to the other ethnic community. This is indicative of a desire by both ethnic communities to ensure their separate identities in a situation where they had co-existed for centuries.

There have been intermittent clashes over the years on comparatively trivial issues such as Muslim farmers being harassed by Tamils when they pass through Tamil areas, waylaying of vehicles, robbing of paddy and cattle belonging to the Muslims. After 1983 ethnic violence, it was found that the Tamils in the Northern and Eastern provinces have started to forcibly occupy the lands belonging to the Muslims in areas close to the Tamil villages.

A delegation of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by its leader Minister Rauf Hakeem met the LTTE delegation led by Mr. V. Pirapakaran in the Wannu on the 13th of April and discussed the Muslim land question. The leader of the LTTE gave an assurance that all lands belonging to the Muslims that are now being forcibly occupied by the Tamils would be returned to the Muslims as soon as possible.

The land rights question is one of the most critical issues which is obstructing peace and reconciliation between the Tamil and Muslim people in the North East of Sri Lanka. At the second meeting of the peace talks in Thailand between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 31st October to 3rd November 2002, the LTTE has announced that they would be interested in returning the lands and the properties to the owners at the end of the harvest. There are about 490 locations in the North East where the Tamils are forcibly occupying about 100,000 acres of agricultural lands belonging to 30,000 Muslim Families.



SLMC National Leader Minister Rauf Hakeem, had substantive discussions with the members of the LTTE team during the peace talk in Thailand and came to a good understanding of the problems. The LTTE was prepared to seriously address the issue and requested that a register of claims be prepared which would then be subject to verification. Subsequently Hon. Rauf Hakeem requested the Muslim Rights organization to prepare a register of Muslim Lands forcibly occupied by the Tamils in the North-East. Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe the Chairman of the Foundation for Co-Existence provided support and guidance and facilitated the programme. The Muslim Rights organisation had undertaken the study with the following objectives.

Systematically enumerate the land claims of the Muslims in the East by visiting each and every location in the 3 districts.

Prepare a register based on field investigations on a professional basis.

The registration exercise involved the distribution of 20,000 forms and folders by 36 Village Enumerators, 3 District Coordinators and 3 Assistant District Coordinators who are the permanent residents in the areas concerned. They have filled the comprehensive questionnaire with regard to individual claims, the actual date of ownership and the manner in which the land was forcibly taken over, the extent of the land, their deeds, permit or any other documents to the land. Details of buildings, machineries and livestock kept in the properties are some of the other informations which have been recorded. The Muslim Rights organization had obtained the assistance of the North East Muslim Peace Assembly, the Ullemas - Muslim Theologians, Trustees of the Mosques and active youths in predominant Muslim areas in Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts of the Eastern Province. All forms and folders were collected, checked case by case and attested by Justice of Peace. The information collected was documented in several Volumes.

Volume I: Project Report

Volume II: AM/R - Ampara District Register.

Volume II: AM/DS - Ampara District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume II: AM/T - Ampara District, Title Claims

Volume II: AM/P - Ampara District, Permit Claims

Volume II: AM/PLR - Ampara District, Paddy Land Register Claims

Volume III: BT/R - Batticaloa District Register

Volume III: BT/DS - Batticaloa District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume III: BT/T - Batticaloa District, Title Claims

Volume III: BT/P - Batticaloa District, Permit Claims

Volume III: BT/PLR - Batticaloa District, Paddy Land Register Claims

Volume IV: TR/R - Trincomalee District Register

Volume IV: TR/DS - Trincomalee District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume IV: TR/T - Trincomalee District, Title Claims

Volume IV: TR/P - Trincomalee District, Permit Claims

Volume IV: TR/PLR - Trincomalee District, Paddy Land Register Claims

The project was funded by USAID - OTI and covered a period of seven months

from 24th April 2003.

There is no doubt that in many instances these land claims will be the subject of mediation. However, as a first step the register of land claims lays the basis for verification.

The resolution of the land question in the North-East would benefit more than 22,000 families - 103,000 men, women and children and will establish the basis for conflict resolution and help peaceful co-existence between the Tamils and Muslims. It would certainly go a long way to heal one of the worst wounds at the heart of the relations between the two communities.

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Mohamed Muhuseen

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Manirasakulam Muslims burning in ceasefire

Nalaka Nonis and Santhush Fernando reporting from Sivurangala

As ruling party politicians wax eloquent on the peace dividends of the 20-month-old ceasefire, for thousands of Muslims who live in Kinniya and other LTTE-infested areas in the vicinity, life has become a nightmare and the peace process elusive. War is bad but ceasefire is worse.

This seems to be the underlying tone of the remarks made by more than thousand Muslim villagers who on Tuesday gathered on the outskirts of the Sivurangala (Surangal) checkpoint in anticipation of joining the Sihala Urumaya protest march towards the LTTE's controversail camp at Manirasakulam.

"The peace process has only made our situation worse. We don't want this peace," said a Muslim leader who had arrived from Kinniya, a Muslim dominated area in the Trincomalee district.

The Muslim protesters who also came from Sivurangala (Surangal) and

Mollipothana expressed anger and disappointment when the Police and the Army prevented them from joining the Sihala Urumaya marchers. However, some 200 of them managed to join the march, carrying and shouting slogans such as "We don't want this peace".

A spokesman for the Kinniya branch of the All Ceylon Jammiyathul Ulama (Council of Muslim Theologians) told The Sunday Times they had submitted a petition to the Scandinavian ceasefire monitors, highlighting harassment they had been subjected to by the LTTE since the ceasefire agreement was signed in February last year.

"The 20-year war had brought untold hardship on us and we had lost much of our income-generating avenues. To keep the home fires burning, many of the Muslim women had left for West Asia as housemaids and this situation has given rise to many social problems and badly affected the institution of family.

"But after the signing of the ceasefire agreement, we have been forced to abandon paddy and chena cultivation, cattle farming and fishing. Besides, we are forced to pay illegal taxes to the LTTE (See box) and our youths are abducted by Tiger cadres who demand huge sums as ransom for their release. The ceasefire has brought us nothing but more hardships," the spokesman said.

He said that despite problems, the Muslims managed to cultivate their land in the vicinity of the Manirasakulam LTTE camp during the Yala season but they were not sure whether they would be able to do so in the coming Maha season because of the presence of the camp, which he pointed out was set up just three months ago on a land which was previously inhabited by the Muslims.

The Muslims, most of whom are internally displaced, said they irrigated their land with water obtained from the Kurangupanchan tank which was known as the lifeline of Kinniya for its large capacity but due to the LTTE presence in the area, they were unable to draw water from the tank. They said besides the LTTE-induced restrictions, the high security zone restrictions imposed by the security forces had also severely affected their fishing activities which they depended on for their livelihood.

The Muslims also alleged that much of their cattle had been stolen or forcibly taken away by LTTE supporters and they were now forced to take their remaining cattle to Kantale for grazing. One villager said that in spite of provocation by the LTTE, the Kinniya Muslims had always lived amicably with the Tamils and never resorted to violent reprisals as happened in other areas of the Eastern Province in the recent past. The Muslims said they hoped the Government, the LTTE and the SLMM would lend a sympathetic ear to their plight and help them live peaceful lives.

The march was symbolic: SU

Sihala Urumaya leader Thilak Karunaratne said their attempt to storm the LTTE camp at Manirasakulam was a "symbolic" act aimed at creating awareness on the dangers posed to the country's security and they did not go there to physically remove it.

