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A low-intensity war

The ceasefire agreement is in tatters and from all accounts the war seems to have already begun. According the head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), "There is war ongoing. It is a low-intensity war." The Mission is now monitoring a war rather than a ceasefire, he laments.

The Government has said that the LTTE has launched an "undeclared war" since last December when it commenced an ongoing campaign of claymore landmine and grenade attacks against the security forces that has claimed the lives of scores of service personnel.

The LTTE has accused the Government of conducting a "shadow war" against it in collaboration with Tamil 'paramilitary' groups including the Karuna faction which defected from the LTTE.

Both sides have failed to abide by promises made in the last round of talks in February in Geneva aimed at strengthening of their commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement. The Tamil Tigers undertook to desist from violence and attacks on security forces and in return the government promised prevent any 'armed groups' carrying out 'armed operations' from in its territory. Both parties agreed to meet again in late April, but the Tigers pulled out and the Geneva exercise collapsed leading to a further intensification of violent incidents mainly in the Northeast between security forces and the LTTE on the one hand and on the other between the LTTE and other armed Tamil groups, particularly the Karuna Group.

Matters reached a new high last month following the assassination attempt on the country's Army Commander by a woman suicide bomber which left the army chief seriously injured, several others killed and wounded.

The retaliation by the military was swift, with Sri Lankan air force, supported by naval artillery, pounding LTTE positions near Trincomalee, sending thousands of local people fleeing into the jungle. Ever since, violent incidents throughout the Northeast have further escalated.

Real fears are now being expressed about the ceasefire completely breaking down and a full scale war resuming particularly after the latest attack by the LTTE on a naval convoy transporting over 700 troops with Scandinavian truce monitors on board the vessels. The LTTE has not only rejected the ruling by the SLMM that its attack on the Sri Lankan Navy vessels on 11 May constituted a gross violation of the ceasefire agreement. It also has also warned the international monitors not to go on board Sri Lankan naval vessels.

It is in this backdrop that the European Parliament recently adopted a resolution critical of the LTTE deciding to list it as a 'terrorist organisation' and to freeze its assets. LTTE's chief negotiator Anton Balasingham has described the EU resolution imposing punitive measures and harshly censuring the Tigers as "unfair, untimely and utterly biased" adding that: "Faced with global isolation and humiliation, the LTTE may be compelled to stay away from further talks."

Whether the ban on the LTTE will in fact take place or not will be known later this month. The Co-Chairs - USA, Japan, EU and Norway - are scheduled to meet on 30 May in Tokyo to discuss the crisis that has hit the Sri Lanka peace process.

The Co-Chairs also have the duty to recognise the fact that, under the pretext of adopting retaliatory measures in the face of continuing landmine and grenade attacks, the security forces have resorted to revenge attacks in the course of which countless number of extra-judicial killings and involuntary disappearances of civilians have occurred. The recent extra-judicial killings and massacres by the security forces such as the 2 January murder of the five Tamil students in Trincomalee and the 13 May massacre of over a dozen civilians in the Kayts island are reminiscent of and reflect the tragic experience the civilian population had gone through for years in the 1980s and early 1990s. The Co-Chairs and the international community should exert strong pressure on the Government of Sri Lanka to carry out prompt and impartial investigations as a matter of priority into all cases of arbitrary or extrajudicial killings and disappearances, findings made public and take prompt action to bring the culprits to justice.

The Co-Chairs and the international community should commit their resources and energies to averting a return to war and promoting the restoration peace based on a negotiated political solution informed by the Oslo Declaration which provided for a federal model and the Tokyo Declaration guaranteeing human rights, democracy and pluralism.

EU ban 'unfair, untimely and utterly biased' - LTTE

May 20 - "The resolution of the European Union Parliament imposing punitive measures and harshly censuring our liberation organisation is unfair, untimely and utterly biased. This EU intervention will thus emerge as a serious impediment to reaching a just and lasting solution to Sri Lanka's conflict," the LTTE's chief negotiator and political ideologue, Mr. Anton Balasingham, said on Saturday (20) when asked for his response to the move by the EU Parliament to proscribe the movement.

"The resolution, while demonising the Tamil Tigers for the escalating violence and for the stalemate in the negotiating process, has condoned and complimented the real culprit - the Rajapakse administration - which is instrumental for the state terror and massacres of Tamil civilians that have hindered the resumption of peace talks," Mr. Balasingham said.

"The resolution was certainly one-sided. It blames the LTTE for the increasing violence and for the dead-lock in the peace process. But the Sri Lankan government has been given a mild, sympathetic treatment with compliments to President Rajapakse's actions! The enormous suffering inflicted on Tamil civilians, the widespread killings and massive displacements caused by aerial and artillery bombardments, the series of brutal murders by Army-backed paramilitaries are conveniently ignored," Mr. Balasingham said.

"The observation in the EU Parliamentary resolution suffers credibility since it fails to acknowledge the appalling conditions of the reality of the ground situation in the Tamil homeland," the LTTE's political advisor said.

"The European Union is set to blacklist the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, hoping such a punitive action will force the LTTE to the negotiating table, irrespective of this ground reality. I gravely doubt that the LTTE leadership will bow down to pressure and humiliation. As such this move will be counter-productive. Faced with global isolation and humiliation, the LTTE may be compelled to stay away from further talks," Mr. Balasingham said.

"The impending proscription by the European Union, which has been sympathetic to Tamil grievances, will severely deepen the asymmetry between the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE - a liberation movement - and thus make productive political engagement extremely difficult. Furthermore, this state-biased decision to blacklist the LTTE will boost the Sri Lankan government's global campaign to cast the legitimate struggle of the Tamil people as a mere phenomenon of terrorism which does not deserve political engagement on its part. The EU intervention will thus emerge as a serious impediment to reaching a just and lasting solution to Sri Lanka's conflict."

LTTE Senior Commander Ramanan killed

May 21 - A Senior Commander of the Liberation Tigers in the East, Commander Ramanan, the Deputy Head of the LTTE

Military wing of the Batticaloa district, was assassinated by a sniper at Vavunathivu Forward Defence Line (FDL), 5 km southwest of Batticaloa, on Sunday (21) around 5:30 p.m. The sniper targeted the Commander while he was inspecting the FDL positions of the Tigers in Vavunathivu, Batticaloa.

The battle-hardened Commander Ramanan, has served as the Military Intelligence Chief of the LTTE in Batticaloa Amparai districts, and later as the Head of the Military Wing of

Maavadymunmari division. Ramanan is the most high ranking LTTE officials to be assassinated during the Ceasefire.

Kandiah Ulagana-than, alias Ramanan, born in 1966, is from Palukamam, 21 km south of Batticaloa. He was enrolled for training in LTTE in 1986 after completing GCE (A/L) at Palukamam Kandumani Maha Vidyalayam, LTTE sources said.

One of his three brothers has already died in battle. Two of the remaining brothers and a sister, are all serving the liberation struggle at various levels, the sources added.

Ramanan emerged as a talented military leader during the LTTE's war with the Indian Army. He served in Jeyanthan Brigade, one of the most feared infantry formations of the Liberation Tigers. His contribution was high in the Unceasing Waves operations against the Sri Lanka Army launched Jeyasikurui operation that was routed by the Tigers in Vanni.

He was appointment as Chief of Intelligence Wing in Batticaloa and Amparai districts after Lt. Col. Nizam was killed in a Claymore attack.

Commander Ramanan's decision to leave the renegade LTTE commander Karuna was a major setback for the renegade's plans to hold his ground in the east.

He was appointed the Commander of Mavadimunmari division and later as Deputy Head of Batticaloa Amparai Military Wing of the LTTE under Special Commander Col. Bhanu.

Vavunathivu FDL positions of the Tigers have recently come under increasing attack by the SLA troopers.

The LTTE has accused the Sri Lankan army of killing its eastern Commander though the army has rejected the accusation. "We are not responsible for this. In fact, our soldiers are not going to those areas," said military spokesman Brig. Prasad Samarasinghe, referring to the Tiger-held areas in eastern Sri Lanka.

However a breakaway Tamil group claimed responsibility for the killing. T. Thuyavan, a spokesman for the Karuna faction said their forces had ambushed and killed Ramanan as he drove by on his motorcycle. First they detonated a mine, which missed him, and then they opened fire on him, killing him.

'EU ban will push Tigers 'to tread a hardline individualist path'

May 18 - Further international proscriptions of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) will seriously impact negatively on the already weakened peace process in Sri Lanka, the LTTE's Chief Negotiator and Political Strategist Anton Balasingham said on Thursday, (18). Commenting to press reports that the European Union (EU) would ban the LTTE this

NEWS REVIEW

week, Mr. Balasingham warned that "the hardliners in the south are urgently seeking the international isolation of the LTTE as a prelude to taking up the military option in earnest."

"Further proscriptions will invigorate the hardline elements in the south, including those in the present Sri Lankan government urging the military defeat of the LTTE and silence those advocating a negotiated solution," Mr. Balasingham said.

"The more the international community alienates the LTTE, the more the LTTE will be compelled to tread a hardline individualist path," Mr. Balasingham said.

The LTTE's actions and policies are dictated by the deteriorating objective conditions on the ground and not only the international community's preferences, Mr. Balasingham, who has led the LTTE's delegations in several sets of negotiations with different Sri Lankan governments, said.

For at least two years, the Sri Lankan state has been waging a 'shadow war' against the LTTE, Mr. Balasingham pointed out. "This shadow war has now transformed into a low-intensity war."

"Emboldened by international support, and especially by further proscriptions of the LTTE, the Sinhala hardline elements will undoubtedly take steps to further escalate the violence and precipitate a war in which they hope to destroy the LTTE," he said. "If this happens, the LTTE will be compelled to resist."

"As such [an EU ban] is not going to help bring about peace, [but] will only serve to exacerbate the conditions of war and endanger the lives of Tamil civilians entrapped by Sinhala occupation forces," Mr. Balasingham further said.

The EU imposed a travel ban on the Tamil Tigers last October. Reuters quoting diplomats said that EU would include the LTTE on its list of banned organisations within days. "A decision in principle is due within the next couple of days," a EU diplomat said on Wednesday (17 May) according to Reuters.

EU member the UK as well as the United States, Canada and India have already listed the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist group and the reports come soon after a senior US official said Washington had urged the EU to also follow suit.

"We will talk to the EU about this. The EU needs to consult among its 25 members and take a decision," Donald Camp, US principal deputy assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs was quoted as saying earlier this week.

Grenade attack on INGOs, Govt-LTTE accuse each other

May 22 - 'Unidentified persons' lobbed grenades at the offices of three international non-governmental organizations, Inter SOS, ZOA and NonViolent PeaceForce located along Market Road in Muttur town in the Trincomalee district eastern Sri Lanka on Sunday (21) afternoon around three p.m. Two persons, one a foreign representative of the Non-Violent Peace Force and a local worker were injured in the grenade attacks.

In the attack at the office of NonViolent Peaceforce - an international group that promotes the resolution of conflicts through non-violence - a Serbian aid worker and two passers

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by were wounded, according to the area police chief Nihal Samrakoon.

There were no injuries reported in the attacks on ZOA, a Dutch agency providing care for refugees and Intersos, an Italian relief organization.

The wounded aid worker, identified as Fabijan Periskic, a Serbian by nationality, was in a satisfactory condition and out of danger, said Nalin Ranathunga, a doctor treating him at the main hospital in the area. "He has suffered an injury to the hip area."

Aid workers said it was unclear why they had been targeted. The motive for the attack on the foreign groups, who have been providing assistance to refugees from the war and the 2004 tsunami, was not immediately clear.

"At the moment we have no idea why," said Nonviolent Peaceforce project director Marcel Smits. "It is something we have to look into to see what could possibly be behind this. It seems like it was coordinated," he said.

However, the local area police chief, Nihal Samrakoon blamed the Tamil Tigers for the attacks on the offices of the INGOs. "According to the ground and police information, Tamil Tigers are suspected for this attack," he said.