Claiming that the government was lethargic in handling the Manirasakulam camp issue, Mr. Karunaratne accused the Ranil Wickremesinghe administration of "hiding every thing under the carpet".

He said the LTTE had refused to accept the SLMM ruling that the camp had come up in the Government-controlled area but the Government was just sitting like an idle observer. Referring to reports that LTTE had built a camp in Kantale, the SU leader warned that at this rate soon there would be camps in Habarana, Dambulla and Kurunegala and

scoffed at the government, saying that even if the Tigers set up a camp at Temple Trees, it would do nothing.

Questioning a statement by the Defence Ministry Secretary that the Manirasakulam camp issue had been referred to Oslo, Mr. Karunaratne asked what right a foreign country had to take a decision on a matter that affected the security of Sri Lanka. He said that the Sihala Urumaya had to abandon the protest to avoid a confrontation between the security forces and "patriotic Muslims" from the areas around Manirasakulam. "These Muslims have been pushed into a desperate situation. We feared that their agitation might lead to an unruly situation as the security forces had been given instructions by the Defence Ministry to stop the marchers," Mr. Karunaratne said.

These Muslims felt that they had been abandoned by mainstream Muslim parties, the SU leader said adding that they even shouted slogans hailing the Sihala Urumaya and invited his party to open a branch in Kinniya. Apart from Mr. Karunaratne, National Organizer Champaka Ranawaka and Propaganda Secretary Udaya Prabath Gammanpila, the march under the theme "Arms are yours, land is ours" was joined by some 200 SU activists from Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Kalutara and Kantale. The marchers were turned back by the police and the army, some six kilometres from the camp.

Referring to the failure of the Police to intervene or arrest LTTE cadres who tried to block the SU march, Mr. Karunaratne said that what ruled the North and East of the country was not the law of the land, but the law of the LTTE. He said that even if the LTTE cadres were arrested, some lawyers would threaten the policemen with fundamental rights petitions and get them released.

He also accused the Government of not bringing to the notice of the international community that the LTTE had violated the ceasefire agreement more than 3,000 times and had not respected the SLMM ruling with regard to the camp and the hoisting of the Eelam flag at recent Pongu Tamil celebrations in Jaffna, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Mannar.

Mr. Karunaratne said the government inaction had given the LTTE so much courage that its female cadres even show their buttocks to security forces personnel to provoke them.

Pay tax or die

The Muslims who live in the vicinity of the Manirasakulam camp say they are forced to pay illegal taxes to the LTTE.

Those who refuse to pay the tax are kidnapped for ransom, tortured or killed, they say. They say however that pro-LTTE Tamils are allowed every freedom to carry on with cultivation and fishing.

The "Taxes" are as follows.

Paddy land : Rs. 1,500 an acre (per season)  
Tractor : Rs. 15,000 per season Cattle: Rs. 300 per head  
Ordinary fishing boat : Rs. 300 a month  
Motor boat : Rs. 1,000 a month  
Bullock cart : Rs. 1,500 a year  
Firewood : Rs. 1,500 a month

Where is the "real" camp?

Several residents of Sivurangala (Surangal) told The Sunday Times that the "Manirasakulam" camp shown to the media by the LTTE last week was not the "real" Manirasakulam camp, but a temporary one built around May 3 this year in the government-controlled area and had been occupied by just two LTTE cadres since then.

They also said that LTTE martyrs cemetery was a hoax and there was no one buried there. M. Anver, a former policeman who had served in Jaffna for seven years, said the LTTE had demolished a mosque in Manirasakulam which was known to Muslims as Majeed Nagar or Barakath Nagar, and was using the Imam's room as the camp kitchen.

The mosque was there when the Muslims fled the area in 1990. He claimed that after the ceasefire the LTTE had built more camps in the east, specifically at Kanniya (hot water wells). The policemen whom we met at Sivurangala said they too had not seen the Manirasakulam camp.

<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/031019/news/8.htm>

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**M.I.M.Mohideen**

**Chairman**

**Muslim Rights Organization**

**Sri Lanka**

**KINNIYA FAISAL NAGAR - AL-IRFAN VIDYALAYAM LAND DISPUTE BETWEEN TAMILS AND MUSLIMS**

**Wednesday 08th October 2003**

Communal violence erupted between the Tamils and Muslims at 10.00 am on Wednesday 8th October 2003, in Faisal Nagar, Kinniya over a plot of land 3 acres belonging to Al-Irfan Mixed School. Fifteen Tamils were injured - fourteen admitted to Kinniya Hospital and One to Trincomalee for the treatment of minor injuries. A Muslim was abducted by the Tamils and a Muslim student was arrested by the police. In retaliation four Tamils were abducted by the Muslims. Muslim students stopped the ferry service between Kinniya and Trincomalee.

Faisal Nagar - 3857 Muslims and 217 Tamils, 3½ km East of Kinniya. Al-Irfan Muslim Mixed School - 760 students conduct classes from grade 1 -10. Situated in a 3 acre plot. Adjoining this School is the 3 acre land in dispute. Originally this land belonged to Captain Sarawanamuthu of Trincomalee who owned more than 350 acres in the

area. Under the Land Reforms, the land in dispute was vested with the LRC in 1972. Muslim Religious School - Madrasa and Hindu Vinayakar Kovil were jointly cultivating the said land for some time without approval from the LRC or permission from the Government.

The Al-Irfan Muslim Mixed School made an application to the LRC for the adjoining 3 acre land for the expansion of the School. Approval was obtained from the LRC, North-East Provincial Land Commission and the Land was surveyed by the Survey Department in 1998. Finally the said land was handed over to the School through the Education Department Kinniya Zonal Director by Kinniya Divisional Secretary on 22nd September 2003. The School Development Society is constructing the boundary wall for the land with the funds allocated by the area Muslim Parliamentarians and Eastern Development Ministry.

When the Vinayakar Kovil Hindus - Tamils came to know the vesting of the land to the school, nearly 18 Tamils unlawfully entered the land, blocked it into small plots and erected temporary fences. Immediately the Principal informed the Zonal Director and the Zonal Director sent a registered letter to the Chaina-bay Police complaining of the unlawful occupation of the School land by the Tamils and wanted the police to take immediately action. In the mean time the principal checked at the Police Station and conformed that the Police station had received the letter sent by the Zonal Director. However no action was taken by the Police to remove the unlawful occupants.

The School Development Society also complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Trincomalee. The SLMM visited the place on 07th October 2002 but not taken any action to settle the dispute. When there was no action by the Police and the SLMM, Muslim School children protested in front of the Kinniya Divisional Secretariat and took the DS and the Police to the site at Faisal Nagar Al-Irfan School and removed the unlawful fence erected by the Tamils at about 10.00 am on Wednesday 8th October 2003. The Tamils who unlawfully put up the fence pelted stones in anger at the Muslim boys, four Muslims were hurt. In retaliation the Muslim attacked the Tamils and nearly 15 were injured. None of the MPs were available in Kinniya.

The violence erupted when the Muslim students removed the fence put up by Tamils in the 3 acre plot belonging to Al - Irfan School in the presence of Police and Kinniya Divisional Secretary. Tamils abducted a Muslim teacher Mr. Anver of Al-Irfan Vidyalaya. In retaliation Muslims abducted four Tamils. Police arrested a Muslim Student at 2.00 pm. In protest the Muslim students stopped the ferry service between Kinniya and Trincomalee. The Tamils released the Muslim teacher in the evening at 5.00 pm and the four Tamil were also released by the Muslims. The Ulama Sabai safely handed over the four Tamils to the respective families. Police also released the Muslim student and the ferry service resumed at 6.00 pm. The situation returned to normal in the evening.