But Mr. Elilan, LTTE Trincomalee district political head in a statement said, "We vehemently deny the accusation made by the SLA spokesman that LTTE was responsible for the grenade attack. We categorically state that the SLA has carried out this attack."

"Almost a week ago anonymous notices were distributed calling these INGOs not to continue humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction works in the LTTE held Muttur east villages and to stop all such works immediately. We have information that the SLA was behind the threat issued to these INGOs," said the LTTE statement.

First reaction from PeaceForce: Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka in a statement issued on 22 May in response to the attack on its Muttur office said, "Nonviolent Peaceforce is greatly saddened by the events of yesterday, Sunday the 21st of May. A grenade was thrown in the vicinity of its office in Muttur in Trincomalee District, injuring one of the staff, 55 year Fabijan Periskic from Serbia. The attack also injured two passing civilians from Muttur Town. At the same time the offices of two humanitarian NGOs in Muttur were attacked in a similar matter. Luckily no one was injured from these other attacks.

Nonviolent Peaceforce has always maintained an impartial position in the conflicts and is solely motivated by assisting civilians through nonviolent means. It has been in Sri Lanka since 2003 and it works on the invitation of civilians to support nonviolent conflict resolution and the protection of Sri Lankans working for their communities. It sees this attack as part of the continued violence that civilians in Sri Lanka have been suffering of as of late, especially in the areas where Nonviolent Peaceforce works.

Nonviolent Peaceforce has observed that the work of those trying to contribute to the reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation in Sri Lanka, those from Sri Lanka and abroad, has been undermined by the current violence. Civilians who have been trying to rebuild their lives since the igning of the

CFA in 2002 are now facing new challenges including limited access to education and health care, restricted economic activities of the rural poor such as farmers and fisherman, and further displacement of families.

Nonviolent Peaceforce has not drawn any conclusions at this time about who is responsible for the attacks, but if those responsible for the grenades on Nonviolent Peaceforce's office, ZOA and InterSOS were specifically targeting those trying to assist civilians in need, humanitarian work or nonviolent problem solving, then their motives are even more regrettable. Currently Fabijan is in good condition and receiving medical attention.

UN, US condemn attacks: The UN's press release said, "The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka is appalled by the continuing despicable attacks on humanitarian workers in the north and east.

Yesterday's grenade attacks on three international non-governmental organizations in Muttur, Trincomalee district, resulted in serious injuries to one international staff member and two civilians. Last week an employee of the Norwegian Refugee Council was shot dead in Vavuniya while returning home from work.

We strongly condemn these attacks which undermine the ability of the humanitarian community to freely conduct operations, and which instill fear into the thousands of men, women and children to whom we provide relief and assistance. These attacks must be investigated and the perpetrators brought to justice.

The Government of Sri Lanka and all parties to the conflict must ensure the protection and safety of all humanitarian aid organizations working in the country. All parties must urgently halt the current escalation of violence which is affecting innocent civilians, and work urgently towards a peaceful solution to the current impasse."

The press release from the Embassy of the United States of America said, "The United States condemns the grenade attacks committed Sunday, May 21, against three international non-governmental organizations (INGO's) in Muttur. The unprovoked attacks against Inter SOS, ZOA and the Non-Violent Peace Force resulted in injuries to several people, including an expatriate NGO worker. These INGO's are working in Sri Lanka to meet humanitarian needs and bring people together in the search for a lasting peace in the country. Violent attacks against such organizations are deplorable and undercut efforts to lay the groundwork for a resumption of talks leading to a final settlement."

LTTE has no rights at sea - SLMM

May 11 - Following the fierce battle in the seas off the northern coast on Thursday (11) in which the Sea Tigers targeted MV "Pearl cruiser", a merchant vessel, carrying 710 military personnel on board escorted by Navy gunboats with monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) on board, in denouncing the LTTE action as a gross violation of the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA), said in a statement that the "sea surrounding Sri Lanka is a Government Controlled area. Non-state actors cannot rule open sea waters or airspace. The LTTE has

therefore no rights at sea.”

The full text of the statement issued by the SLMM on May 11 is as follows:

“The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have committed gross violations of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) in recent days by moving at sea with the aim of provoking the Sri Lankan navy and now finally embarking on an offensive operation against the navy sinking one vessel and putting SLMM monitors in grave danger.

“The sea surrounding the Sri Lanka is a Government Controlled Area. This has been ruled so by the Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in line with international law. Non-state actors cannot rule open sea waters or airspace. The LTTE has therefore no rights at sea.

“The LTTE has made, what the SLMM feels are threats to our monitors warning them not to participate in patrols in Navy vessels. The SLMM takes these threats very seriously and would like to remind the LTTE of its responsibility as an equal partner to the Ceasefire Agreement to do everything in its power not to jeopardise the monitors’s safety.

“We therefore demand that the LTTE immediately ceases all activities and operations at sea as they are a serious violation of the CFA. This sort of reckless behaviour can only lead to a dangerous escalation resulting in growing hostilities and jeopardising any possibility for future peace talks.

“We would also like to urge the Government of Sri Lanka not to be pushed by these provocative acts and to show as much restraint as possible.”

Before mounting the attack on the SLN’s vessels, on the morning of May 11 itself the LTTE had sent an urgent letter to the SLMM warning that its monitors should not be on board SLN vessels. The letter from the LTTE’s political head, Mr S P Tamilselvan warned as follows:

“We have on several occasions verbally informed you to refrain from boarding Sri Lankan Naval vessels. We have also given this request in writing to you twice so far. This is the third request from us to you to refrain from boarding Sri Lankan Naval vessels. Sri Lankan Navy is entering the sea adjoining the land in our control and disrupting the fishing activities of the people. It is also disturbing the LTTE exercises in doing so. If Sri Lankan Navy disrupts our activities we will definitely retaliate. SLMM monitors are used by the Sri Lankan Navy as human shields in order to continue with these disruptions. We urge you for the last time not to be on board Sri Lankan Naval vessels until further notice from us. If you chose to ignore our warning and request, we are not responsible for the consequences. Please take this as the last warning to you to not board Sri Lankan Naval vessels” it said.

SLMM temporarily suspends sea monitoring

Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Saturday (13) evening suspended sea monitoring missions, according to informed media sources in Colombo. The presence of one SLMM monitor on board a ship chartered by Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) to transport SLN sailors, caught in the middle of a clash between the Sea Tiger Fast Attack Crafts and the SLN Dvoras Thursday (11), saved the lives of at least 700 SLN personnel in the

seas off Vadamradchi East, sources from Kilinochchi said.

The SLMM decision was a temporary one, made after increased pressure from the nordic countries that feared for the safety of their citizens on board SLN vessels, informed sources said.

Tigers have previously warned that any hostile acts in the areas of seas under their control perimeter will be retaliated, and slammed SLMM for ignoring their repeated requests and warnings not board SLN ships.

Chief among SLMM concerns is the possible threat to monitors serving in the North - East while engaged in field work.

“When the monitors came in they thought they were going to monitor a ceasefire but now they find they have to monitor an undeclared war” said a Western diplomat.

The recent letters exchanged between the LTTE and SLMM have raised more concern. Anxiety has arisen further after the meeting between the LTTE political commissar Thamilselvan and SLMM chief Henricsson in Kilinochchi. The tough warnings issued by the LTTE to the SLMM had hurt and angered some SLMM members.

It is learnt reliably that two of the five member states in the SLMM have opted to pull out completely from monitoring activities to safeguard the lives of their nationals involved in the exercise. The five Countries involved are Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland.

Saner counsel has prevailed and the SLMM members were urged to be patient till all issues are discussed in detail with Norwegian facilitators. Consultations are to take place between the SLMM and Norway in Colombo and Oslo shortly.

In the meantime, it is learnt that fifteen more monitors have been asked for by the SLMM in a move to step up its monitoring activities amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country. “We have written to the five contributing nations Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with our request,” SLMM Spokesperson Helen Olafsdottir reportedly said.

Meanwhile, SLMM Chief Ulf Henricsson was leave for Norway to take part in a meeting, which would be attended by these five nations. The meeting is termed ‘regular’ but special attention would be given to the tensed situation prevailing in the country in the wake of a series of LTTE attacks on security forces and retaliatory attacks including the air strikes by the armed forces.

It is also reported that the Mission has forwarded their list of conditions to the Sri Lanka Government Peace Secretariat and the LTTE Peace Secretariat if it is to resume its naval monitoring again, which was suspended following the recent attack on a troop carrier by LTTE in which truce monitors were also travelling. The SLMM in its letter to the two peace secretariats has demanded protection for its monitors in the event they are to resume naval monitoring.

At least 8 civilians killed, Navy and EPDP personnel implicated

At least 8 civilians were killed, including a child, in Allaipiddy near Mandaithivu islet Saturday (13) night. Three persons with serious wounds were rushed to Jaffna hospital

after Jaffna district magistrate ordered the Police to provide security to an ambulance from Jaffna hospital, medical sources said. One of the wounded died at Jaffna Hospital. Two of the wounded persons were identified as S. Mohanambikai, 46, a female, and two males T. Sellathurai, 61, and S. Sivanesan, 46.

Men belonging to the Sri Lankan Navy and the EPDP have been blamed for the killing of the civilians. However, Navy sources in Mandaithivu claimed that they were attacked with grenades and they opened fire at the attackers in retaliation.

Allaipiddy is located on the causeway from Jaffna towards islets of Velani and Kayts through Pannai bridge. After Mandaitivu, past the abandoned aluminum factory, lies the large Sri Lanka Navy garrison, 500 meters from Allaipiddy.

Referring to this incident, Amnesty International in a statement dated 16 May said, "On 13 May, at about 8.30 p.m., unidentified gunmen reportedly entered the home of Sellathurai Amalathas in Allaipiddy and opened fire. Eight people were killed on the spot, including a four-month-old baby and four-year-old boy, and one other person died later in hospital. In another incident, at around 10:30 p.m. the same night, unidentified gunmen reportedly entered the home of 72-year-old Murugesu Shanmugalingam in Puliyanakoodal, also on Kayts Island, and shot him and two other members of his family dead. Ten shops in Puliyanakoodal were reportedly burnt down. In Vangalady, gunmen reportedly entered the home of Ratnam Senthuran, a tea shop owner, and shot him dead. Other members of his family also were shot and injured, but managed to escape."

In regard to who carried out these killings, Amnesty International said, "Amnesty International has received credible reports that Sri Lanka Navy personnel and armed cadres affiliated with the Eelam People's Democratic Party, a Tamil political party that is opposed to the LTTE, were present at the scene of the killings."

Meanwhile, two local residents seriously injured during Allaipiddy killings and receiving treatment in Jaffna Hospital told the Kayts Magistrate, Mr. Jeyaraman Roxy, in a deposition that Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) soldiers were present during the killings and that they would be able to identify the SLN soldiers who took part in the killings. The Magistrate recorded statements from witnesses and relatives in the Puliyanakoodal and Velanai killings starting from Wednesday (17) in the Kayts courts..

Families vacate village: May 20 - As fear gripped the civilian population as a result of the killings, it has been reported that eighty families which remained in Allaipiddy, completely vacated the village on Saturday (20) in fifteen lorries, sources from Jaffna said. 42 families have sought shelter in St. Michael's church in Navanthurai. 38 families in six lorries proceeded towards Tiger-controlled areas.

The two lorries with more than 10 families were staying for the night in Mirusuvil intending to cross the checkpoint on Sunday (21) morning. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and the UNHCR facilitated the families to leave the village. The SLA soldiers from the Vembadi 51-2 camp insisted on checking thoroughly all six lorries proceeding towards Muhamalai which caused delay.