#### **Thursday 09th October 2003**

At the boarder of Alankeni - Idiman, Tamils attacked the Muslims in the morning. LTTE Anpalakan invited the Ulamasabai for immediate discussion. When the representatives of the Ulamasabai went LTTE Anpalakan did not turn-up. However, Mr. Parimelalakan from LTTE Political division came. They met and dispersed. Soon after the meeting with LTTE Parimelalakan, the Tamils attacked the Muslims in Alankeni No.10, Situation became tense and Muslims in the boarder villages started moving out to the interior of Kinniya and Kuttikarachi.

SLMC Leader and Minister Hon. Rauff Hackeem visited Kinniya by Helicopter at 3.30 pm and met the local Civil Society Leaders and defused the situation. SLMM Trincomalee and SSP Mr. Daya Samaraweera have also visited the area. Local curfew was enforced from 6.00 pm to 6.00 am the following day. No incidents during the curfew in Kinniya and the suburbs.

**Recommendation:**

Immediate inquiry should be held by the IGP or DIG Trincomalee as to why the Chaina-bay Police failed to take prompt action on the letter sent by Kinniya Zonal Director of Education.

SLMM Head Office should hold an inquiry as to why the SLMM Trincomalee did not take prompt action on the complaint made by the Al-Irfan School Development Society.

Strengthen Security in the area

SLMM Trincomalee should coordinate reconciliation between the Tamils and Muslims with the assistance of Government Security Force, LTTE and Local Civil Society - Muslims and Tamils.

Forwarded by  
SLMIC (UK)  
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Sujet : **[SRILANKA MUSLIMS] Lankan housemaids face murder, rape, harassment ...**  
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Lankan housemaids face murder, rape, harassment - Daily News

by Nadira Gunatilleke

Murder, rape and harassment of Sri Lankan housemaids in the Middle-East continues unabated, it was revealed yesterday at a press conference held in Colombo by the Campaign to Protect Migrant Workers' Rights.

From January 2000 to October 2003, 400 bodies of Sri Lankans who had been employed abroad have been brought to Sri Lanka, a migrant workers' rights campaigner said.

President, Campaign to Protect Migrant Workers' Rights, Shriyani Pathirage said this was a shocking figure and that immediate action should be taken to protect Lankans working abroad.

The total number of Sri Lankans employed abroad is about 1.2 million and 65 per cent of them are housemaids. More than 7,100 complaints had been received from the Sri Lankan housemaids who went abroad during this year up to October 31, Pathirage told a media briefing.

During the first six months of this year 240 complaints on sexual abuse had been reported to Sahana Piyasa operated at the Bandaranaike International Airport by Foreign Employment Bureau and it is an increase of 70 percent than the number of similar complaints received during the first six months in 2002.

Pathirage said that during the past six months of this year 'Sahana Piyasa' has also received 1041 complaints related to different types of harassment. The number of complaints received in connection with harassment and non-payment of salaries is 1704, which is a 45 per cent increase when compared with the first six months of 2002.

The number of complaints received in connection with non payment of salaries is 1859.

The number of complaints in connection with becoming disabled is 81.

Pathirage said that during the first six months of this year 44 pregnant (due to rape) housemaids returned to Sri Lanka and another 20 housemaids returned with illegitimate children.

This is an increase of 157 per cent over the first six months of 2002. The Foreign Employment Bureau has trained 29,761 housemaids during the first six months of this year and this is a decrease by 20 percent over the number trained during the first six months in 2002.

There are 571 foreign employment agencies. During the period January - June, 50 more applications had been forwarded to the Foreign Employment Bureau to open new foreign employment agencies.

The Foreign Employment Bureau has issued 28 new licenses for new agencies and so far none of their license has been cancelled. Some agencies still operate smoothly despite cancelation of their license, she added.

According to the Secretary of the Rural Women's Front, Ahmed Shamshad Begam 1,91,581 Sri Lankans have gone abroad for employment.

Out of the 7103 complaints received from migrant workers, 3191 complaints are from the Sri Lankans employed in Saudi Arabia. The number of complaints received from Kuwait is 1041, Lebanon (800), UAE (497) and Jordan (467).

She said that about 91 per cent Sri Lankan women who go abroad as housemaids are subject to sexual harassment. Officials attached to Sri Lankan embassies abroad operate as brokers selling Sri Lankan housemaids to 'clients' when those women come to Sri Lankan embassies seeking shelter, protection and help, she alleged

Sujet : **[SRILANKA MUSLIMS] IDPs need more assistance to return in safety and dignity**

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Source: Norwegian Refugee Council

Date: 16 Sept 2003

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IDPs need more assistance to return in safety and dignity

Geneva, September 16, 2003 - More than 300,000 people, out of a total displaced population estimated at 800,000, have returned home since a ceasefire ended 20 years of hostilities in 2002. Despite the ceasefire, however, many remain displaced, while many of those who have been able to



return have not done so in safety and dignity. Returning IDPs face safety threats, property dispossession, landlessness and a lack of basic infrastructure and basic services. Two large groups, in particular, are in need of better security arrangements before returning: Some 125,000 non-Tamils from rebel-held areas and some 50,000 Tamils from government 'high security' areas (HSZ). Displaced women, especially female-headed households, are among the most vulnerable upon return. They face inequitable policies for distributing assistance as well as obstacles to gaining legal

title to land and property. Some 100,000 IDPs stuck in government-run welfare centres are among the worst off. While the Government and Tamil rebels are committed to creating conditions for large-scale returns, they do not yet adequately protect and assist IDPs.

Returned but still displaced

Large numbers of internally displaced people have headed home in war-torn northern regions of Sri Lanka since a ceasefire was signed in early 2002. Over 311,000 IDPs have returned or relocated to northern and eastern areas in the past 18 months, exceeding expectations and showing confidence in the peace process (MRRR & UNHCR June 2003). Once travel restrictions were lifted and military activities ended in early 2002, IDPs began heading home, at least temporarily to check on security conditions and properties. Many discovered that their houses and properties had been either destroyed, looted or had been taken over by other displaced people. Some have decided to wait before taking their families home and remain in welfare centres or with friends and relatives. Others are now struggling to rebuild their homes and restart a livelihood.

Returnees face difficult challenges in their home areas. Most of them are subsistence farmers, fishermen, agricultural labourers or unskilled workers who need strong support from the government and aid agencies to restart their lives. The war has caused widespread destruction in the north and east of the country and serious reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts are needed before a large-scale return can be sustained. An IDP survey conducted by UNHCR and the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees (MRRR) during 2002 showed that close to 150,000 IDP families or 92 per cent of the total displaced population required some kind of assistance to achieve durable solutions (MRRR & UNHCR May 2003). So far the Government is providing little assistance to returnees and the difficulty in restarting a livelihood is one of the main problems slowing down return (CPA February 2003, p. 39). Since December 2002, the rate of monthly return has gradually decreased from over 15,000 to less than 5,000 in June 2003 (MRRR & UN June 2003).