Amnesty International condemns killing of civilians

"Amnesty International is alarmed by the increasing number of civilians killed as a low-intensity armed conflict appears to be escalating, despite a 2002 ceasefire agreement between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). More than 200 people have been killed over the past month alone, the majority of them civilians, and more than 20,000 others have been displaced from their homes. Amnesty International fears that a collapse of the ceasefire agreement and return to full-scale armed conflict would have further devastating consequences for civilians," the internationally reputed human rights organisation, Amnesty International said in statement on 16 May.

The AI statement further said, "In separate incidents over the past weekend, 13-14 May, at least 18 civilians were reportedly killed in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Thirteen Tamil civilians were reportedly killed in a spate of incidents on Kayts Island, a small islet off the northwestern coast of the Jaffna Peninsula that is strictly controlled by the Sri Lanka Navy, which has a major base there. On 13 May, at about 8.30 p.m., unidentified gunmen reportedly entered the home of Sellathurai Amalathas in Allaipiddy and opened fire. Eight people were killed on the spot, including a four-month-old baby and four-year-old boy, and one other person died later in hospital. In another incident, at around 10:30 p.m. the same night, unidentified gunmen reportedly entered the home of 72-year-old Murugesu Shanmugalingam in Puliyanakoodal, also on Kayts Island, and shot him and two other members of his family dead. Ten shops in Puliyanakoodal were reportedly burnt down. In Vangalady, gunmen reportedly entered the home of Ratnam Senthuran, a tea shop owner, and shot him dead. Other members of his family also were shot and injured, but managed to escape.

"The government has condemned the Kayts Island killings and announced that a police investigation is underway. Amnesty International welcomes these initial steps but notes that there is a disturbing pattern of incomplete or ineffective investigations by the government, with the result that perpetrators of such violence generally operate with impunity. In accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Sri Lanka has ratified, the government must carry out independent, impartial and effective investigations into all killings; the results of these investigations should be made public, and those found responsible for the attacks must be brought to justice. Without effective investigations and prosecutions, the cycle of retaliatory violence that so endangers the lives of civilians is likely to escalate.

"The LTTE has accused the Sri Lanka Navy of responsibility for the attacks on Kayts Island, a charge which the Navy has denied. However, Amnesty International has received credible reports that Sri Lanka Navy personnel and armed cadres affiliated with the Eelam People's Democratic Party, a Tamil political party that is opposed to the LTTE, were present at the scene of the killings. The government in turn has suggested that the LTTE orchestrated the attack in order "to divert international opinion".

"Regardless of who is responsible for the attacks, the Sri Lankan government has obligations under international law to

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take steps to prevent such killings, to ensure that those who commit them are brought to justice, and that the families of those killed are able to obtain redress.

"Amnesty International calls on all parties to the conflict, including the government of Sri Lanka, the LTTE, and other armed groups, to take all possible measures to avoid harm to civilians and respect international humanitarian law, which prohibits murder or violence to those taking no active part in hostilities."

Eight civilians feared killed in Manthuvil

May 8 - Innocent Tamil civilians continue to be caught up in the vicious cycle of violence that grips Jaffna and other Tamil areas of the North - Eastern province. The latest incident in this seemingly endless saga was at Manthuvil in the Thenmaratchy sector of Jaffna peninsula.

Villagers who went searching for eight missing youths in Manthuvil East in Thenmaradchi, Jaffna, found blood trace, pieces of clothes, 3 identity cards and at least 6 empty cases of bullets Sunday (7) morning. Eight young men who went to Seerani Kelakkai temple in Manthuvil East, around 7 km north-east of Chavakachcheri were reported missing. A teacher and general secretary of the temple trustee board, and four students were among the victims who were feared dead. Fear gripped the entire Kelakkai village.. Local residents suspected that the

military might have been involved in the killing of the victims.

The temple and the villagers were about to celebrate the fifth and final day of the grand Kumbabishekam festival being observed at the site. The victims were staying at the temple to protect the valuables at the festival temple.

More than 8 gunshots were reportedly heard around 1:10 a.m. Sunday (7), according to the villagers. Pieces of clothing were reportedly seen among the bushes near the temple and 3 identity cards with blood trace were discovered between the temple chariot and the temple. Blood trace between the temple chariot and the temple, were covered with sand. Bootprints are seen

Soldiers use to visit the temple site regularly around 7:00 p.m., villagers said stressing that the Sri Lanka Army was fully aware of the festival. On Saturday (6) night, the soldiers also came to the site around 10:00 p.m. Villagers reportedly heard a Jeep movement around 1:00 a.m. in the area, few minutes before they heard gunshots. At 4:00 a.m. in the morning, another unusual movement was observed. A Buffel APC, and a Jeep with soldiers, who came to the temple site stayed there for more than 30 minutes at the crime scene.

At daybreak on Sunday (7) Manthuvil residents comprising mainly of family members went to the temple in search of their relatives staying there. They were shocked to find them missing. A search of temple premises made them even more upset. Bloodstains were found on the wall near the chariot stall. There were signs of blood being covered up with gravel in

the area in front of the chariot.

According to local residents, pieces of clothing, six empty bullet cases, three national identity cards etc were also found within temple premises, and that bloodstains were seen on the road outside.

The names of the victims are: Rasanyagampillai Sivananthamoorthy, 35, the General Secretary of the Temple Management Board and a teacher; Markandu Pushpakanthan, 26, a temple board member; Kandasamy Parimelalakan, 29; Ramachandran Rasakumar, 24; Ponnambalam Parthipan, 22; Vaikundavasan Vaikundakumar, 22; Selvaratnam Sivananthan, 22; and Ratnam Thayaroopan, 22. All victims are from the Kelakkai village in Manthuvil East.

The SLMM monitors visited the scene and inspected the adjoining areas. After a fruitless search the monitors officially announced that they could not discover any bodies. Allegations have been made that the army suspected of killing the eight youths might have used the curfew to take away or destroy the sighted bodies without leaving any traces.

Another puzzling thing about the Manthuvil incident is the lack of provocation. In other incidents in the North - East members of the security forces have either directly or indirectly through paramilitaries and homeguards targeted civilians as part of their retaliation theory. If and when the LTTE attacks through proxies the security forces respond immediately with reprisals against Tamil civilians. Manthuvil is a departure from this norm as there is no evidence of any provocative act done against the army. Innocent civilians involved with temple activity have been the victims.

The alleged involvement of the army in the killings on this occasion come in the context of increasing reports that the security forces have been responsible for extra-judicial killings and involuntary disappearances that have been occurring in recent weeks. The Ceasefire monitors also have recently expressed fears that security forces have been involved in extra-judicial killing of civilians.

US calls on govt. to uphold law and order

May 17 - The United States while being sharply critical of the LTTE's 'atrocities' called on the government of Sri Lanka to fulfil its responsibility to uphold law and order and address legitimate Tamil grievances.

The US position was articulated by the US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Donald Camp in interviews with the independent Maharaja Television and government controlled Rupavahini.

Camp said while LTTE's provocations in recent months are particularly disturbing, the US also holds democratic governments to high standards.

"And when there are killings in areas controlled by the government, it is certainly the government's responsibility to uphold law and order. There need to be investigations and we have impressed this on the government and they have assured us that they are carrying out such investigations. There need to be investigations and there need to be prosecutions," Camp said according to an official text released by the US Embassy in Colombo.

Camp had also said such actions were crucial to what the government was trying to do to reassure members of all minority groups in the country that everyone is equal and that every-

one is treated equally. "There needs to be reassurance and the government needs to address legitimate Tamil grievances," Camp had also said.

Camp had further said while the US wants to help Sri Lanka in any way they can, they do not think the country should be plunged back into conflict. "That could be the worst thing that could happen and all parties should do everything they can to avoid that," Camp said.

Referring to the Co-Chairs meeting scheduled for May 30, he said they hope it can help move Sri Lanka back to the peace process and de-escalate the current crisis. He said they would also urge the government and all parties involved to begin to de-escalate the violence and get back to the peace talks.

In his interview with Rupavahini, Camp when asked what the US can say "to help Sri Lanka during this war of aggression," had in response said while Sri Lanka will continue to have the moral and diplomatic support, there was no question that the government of Sri Lanka has responsibilities as well.

"One of those, which the government has certainly acknowledged is to address the legitimate grievances of the Tamil people. That includes, of course, dealing with the disturbing number of killings in the recent months. This is something the government has said it will investigate. We think those investigations should be carried out promptly and thoroughly - we think it's the responsibility of the government to uphold law and order, and that is a responsibility of any democratic government," Camp added.

The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State also labelled the LTTE as a terrorist group of the first order. Dealing with the issue of suicide bombers, Camp said the LTTE should reassess its methods and abandon terrorism. "That's the only way it can really have a future in a united Sri Lanka," he added.

Camp also said the US has encouraged the EU to list the LTTE as a terrorist group since it will help cut off financial supplies and weapons procurements and the like.

Indian Navy Chief's warning on escalating Sri Lanka violence

19 May 2006 - India's Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Arun Prakash on Thursday (18) sounded a warning against taking the situation in neighbouring Sri Lanka lightly and said violence there could have an impact on India.

He was speaking at the launch here of a "Maritime Security Programme", a series of studies to examine the emerging maritime security environment in the Indian Ocean, by policy research outfit Observer Research Foundation (ORF). He also released an ORF document, "Sri Lanka: Peace Without Process", on the occasion.

Commenting on the island nation, Arun Prakash said: "Things have regrettably taken a turn for the worse in Sri Lanka and violence rears its ugly head once again. "The unfortunate island nation may be plunged into a state of turmoil and conflict, and as immediate neighbours we need to keep a close watch on events as they unfold, lest they have an impact on our affairs."

"The situation in Sri Lanka is dynamic," the naval chief warned, adding that "any opinions expressed or conclusions that are drawn may need review in the light of developments that are rapidly taking place." He was referring to the breakdown of peace talks between the Sri Lankan government and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The Indian Navy has stepped up air and sea vigilance in the

Palk Straits following reports of increased violence in Sri Lanka. "We are watching the situation very carefully and have stepped up surveillance both by air and by sea," the Navy chief told presspersons when asked about the steps the navy took in view of the fresh violence in Sri Lanka. Stating that Indian Navy's coordination with that of the island's was "pretty good", he said there was no incursion of LTTE cadres or boats into Tamilnadu. The odd entry of refugees into the country was also not alarming, he added.

Describing the safety of Indian fishermen as "our prime concern", he said following the escalation of violence over the last two to three months, fishermen had been asked not to intrude into the Lankan waters. However, on occasional crossings, he said 'we have asked our counterparts not to harm fishermen'.

When asked for his comments on the claim that the LTTE enjoyed sovereign sea and air space rights, he said "we have no view. It is Sri Lanka's internal matter". The navy only dealt with the sovereign State and not with non-state players, he said. When asked about the Dredging Corporation of India vessel that sank in the Palk bay following an explosion, Admiral Prakash said, "we are investigating if the explosion was an accident or due to any other cause. It was carrying many things including gas cylinders".

To a question about the attack on the "Pearl Cruiser", he said one Sri Lankan navy boat and two belonging to the LTTE were damaged in the encounter. The Navy had no role but only came to know about it, he said, adding the vessel, however, returned to Sri Lanka quite safely.

Refugee arrivals mount in India: More than 1,000 Sri Lankans have fled to southern India since the beginning of the year, the vast majority by boat, because of the upsurge of violence between Government and rebel Tamil Tigers in the north and east of the island, the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) reported today (19).

On 19 May alone, 102 people arrived in India's Tamil Nadu state, the largest number in a single day since the present outflow began, bringing the total to 1,019. They are being housed in camps run by the government, where 60,000 refugees from previous arrivals in the 20-year conflict are living.

"After arriving in India, they told UNHCR they fled because they were scared of the rapidly deteriorating security situation," Agency spokesperson Jennifer Pagonis told a news briefing in Geneva. "There are reports that more arrivals are on their way, but although we are monitoring the situation closely we are currently unable to verify this," she added.