Housing is one of the main issues facing the returnees with an estimated 327,000 houses partly or totally damaged by the conflict in the north-east. Reconstruction efforts have been slow to date and an estimated 58 per cent of the damage units remain totally inhabitable, about half of them in Batticaloa and Jaffna district (ADB, UN & WB May 2003, p. 32)

When minority ethnic communities have been collectively displaced and their land subsequently occupied by another ethnic community, the issue of restitution of land and property needs to be addressed before durable solutions can be found. These particular issues are faced by around 125,000 returning non-Tamils who were displaced from areas due to come under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in an interim administration. In addition, many IDPs face serious security issues on return. Some 100,000 Muslims long displaced from Jaffna and Mannar, and 25,000 Sinhalese who fled LTTE attacks in the northeast are seeking security guarantees before they will return. Muslim IDPs returned to Jaffna to check security in 2002 but soon returned to Puttalam to await better conditions (BRC July 2002). Despite an official commitment by the LTTE to allow for the return of the Muslim IDPs and to look into the restitution or compensation for property losses, which are estimated to be worth around US\$ 110 million (BRC February 2003), the latter remain distrustful and few envisage

unconditional return (CPA February 2003, p.36).

IDPs from the government's High Security Zones (HSZ) will remain displaced as the parties argue over humanitarian and territorial concerns. The Zones were a bone of contention during the fourth round of peace talks in January 2003, when the Sri Lankan government demanded that the LTTE disarm before allowing some 50,000 civilians to resettle in these areas. Sidestepping the problem, the parties agreed to start resettling people outside the security zones (Government of Sri Lanka 8 January 2003). Since then, the issue has remained unresolved hampering the return of tens of thousands of displaced. In the Jaffna peninsula, where more than half of the 311,000 IDPs have returned, an estimated 30 per cent of the area is still occupied by the Sri Lankan Army (SLA). The military presence not only prevents the return and resettlement of many IDPs in the HSZ but it also negatively affects economic activity, in particular by placing severe restrictions on fishing activities (CPA February 2003, p.50).

#### Majority yet to return

Although over 311,000 Sri Lankans IDPs have returned home, more than twice as many remain displaced throughout the country. During more than 20 years of civil war in Sri Lanka, more than a million people were uprooted and some 64,000 were killed.

A total of 800,000 Sri Lankans were estimated to be internally displaced at the end of 2002. During 2002, the MRRR and UNHCR conducted a nationwide IDP survey to register displaced persons and collect data on their needs and intentions. Some 613,000 people voluntarily registered as IDPs. This figure did not include some IDPs who had already returned by the time the survey was completed in August 2002, estimated at 160,000. Despite the return movements, UNHCR continue to use the 613,000 figure for its country operation plan, considering that many of those who have returned have not yet been properly resettled and are still in need of assistance to restart a livelihood (UNHCR 3 September 2003).

The majority of the displaced are located on the northern districts of Jaffna (113,133), Mullaitivu (115,590), Kilinochchi (105,570) Vavuniya (73,235) and Mannar (46,801) while the eastern districts of Batticaloa (22,733) and Trincomalee (16,631) host fewer IDPs. Puttalam district in the west is home to some 66,184 IDPs, most of them Muslims evicted by the LTTE in early 1990 from Jaffna and Mannar (MRRR & UNHCR May 2003). In June 2003, some 102,000 IDPs were still living in 315 welfare centres, mainly in the north (UNHCR 3 September 2003).

Of the 311,000 who have returned, relocated or are in transit, more than half have moved to or within Jaffna district (170,768). Other districts receiving large numbers of returnees are Kilinochchi (57,242), Mullaitivu (34,107) and Vavuniya (21,086) (MRRR & UNHCR June 2003).

The IDP study revealed that 63 percent of the IDPs surveyed in the north-east wanted to return home; 25 per cent wanted to remain where they were; 3 per cent preferred to move to a new place and 7 per cent were undecided (ADB, UN & WB May 2003, p. 11). Similarly, the same proportion of IDPs in the border districts expressed the wish to stay and integrate in their area of displacement (ADB, UN & WB 9 May 2003).

Displacement in Sri Lanka has been characterized by its long duration and a pattern of multiple displacements. In some areas, families have been displaced as often as five times while many IDPs in camps have been displaced for more than 5 years. Some, like the Muslim IDPs now residing in camps in Puttalam, have even been displaced for more than ten years (CPA February 2003, p. 25).

A history of repeated displacement and the bleak prospects upon return to areas devastated by war explains why many prefer to stay temporarily or

permanently in their area of displacement. A survey by UNHCR among IDPs in welfare centers in Vavuniya district at the end of July 2003 revealed that the two main reasons for not returning were the issue of the safety of the children and the issue of landlessness (UNHCR 20 August 2003).

#### Landmines, abuses

Displaced people returning to the Jaffna and Vanni areas face risks to their safety from large numbers of landmines. After 20 years of fighting, Sri Lanka is riddled with an estimated 700,000 landmines, most of them buried in heavily populated and fertile areas like the Jaffna peninsula and Vanni, representing a serious threat to civilians. Since the ceasefire, some 54,846 mines and 13,149 UXOs have been cleared but much remains to be done to protect the returning IDPs. There were some 142 mine casualties reported in 2002, but the real number is believed to be much higher (ICBL August 2003). Mine Education is reportedly only provided upon return and none provided in IDP camps or settlements prior to return (CPA February 2003, p. 7).

Displaced people still face risks to their safety and rights although violence has generally subsided since the ceasefire. Women and children, who make up the large majority of IDPs, are particularly at risk: During 2002, human rights violations continued to be reported in the north and east, including extortion, protection rackets, child recruitment and abduction.

During 2002 a total number of 556 violations of the Ceasefire were reported by the Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), 502 of them by LTTE, and 54 by Government forces. Most violations were cases of child recruitment and abduction by LTTE, and harassment by government forces (SLMM 21 January 2003).

Numerous cases of 'disappearances' were also reported when IDPs were taken into custody from welfare centres. This was especially the case after the government stepped up its military response to the Tamil insurgency in 2000, by declaring new emergency regulations. Amnesty International linked the regulations to increased reports of torture by military forces (AI, 1 July 2000). Other security concerns affecting IDPs included extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions and harassment by soldiers at checkpoints.

The exclusion of human rights concerns from the peace process may foster a climate of impunity and injustice which is unlikely to help reconciliation. Critics contend that the ceasefire agreement and ongoing negotiations have paid little attention to human rights, with both parties reluctant to examine the abuses of the past. Decades of fighting and near total abdication of civil administration to armed groups and patronage networks in the north and east have resulted in institutionalised abuses against civilians by both the LTTE and pro-government groups (HRW July 2002, pp. 8-9).

Repeated displacement and long internment in welfare centres has made displaced people a particularly vulnerable and dependent group. Generally, IDPs have avoided taking refuge in welfare centres where their freedom of movement was severely restricted under a daily 'pass' system. This restriction has hampered the ability of IDPs to cope independently with displacement and deepened their reliance on food aid.

#### Property loss

The war has caused enormous damage to property in the north-east. Many returnees have lost their homes, property and business premises after private and state property suffered extensive damage during two decades of civil war. Many other IDPs, in particular those of the second generation who have reached adulthood during displacement are landless and have nothing to return to.

It is estimated that the conflict has damaged close to 90 percent of the

houses owned by displaced persons in the north-east (ADB, UN & WB May 2003, p. 32). Others have found their properties occupied by other displaced persons or by military personnel. Requisition of land and buildings by the military occurred frequently during the war, with no compensation generally paid to those evicted. After being away for more than 10 years many IDPs face the risk of being unfairly dispossessed of their land and properties under current Sri Lankan property laws.

In the government-controlled areas, there are a number of state institutions and NGOs involved in assisting in the restitution of property of IDPs, including the District Courts, the Bar Association of Sri Lankan, the Legal Aid Foundation, the Human Rights Commission, Mediation Boards, the Legal Aid Commission and the Police (CPA February 2003, p. 57). However, for those IDPs whose houses and properties are situated in the HSZ, no solution is in sight as long as the two parties to the peace process do not resolve the issue.

In LTTE-controlled areas, where the LTTE has set up a parallel administrative structure and judicial system, land and property issues come under the purview of both the government and the LTTE administration. In cases where land and property has been taken over by the LTTE, it is presently unknown what type of redress will be afforded to owners. The Muslim IDPs evicted from Jaffna and Mannar in the early 1990 whose properties and premises have been taken over by the LTTE or rented to others are particularly affected by this.

Regarding the prescription issue, "the practice in LTTE-controlled areas appears to be that, if for a period of 20 years from the time of leaving a property, the owner has made no inquiries about, or visits to the property in question, the person occupying should be able to claim prescription. Prescription will be applied in the case of economic migrants, however, prescription may not be applicable for displaced persons and refugees or when the occupant is paying rent to the LTTE" (CPA February 2003, p. 60). For the time being most land and property disputes appear to be settled amicably.

IDPs will also struggle to prove ownership over lost property with a land registration system seriously disrupted by the war. While many IDPs either lost or left behind their land title documents after escaping fighting, land registry authorities themselves do not always have the documents; in parts of the north land offices have been destroyed (Premarathne, Eranthi November 2002 p. 6-7).

#### Return areas devastated

In northern areas earmarked for resettlement, water and sanitation needs remain acute, with a widespread lack of drinking water and sanitation facilities. It is estimated that the proportion of people with access to safe water supply is only 20 per cent while access to sanitation is limited to 25 per cent of the population (ADB, UN & WB May 2003, p. 49)

An estimated three-quarters of returnees will not have access to adequate water supply or proper sanitation, exposing vulnerable groups to high risks of diarrhoea, dysentery and other diseases (UN & GOSL 23 August 2002, p. 21).

Returnees, IDPs and other civilians face a serious lack of medical care in the north because of past government restrictions and the flight of qualified personnel. Many medical professionals and healthcare workers have fled the area, causing a shortage of doctors, nurses and medical specialists (MSF 9 February 2002). Out of the 11,132 posts in the health care, over 40 per cent are vacant, mainly in the skilled and professional categories (ADB, UN & WB May 2003, p. 5). A World Health Organisation baseline survey showed that the depletion of human resources combined with a lack of proper supplies had disrupted all regular preventive and curative services in the

northeast (WHO August 2002, pp. 96-98).

The humanitarian situation in Vanni has remained worrisome despite the easing of a government embargo on 'war-related material' in rebel-held areas from early 2002. The decade-long embargo restricted the flow of food, essential drugs, medical equipment, fuel and cement to the area, devastating health, education, houses, roads and agriculture.

Although the government kept a civilian administration structure in LTTE-controlled areas in the north, local services were limited by the strict control of supplies, staff shortages and inadequate infrastructure.

#### Centres of misery

Displaced people interned for years in state-run welfare centres continue to face hunger and stress. As the conflict dragged on, welfare centres designed as a temporary solution became semi-permanent with some IDPs spending a decade living in squalid, overcrowded conditions.

Large numbers of displaced people have suffered hunger in the welfare centres. In early 2002, some 77,000 IDPs were going hungry in welfare centres after receiving very little food assistance for three months, and with no alternative sources of food, according to the UN World Food programme (WFP). The main cause of this shortage was the inability of the state to mobilize resources to assist these vulnerable groups (WFP 28 February 2002). The government has failed to provide regular food to the welfare centres, and its dry rations often fall short of minimum caloric requirements (WFP 19 September 2002, p. 5).

According to preliminary surveys conducted by the government and NGOs in early 2003, a majority of displaced mothers and children in the welfare centers of Trincomalee suffered from malnutrition mainly because of the lack of nutritional food provided to them (Tamilnet 14 March 2003). At the end of 2002, there were complaints that the rice provided to IDPs under the WFP programme was of poor quality and unfit for human consumption. In August 2003, IDPs in the Jaffna peninsula again complained about the quality of rice being sold to them by the Rehabilitation Ministry of Sri Lanka (Tamilnet 27 August 2003).

Displaced people also face serious psycho-social problems stemming from long-term stays in welfare centres. These include high rates of suicide, dependency attitudes, loss of self-esteem, alcoholism and depression. Suicide rates were three times higher in welfare centres than in the rest of the country. A 2001 MSF survey of residents in the Vavuniya welfare centre found high levels of traumatic stress due to shocking past experiences and present living conditions. Stress was often associated with physical complaints, such as chest and heart problems or generalized body pains (MSF 31 May 2001, p. 25).

#### Immediate help needed

The Sri Lanka Government and aid agencies have been slow to provide enough assistance to returnees. Scores of thousands who returned to the north did so spontaneously largely without support from the government. Those returning from the Vanni prior to the date of the ceasefire are reportedly denied any resettlement assistance (BRC March 2003). Implementation of the Unified Assistance Scheme (UAS), due to start in December 2002, was delayed because of lack of funding and until an IDP needs assessment by the government and UNHCR was completed. The UAS package provides a start-up grant for returnees to purchase basic tools, inputs and find temporary shelter to regain a productive livelihood and a permanent housing allowance (UN Inter-Agency IDP Working Group 28 November 2002). However, in order to benefit from the resettlement assistance the displaced persons have to re-register to receive dry rations in the area of return. Those who decide to phase their return and to leave their families behind while they rebuild

their homes and livelihood are reportedly not entitled to receive any assistance (CPA February 2003, p. 9).

The government and LTTE have agreed to work together to return displaced people. At peace talks in Thailand in early January 2003, both sides agreed to facilitate returns to war-affected areas through a joint Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN) (Royal Norwegian Government 9 January 2003). A risk is that short term military considerations will outweigh the rights of displaced people to return home voluntarily in safety and dignity. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka found that the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have been widely breached in recent years, especially under a policy influenced mainly by military considerations (Gomez, Mario, July 2002, pp. 15-18).

Structures to help the IDPs are in place. In an effort to better streamline and coordinate assistance to IDPs, the government of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe established the Ministry of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Refugees (MRRR) in December 2001. Along with UNHCR, the lead UN agency for IDPs in the country, MRRR developed a framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (RRR) to assist IDP resettlement and rehabilitate war-affected communities. UNHCR has also been involved in delivery of non-food items, education, water and sanitation improvements, and IDP protection schemes with ICRC.

During 2002, the Government launched a National Framework for Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation and defined a joint strategy with the UN Country Team to meet the immediate needs of returned IDPs (UNHCR June 2003).

Donor support has focused mainly on the task of restoring infrastructure in areas of return; roads, transport, irrigation systems, schools and health services. In June 2003, donors pledged some \$4.5 billion to support the reconstruction and development of Sri Lanka. The Multilateral Group (UN Country Team, World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM)) is currently working on a Transitional Strategy to address the needs of the returnees and to better bridge the gap between relief and development (UN Inter-Agency Working Group 6 August 2003).