Reports have been received that residents leaving Trincomalee district are selling their possessions to pay for the boat trip to India. Some have sought asylum in India before with one family saying they were going to India for the third time, Ms. Pagonis said.

The latest outflow is a complete reversal of what had been happening in 2005, when UNHCR helped 1,173 refugees return home by air to Sri Lanka. Since 2002, when the now fraying ceasefire between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was signed, a total of 5,000 refugees have returned to Sri Lanka.

Since the beginning of April, when the level of violence sharply increased, some 31,000 people have reportedly been internally displaced in Trincomalee District. UNHCR is now working closely with the Government, UN sister agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and other partners to verify

how many have returned home after stabilization in some parts of the district.

Human rights must be central to peace process says UN expert

May 8 - The United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Philip Alston, has recommended that human rights be made central to both the peace process and the general system of governance in Sri Lanka.

In his report released recently following a fact finding mission to Sri Lanka late last year, Prof. Alston says the struggle for peace should be firmly grounded in human rights.

The Special Rapporteur visited Sri Lanka in December when the Ceasefire Agreement was under severe strain. The report said it was making recommendations in the wake of many Tamil and Muslim civilians being killed when seeking to exercise their freedom of expression, movement, association and participation in ways which were incidentally not in agreement by one or other of the factions fighting the Government.

The report said none of these extrajudicial executions had been effectively investigated and such executions were significant in their contribution to the escalation of conflict.

This together with the complex situation that had resulted from the 'Karuna Group' having split from the LTTE in March 2004 and the role of the LTTE under the CFA gave rise to the need for a report to spell out the international legal framework governing and regulating the conduct of the different parties, it said.

The report also examines the problems of deaths while in police custody as a result of inadequate training of police officers in criminal investigations and the use of torture to extract confessions from suspects. However Prof. Alston says the commitment of both the Government and the LTTE should not be overlooked.

"What has been achieved since the JVP insurgencies of 1971 and 1989 and in the earlier phases of conflict with the LTTE where tens of thousands of persons disappeared or were killed in military operations should not be ignored", the report said. However, he says, that sadly during his fact-finding mission, there were 16 complaints of disappearances from the north of the country.

He warned of a reverse to such tragic actualities and urged the Government to respond both promptly and accordingly. Among the principal recommendations made in Prof. Alston's report are that a complementary wide-ranging human rights agreement should complement the CFA. He says the LTTE must take concrete steps to demonstrate that it is serious about human rights, in compliance with its professed commitment to human rights.

The LTTE also must make an unequivocal denunciation of killings attributed to it for which it denies responsibility.

All parties to the conflict are requested to comply with their legal obligations under the common article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law. This includes that killing any person not taking an active part in hostilities is prohibited.

He has also urged that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission de-link its monitoring role from its role as facilitator of the peace process.

Sri Lanka seeking

arms from Pakistan?

May 6 - Sri Lanka has placed orders with Pakistan for cluster bombs, deep penetration bombs and rockets and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), the Indian Express newspaper reported Saturday. Sri Lanka has turned to Pakistan for "a comprehensive list of weapons and other military hardware it wants to procure after India kept it waiting," the paper said.

Separately, the UPI news agency, quoting an Indian diplomat, reported Sri Lanka "has even asked for satellite images and two unmanned aerial vehicles," from Pakistan.

Of the various requests Sri Lanka made to Delhi over the past 18 months, very few items were actually cleared for transfer and the Indian government "in no hurry to change the status quo", the Express said.

India has "no objection" to Sri Lanka seeking weapons from Pakistan or China, IANS reported. "But the Indian military establishment has made it clear that any move by Sri Lanka to inject foreign military personnel or establish "listening posts" in any part of the island's northeast would be viewed with grave suspicion," the agency also reported Saturday.

"At the same time, India will not sell arms and ammunition of offensive nature to Sri Lanka. However, non-lethal military

equipment and those deployed for defensive positions will be sold," IANS said.

In response to a question about the possibility of India's military assistance to Sri Lanka, external affairs ministry spokesperson Navtej Sarna told reporters: "We are already involved in training (Colombo's) armed forces. There is an exchange of visits by the three service chiefs."

On March 1, Sri Lankan chief of defense staff D.W.K. Sandagiri wrote to the Pakistan High Commissioner in Colombo requesting that he urgently send a technical team to Colombo for an immediate survey of T-55 tanks and C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, UPI said.

The Express listed equipment and weapons Colombo is seeking from New Delhi.

Colombo has unsuccessfully asked India for "maintenance contracts and spares for the Sri Lankan Air Force's large MiG-27 ground strike fleet, laser-guided bomb upgrade kits, dumb bombs, penetration bombs, rocket pod systems and strafing ammunition," the paper said.

Sri Lanka also asked India for "ship-based mortars, ammunition, small fast-attack craft and sea-mines for the Sri Lankan navy," but the Indian government "has only allowed the transfer of ammunition and some non-lethal stores."



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Sri Lanka also asked India for "multi-barrel rocket launcher systems, mortars, air defence artillery systems, 5.56 mm weapons, ground radars, night vision devices, armoured troop carriers, UAVs, Milan anti-tank missile jeeps and mine-protected vehicles for the Lankan Army."

But "apart from a pair of radars, nothing of significance has been transferred," the Express said.

"With no response from India on any of these, the Lankan government has gone to Pakistan for UAVs, cluster bombs, PGM [Precision Guided Munitions] upgrade kits, deep penetration bombs and rockets," the paper said.

While one reason for the Government dragging its feet is the LTTE, Indian Defence Ministry sources said, "Another is the lack of a comprehensive Indo-Lankan defence cooperation agreement, despite talks going on it for over two years now," the paper said.

AI expresses concern over threat to doctor

May 8 – Amnesty International (AI) has expressed fears for the safety of a Sri Lankan doctor whose son was among the five students killed in Trincomalee in January. The AI says Dr Kasippillai Manoharan, whose son was killed in January, allegedly by the security forces, has received death threats also believed to be from the security forces.