The Global IDP Project  
<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/ec211c631482a5f5c1256da300503ac4?OpenDocument>

<http://www.idpproject.org>

Sujet : **[SRILANKA MUSLIMS] Lands grabs in East**

Date : 16/12/03 12:37:49 Paris, Madrid

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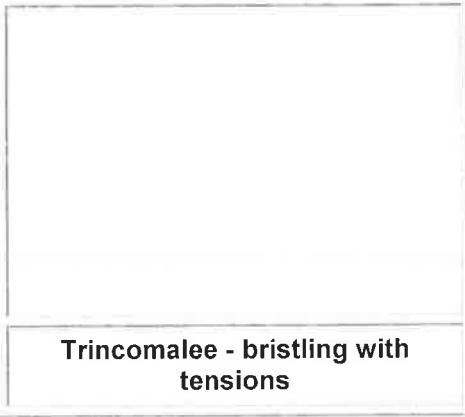
### 'Lands grabs in East - a source of tension'

by Chandani Jayatilleke

A group of Muslim women has called upon the Government to intervene and settle disputes between Tamils and Muslims in the Eastern districts, following several incidents threatening the lives of the Muslims since April this year.

The Group is part of an organisation called Al Muslimaath which is involved in projects to support the poor and needy, specially Muslim women and girls.

Dr. Marina Thaha Reefai (Founder President), Ayesha Yusuf (Past President), Susan Jamaldeen (Current President) and Nadira Rameez (Committee Member), told Daily News that the murder and abduction of Muslims were grave problems and many families had lost their male relatives.



The issue needed to be addressed at the earliest, before it got further complicated and led to another ethnic conflict in the country, they pleaded.

"The authorities have done very little to protect unarmed Muslims in the cleared areas after the ceasefire agreement," Dr. Reefai said. Muslims have also been victimised in many different ways during the ethnic conflict. There have been attacks on mosques and on innocent civilians. Confiscation of land has taken place.

After the ceasefire agreement, the Muslims in the East have been denied access to mosques during mass agitations promoted by the LTTE. In incidents which took place in Muttur and Valachenai in June 2002 the LTTE and other militants had destroyed properties worth more than Rs. 150 million

and abducted and killed 13 Muslims, they said.

Dr. Reefai said that in the latest incident (last week), 11 Muslims were brutally murdered in a predominantly Muslim area - Kinniya - in Trincomalee district by a militant group. "It appears that LTTE has no control over these terrorists known as Tamil Maravar Padai, identified as the Third Force," she said.

The Muslim group claimed that the Tamils had unlawfully occupied the houses of Muslims in Jaffna and that the Muslim returnees have found it difficult to survive in Jaffna under these conditions. The land rights question is one of the most critical issues obstructing peace and reconciliation between the Tamils and Muslims in the North East.

At the second meeting of the peace talks in Thailand, the LTTE had announced that they would be returning the lands and the properties to the owners after harvest and wanted a register identifying Muslim claims. There are nearly 490 locations in the North-East where persons are unlawfully occupying more than 100,000 acres of agricultural land belonging to 30,000 Muslim families, the Muslim women's' group said.

A resolution of the land and properties question would be of great significance and would establish the basis for reconciliation and co-existence, they pointed out.

Unlawful occupation of Muslim lands, abduction of Muslims for ransom and taxation by terrorists are the root cause for the ethnic conflict between the Tamils and Muslims in the North-East. "The recent incident in Kinniya is the best example. Terrorists are forcible occupying Muslim lands in Kinniya, Muthur, Thampalakamam, Kanthalai, Kuchcheveli and Pudavaikattu." Most of the reports in media had not given the true picture of the situation so far, the Muslim women said. "As a result of terrorist attacks in Kinniya from November 23 to December 3, 3,064 people have been displaced, of which 2,647 are Muslims and 417 are Tamils," the Group said.

They warned that these issues would create serious social problems in the near future. Young Muslims are becoming restless. "They are growing up in an environment which is leading them to frustration and anger. Therefore, you cannot expect them to behave in a normal manner," the Group said.

It proposes to create a system where these issues can be addressed soon by the affected and the government. "A third of the Muslims of Sri Lanka live in the Eastern Province and so, the authorities should take immediate measures to stop the violence and abductions in the area," the women said.

**Monday, 15 December 2003**  
**Daily News**

POP/849

6 February 2003

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: A GLOBAL ISSUE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST  
CENTURY; NEW REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

NEW YORK, 6 February (UN Population Division) -- Around 175 million persons currently reside outside the country of their birth, and almost one of every 10 persons living in the more developed regions is a migrant. The more developed regions receive each year about 2.3 million migrants coming from the less developed regions, accounting for two thirds of their population growth. These are some of the data from the International Migration Report 2002, issued by the United Nations Population Division. This report complements findings from the wall chart International Migration 2002 issued on 28 October 2002.

The issue of international migration has moved to the forefront of national and international agendas, raising many questions. The report attempts to address some of these questions by providing an overview of international migration levels, trends and policies, and of the workers' remittances they generate, for countries and regions and for the world as a whole.

The first part of the report deals with the following general issues:

Data and Policy Issues

Discussing some of the challenges faced in gathering and analyzing data on levels and trends of international migration, the report illustrates some of these challenges with recent examples from the work of the Population Division. It also provides a summary of major trends in international migration policies in developed and developing countries since the mid-1970s.

Migration Issues in the General Assembly

Also presented is the report of the Secretary-General to the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in 2001: "International migration and development, including the question of the convening of a United Nations Conference on international migration and development to address migration issues." This document summarizes the views of governments and describes recent activities carried out by the relevant organizations at the regional and international levels. Also included is the resolution adopted by the General Assembly following its consideration of the report.

The second part of the report presents international migration profiles for each individual country and for regions, major areas and special groups of countries.

Some of the major findings are as follows: Migrant Stock



Around 175 million persons currently reside in a country other than where they were born -- about three per cent of the world's population. The number of migrants has more than doubled since 1975, and sixty per cent of the world's migrants currently reside in the more developed regions, with 40 per cent living in the less developed regions. Most of the world's migrants live in Europe (56 million), Asia (50 million) and Northern America (41 million). Almost one of every 10 persons living in the more developed regions, but only one of every 70 persons in developing countries, is a migrant. In the 10 years from 1990 to 2000, the number of migrants in the more developed regions increased by 23 million persons, or 28 per cent.

#### Net Migration

In the five years from 1995-2000, the more developed regions of the world received nearly 12 million migrants from the less developed regions, about 2.3 million migrants per year. The number of net migrants amounted to 18 per cent of the number of births, and the net migration accounted for two thirds of the population growth in the more developed regions. The largest gains per year were made by Northern America, which absorbed 1.4 million migrants annually, followed by Europe with an annual net gain of 0.8 million.

#### Number of Refugees

About nine per cent of the migrants are refugees. At the end of 2000, the number of refugees in the world stood at 16 million, of which 12 million were under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and 4 million were under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The largest number of refugees was found in Asia -- 9 million -- and in Africa -- 4 million. Three million refugees were in developed countries with 13 million in developing countries.

#### Workers' Remittances

Remittances sent back to the home country by migrants are a major source of foreign exchange earnings for some countries and are an important addition to gross domestic product. For example, in 2000, at least nine countries received remittances from abroad amounting to more than 10 per cent of their gross domestic product.

#### Governments' Views and Policies on Immigration

In 2001, almost a quarter of all countries viewed immigration levels as too high; 44 per cent of developed countries had policies aiming to lower immigration levels, as did 39 per cent of developing countries.

#### Governments' Views and Policies on Emigration

Developed and developing countries are strikingly similar in their views and policies concerning levels of emigration. About three-quarters of all countries view their level of emigration as satisfactory, and one in five countries have policies in place to lower levels of emigration.

Parties to United Nations Instruments

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, ratified by 141 countries, establishes legal protections and a clear definition of the status of refugees.

The 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, ratified by 139 countries, extends the scope of the 1951 Convention to persons who became refugees after that date.

The 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, came into effect last month, after the report was sent for printing, when Timor-Leste became the twentieth country to ratify it.

The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has been ratified by 18 countries.

The 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has been ratified by 17 countries.

For further information, please contact the office of Joseph Chamie, Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; tel: 1-212-963-3179; fax: 1-212-963-2147.

The International Migration Report 2002 is available for \$39.95 (Sales No. E.03.XIII.4, ISBN 92-1-151375-8) from United Nations Publications, Two UN Plaza, Room DC2-853, Dept. PRES, New York NY 10017 USA, Tel.1-800-253-9646 or 1-212-963-8302, Fax.1-212-963-3489, E-mail: publications@un.org; or Section des Ventes et Commercialisation, Bureau E-4, CH-1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland, Tel.41-22-917-2614, Fax.41-22-917-0027, E-mail: unpubli@unog.ch; Internet: <http://www.un.org/publications>.

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## **NUMBER OF WORLD'S MIGRANTS REACHES 175 MILLION MARK**

### **Migrant Population Has Doubled in Twenty-five Years**

New York, 28 October -- With around 175 million people currently residing in a country other than where they were born, the number of migrants in the world has more than doubled since 1975, with most living in Europe (56 million), Asia (50 million), and Northern America (41 million), according to findings from the wall chart *International Migration 2002*, issued by the United Nations Population Division.

As the issue of international migration has been thrust to the forefront of the international agenda, the need for accurate, timely and comparable information and analyses on international migration levels, trends and policies has acquired unprecedented urgency. But the available information and analyses have not kept pace with growing demands. Most recently, the Secretary-General indicated in his report on strengthening the Organization (document A/57/387) that, "it is time to take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue, which now involves hundreds of million of people and affects countries of origin, transit and destination. We need to understand better the causes of international flows of people and their complex interrelationship with development".

In its continuing efforts to address these issues, the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has issued the wall chart, which presents the latest available key information on international migration for all countries and regions of the world, including estimates of migrant stock, net migration flows, refugees and workers' remittances. These estimates are supplemented with information concerning governments' views and policies on international migration and the status of ratification by countries of United Nations instruments regarding international migration. In addition to the wall chart, the Population Division is issuing next month, a companion publication, *International Migration Report 2002* (document ESA/P/WP.178), which provides additional information on international migration for countries, regions and the world for 2000, as well as for 1990. The wall chart and the Report are also available on the Internet at: <http://www.unpopulation.org>.

The major findings of this study are:

**Migrant stock** -- Around 175 million persons currently reside outside the country of their birth, which is about three per cent of world population. The number of migrants has more than doubled since 1975. Sixty per cent of the world's migrants currently reside in the more developed regions and 40 per cent in the less developed regions. Most of the world's migrants live in Europe (56 million), Asia (50 million) and Northern America (41 million). Almost one of every 10 persons living in the more developed regions is a migrant. In contrast, nearly one of every 70 persons in developing countries is a migrant.

**Number of refugees** -- The number of refugees in the world at the end of 2000 stood at 16 million, of which 12 million are under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and 4 million under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The largest number of refugees are found in Asia, 9 million, followed by Africa with 4 million. Three million refugees are located in developed countries.

**Net migration** -- The world's more developed regions gained an estimated 2.3 million migrants from the less developed regions, or nearly 12 million over the period 1995-2000. The largest gains were made by Northern America, which absorbed 1.4 million migrants annually, followed by Europe with an annual net gain of 0.8 million and by Oceania, with a net intake of 90,000 migrants annually.

**Workers' remittances** -- Remittances are a major source of foreign exchange earnings and are an important addition to gross domestic product (GDP) for a number of countries. For example, in 2000, remittances from abroad augmented GDP by more than 10 per cent for countries such as El Salvador, Eritrea, Jamaica, Jordan, Nicaragua and Yemen. Remittances can be used to import capital goods and provide investment funds for entrepreneurs. Also important, remittances can add to household income and savings and be used for the purchase of consumer products and services.

**Government views and policies on immigration** -- Major changes in governments' views on the level of immigration are taking place, as a result of growing concerns with the economic, social, political and demographic consequences of immigration. At present, about 40 per cent of the countries in the world have policies aimed at lowering immigration levels. Although developed countries are more inclined

towards lowering immigration, developing countries are also moving in a similar direction towards more restrictive policies.

Government views and policies on emigration -- Developed and developing countries are strikingly similar in their views and policies concerning levels of emigration. About three quarters of both developed and developing countries view their level of emigration as satisfactory. In contrast, one in five countries have policies in place to lower levels of emigration.

Parties to United Nations instruments:

-- The 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*, ratified by 141 countries, establishes legal protections and a clear definition of the status of refugees. It also prohibits the expulsion or forcible return of persons accorded refugee status.

-- The 1967 *Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees*, ratified by 139 countries, extends the scope of the 1951 Convention, which benefits

only persons who became refugees prior to 1 January 1951. It also extends the application of the Convention to persons who became refugees after that date.

-- The 1990 *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*, ratified by 19 countries, establishes an international definition of the different categories of migrant workers. It formalizes the responsibility of receiving States with regard to upholding the rights of migrants and assuring their protection.

-- The 2000 *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, ratified by 18 countries, aims

to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, particularly women and children; to protect and assist the victims of such trafficking; and to promote cooperation among States parties to meet these objectives.

- The 2000 *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, ratified by 17 countries, aims to combat and prevent the smuggling of human cargo, reaffirming that migration in itself is not a crime, and that migrants may be victims in need of protection.

For further information, please contact the office of Mr. Joseph Chamie, Director of the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; tel: 1-212-963-3179; fax no. 1-212-963-2147.

International Migration 2002 (Sales No. E.03.XIII.3) may be obtained for \$5.95 per copy from the Sales Section, United Nations, New York or Geneva, through booksellers worldwide, or by writing to the Director, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, United States of America.

**BELOW-REPLACEMENT FERTILITY EXPECTED IN 75 PER CENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**BY YEAR 2050 ACCORDING TO UN POPULATION REPORT**

NEW YORK, 26 February (UN Population Division) -- The newly released 2002 Revision of the official United Nations population estimates and projections breaks new ground in terms of the assumptions made on future human fertility and the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. For the first time, the United Nations Population Division projects that future fertility levels in most developing countries will likely fall below 2.1 children per woman, the level needed to ensure the long-term replacement of the population, at some point in the twenty-first century. By 2050, the medium variant of the 2002 Revision projects that three out of every four countries in the less developed regions will be experiencing below-replacement fertility.

With respect to HIV/AIDS, the 2002 Revision anticipates a more serious and prolonged impact of the epidemic in the most affected countries than in previous revisions. The impact of the disease is explicitly modeled for 53 countries, up from the 45 considered in the 2000 Revision. The dynamics of the epidemic, as estimated by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), are assumed to remain unchanged until 2010. Thereafter, prevalence levels are assumed to decline in a manner consistent with modifications of behaviour that reduce the rates of recruitment into the high risk groups as well as the chances of infection among those engaging in high risk behaviour. The resulting HIV prevalence levels remain relatively high until 2010 and then decline, but are still substantial by mid-century.

As a consequence of these changes, the 2002 Revision projects a lower population in 2050 than the 2000 Revision did: 8.9 billion instead of 9.3 billion according to the medium variant. About half of the 0.4 billion difference in these projected populations results from an increase in the number of projected deaths, the majority stemming from higher projected levels of HIV prevalence. The other half of the difference reflects a reduction in the projected number of births, primarily as a result of lower expected future fertility levels.

The 2002 Revision confirms key conclusions from previous revisions. Despite the lower fertility levels projected and the increased mortality risks to which some populations will be subject, the population of the world is expected to increase by 2.6 billion during the next 47 years, from 6.3 billion today to 8.9 billion in 2050. However, the realization of these projections is contingent on ensuring that couples have access to family planning and that efforts to arrest the current spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are successful in reducing its growth momentum. The potential for considerable population increase remains high. According to the results of the 2002 Revision, if fertility were to remain constant in all countries at current levels, the total population of the globe could more than double by 2050, reaching 12.8 billion. Even a somewhat slower reduction of fertility than that projected in the medium variant would result in additional billions of people. Thus, if women were to have, on average, about half a child more than according to the medium variant, world population might rise to 10.6 billion in 2050 as projected in the high variant.

The increasing diversity of population dynamics among the countries and regions of the world is evident in the results of the 2002 Revision. Whereas today the population of the more developed regions of the world is rising at an annual rate of 0.25 per cent, that of the less

developed regions is increasing nearly six times as fast, at 1.46 per cent, and the subset of the 49 least developed countries is experiencing even more rapid population growth (2.4 per cent per year). Such differences, although somewhat dampened, will persist until 2050. By that time, the population of the more developed regions will have been declining for 20 years, whereas the population of the less developed regions will still be rising at an annual rate of 0.4 per cent. More importantly, the population of the least developed countries will likely be rising at a robust annual rate of over 1.2 per cent in 2045-2050.

As a result of these trends, the population of more developed regions, currently at 1.2 billion, is anticipated to change little during the next 50 years. In addition, because fertility levels for most of the developed countries are expected to remain below replacement level during 2000-2050, the populations of 33 countries are projected to be smaller by mid-century than today (e.g., 14 per cent smaller in Japan; 22 per cent smaller in Italy, and between 30 and 50 per cent smaller in the cases of Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine).

The population of the less developed regions is projected to rise steadily from 4.9 billion in 2000 to 7.7 billion in 2050 (medium variant). Particularly rapid growth is expected among the least developed countries whose population is projected to rise from 668 million to 1.7 billion despite the fact that their fertility is projected to decline markedly in the future (from 5.1 children per woman today to 2.5 children per woman in 2045-2050). With sustained annual growth rates higher than 2.5 per cent between 2000 and 2050, the populations of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen are projected to quadruple, passing from 85 million to 369 million in total.

Large population increments are expected among the most populous countries even if their fertility levels are projected to be low. Thus, during 2000-2050, eight countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria, the United States, China, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in order of population increment) are expected to account for half of the world's projected population increase.

The past 50 years witnessed a remarkable reduction of fertility levels in the less developed regions, with total fertility falling from six to three children per woman. Over the next 50 years, fertility in less developed regions is expected to reach replacement level in 2030-2035 and fall below it thereafter. However, average fertility in the less developed regions as a whole is still expected to be slightly above two children per woman in 2045-2050, mainly because of the increasing heterogeneity of population dynamics among developing countries. Thus, the 49 least developed countries are expected to have a total fertility of 2.5 children per woman in 2045-2050, well above replacement level. That is, the 2002 Revision foresees that by mid-century there will still be a significant number of countries where the transition to very low fertility will not be completed.

Increasing diversity is also evident with respect to future mortality levels. At the world level, life expectancy at birth is likely to rise from 65 years today to 74 years in 2045-2050. But whereas more developed regions, whose life expectancy today is estimated at 76 years, will see it rise to 82 years, that of less developed regions will remain considerably below, reaching 73 years by mid-century (up from 63 years today). In the group of least developed countries, many of which are highly affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, life expectancy today is still below 50 years and is not expected to exceed 67 years by 2050. So, although the gap in life expectancy between the different groups of countries is expected to narrow, major differences in the probabilities of survival will remain evident by mid-century.



The 2002 Revision indicates a worsening of the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in terms of increased morbidity, mortality and population loss. Although the probability of being infected by HIV is assumed to decline significantly in the future (particularly after 2010), the long-term impact of the epidemic remains dire. Over the current decade, the number of excess deaths because of AIDS among the 53 most affected countries is estimated at 46 million and that figure is projected to ascend to 278 million by 2050. Despite the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the populations of the affected countries are generally expected to be larger by mid-century than today, mainly because most of them maintain moderate fertility levels. However, for the seven most affected countries in southern Africa, where current HIV prevalence is above 20 per cent, the population is projected to increase only slightly, from 74 million in 2000 to 78 million in 2050, and outright reductions in population are projected for Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland.

The deeper reductions of fertility projected in the 2002 Revision result in a faster ageing of the population of developing countries than in previous revisions. Globally, the number of older persons (60 years or over) will nearly triple, increasing from 606 million in 2000 to nearly 1.9 billion by 2050. Whereas six of every 10 of those older persons live today in less developed regions, by 2050, eight of every 10 will do so. An even more marked increase is expected in the number of the oldest-old (80 years or over) at the global level: from 69 million in 2000 to 377 million in 2050. In less developed regions, the rise will be from 32 million to 265 million, again implying that most oldest old will live in less developed countries by 2050.

In more developed regions, the population aged 60 or over currently constitutes 19 per cent of the population; by 2050 it will account for 32 per cent of the population. The elderly population has already surpassed the child population (persons aged 0-14) and by 2050 there will be 2 elderly persons for every child. In the less developed regions, the proportion of the population aged 60 or over will rise from 8 per cent in 2000 to close to 20 per cent in 2050.

Increases in the median age, the age at which 50 per cent of the population is older and 50 per cent is younger than that age, reflect the ageing of the population. At the world level, the median age rose by scarcely three years between 1950 and 2000, from 23.6 years to 26.4 years largely because most populations in less developed countries remained young. Over the next 50 years, however, the world's median age will rise by nearly 10 years, to reach 37 years. Among developed countries, 17 are expected to have a median age of 50 years or more, with Japan, Latvia and Slovenia (each with a median age of about 53 years), and the Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Singapore and Spain (each with a median age of about 52 years) leading the list. At the other end of the spectrum, Angola, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Somalia, Uganda and Yemen expect to have very young populations, with median ages lower than 23 years in 2050.

International migration is projected to remain high during the first half of the century. The more developed regions are expected to remain net receivers of international migrants, with an average gain of about 2 million per year over the next 50 years. Averaged over the 2000-2050 period, the main net gainers of international migrants are the United States (1.1 million annual net migrants), Germany (211,000), Canada (173,000), the United Kingdom (136,000) and Australia (83,000), whereas the major net senders are China (-303,000 annual net number of migrants), Mexico, (-267,000), India (-222,000), the Philippines (-184,000) and Indonesia (-180,000).

A more detailed summary of the key findings of the 2002 Revision is available as World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision, Highlights (United Nations, February 2003). This document will be posted on the Population Division's web site at [www.unpopulation.org](http://www.unpopulation.org). The full results of the 2002 Revision will be issued in a series of three volumes and a wall chart that are under preparation as well as in electronic format.

For further information on the 2002 Revision, please contact Joseph Chamie, Director, Population Division, New York, NY 10017, USA; tel: (212) 963-3179, fax: (212) 963-2147)