Since the family believe that the death threats and harassment have been initiated by the security forces who suspect them of having links with the LTTE, they are living in fear for their lives. Dr Manoharan has temporarily suspended his medical practice and his children are no longer attending school.

The Doctor has notified the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UN High Commission for Refugees and the National Human Rights Commission of the threats to kill him and his family.

In a report posted on its website, AI says Dr Manoharan's son, 20-year-old Ragihar Manoharan, was among five Tamil students allegedly killed by the Sri Lankan security forces in Trincomalee on January 2. A group of students from Sri Koneswara Hindu College and St. Joseph's College in Trincomalee had gathered for a chat at about 7pm near the seafront, when a grenade was thrown at them from a passing auto rickshaw. The students ran, but at least three of them were injured in the explosion. A short while later a group of 10 to 15 officers in uniform believed to be of the STF arrived. They allegedly put the injured students into their jeep and beat them with rifle butts, and then pushed them out onto the road.

According to a witness the security forces personnel then shot five students dead, including Ragihar Manoharan. Although the security forces initially claimed the five had been killed when the grenade (which they alleged the students had been carrying) exploded, a post mortem revealed that the five students had died of gunshot injuries.

An inquest was held at the Trincomalee Magistrates' Court on January 10, at which Dr. Manoharan gave evidence. That night, the family heard shouting outside and their house was pelted with stones. Dr Manoharan also received a number of anonymous phone calls that night, and on several subsequent nights from a man speaking in Sinhalese with a few words in Tamil saying that he and his family would be killed, because he had given evidence at the inquest.

Dr Manoharan was one of several witnesses who gave evidence to the Magistrates' Court the following week.

Academics seek global pressure on LTTE

Intellectuals for Human Rights (IHR), a group of university and school academics called upon the international community on 17 May to exert pressure on the LTTE to stop gross violations of human rights and intimidation of free thinking academics.

Hosting their first press conference at the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, the human rights group cited the case concerning Prof. Ratnajeewan Hoole, recently designated Vice Chancellor to the Jaffna University who had to flee the country following LTTE threats. This was a clear cut case of the LTTE's atrocities against the intellectual community who choose an independent path, IHR said.

Prof. Hoole left the country with his family following a concerted campaign of coercion by LTTE backed student groups to prevent him from functioning as the Vice Chancellor. "e know it was orchestrated by the LTTE through other elements trumpeting the LTTE agenda," Senior Lecturer at Moratuwa University Dr. Kapila Perera who is the IHR's Secretary for Civil and Political Rights said.

He voiced that the international community must also help in bringing the LTTE, which backed away from the peace talks giving meagre excuses, back to the negotiating table. They stressed that human rights and freedom of speech should be in the forefront at the next round of talks.

Condemning the killings of ordinary civilians including the recent incident in Kayts, the human rights group said they were willing to go before the international community starting from the Co-Chairs to seek their support in compelling all parties concerned to refrain from unleashing violence on innocent civilians.

The group also raised concerns that the increasing tension in the North and East will have grave consequences on the free thinking intellectuals who choose to work independently and portray different views than that of the LTTE.

"LTTE has curtailed free speech and the rights to air different opinions be it political, social and cultural. With the increasingly deteriorating security we fear that they will be further harassed."

"our next step is to meet the Co-Chairs and the Japanese Special envoy Yasushi Akashi to present our case," Raja Gooneratne, Human Rights lawyer from the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), said.

He said Sri Lanka as a country has its own set of human rights inscribed in the Constitution apart from international conventions which we are party to, such as the Geneva Protocol 2. "any organisation is as responsible as the Government to uphold these norms," Goneratne stressed adding that all parties must ensure rights of children, women and unarmed civilians during a conflict or otherwise.

The IHR has already written to the Amnesty International regarding Prof. Hoole's case. Prof. R.A. Attalage of the Moratuwa University, who is the General Secretary of the IHR and Secretary, Social and Political Rights Dr. N.G.A. Karunatileke of Kelaniya University also spoke. □

Fierce Sea Battle in Northern Waters

May 13 – In what is seen as the biggest incident since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in February 2002, at least 17 Navy personnel, including two officers, and possibly an equal number LTTE cadres were killed in a fierce sea battle between the Sea Tigers and the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) on Thursday (11) evening, when the LTTE sank a Dvora fast attack craft as it launched a suicide attack on a part of the convoy escorting the troop carrier 'MV Pearl Cruise II' off Vettalaikerni in the north-eastern seas. The troop carrier was being used to transport over 700 security forces personnel to the Kankesanthurai Navy base.

According to the Navy Commander, Vice Admiral Karannagoda, when the LTTE boats launched their attack targeting the passenger ferry Pearl Cruise on Thursday, Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission Member Ikka Happlina was also on board and the charter vessel was flying the SLMM flag. One Fast Gun boat and two Fast Attack craft were escorting it.

When the vessel was about 30Nm off Point Pedro around 12 craft fitted with guns and four suicide craft of the LTTE were seen approaching Pearl Cruise at high speed around 4.15 p.m.

The Naval craft P-418, P-420, P-421 and P-497 which were providing outer escort were compelled to intercept the enemy boats. P-421 was carrying another SLMM member Lars Bleymann and flying the SLMM flag.

LTTE boats started firing at the Naval craft around 4.35 pm and the Naval vessels were compelled to retaliate to protect Pearl Cruise which was carrying a large number of unarmed personnel of the three Armed Forces and Police.

The Naval craft P-418 commanded by Lt. Commander E. A. L. P. Edirisinghe, P-420 commanded by Lt. Commander IWMA Wijewardene, P-421 commanded by Lt. R. J. Walagampaya and P-497 commanded by Lt. R. M. L. Ratnatilake fought valiantly against the LTTE suicide vessels thwarting their attempt to charge at Pearl Cruise.

The battle in the sea lasted for over one hour with Naval craft P-418, a Dvora became disabled due to enemy fire damaging her control systems after being rammed by an LTTE suicide craft and was sunk with 18 crew members including two officers and an Army Signalman.

The Navy craft destroyed four LTTE craft and damaged many other boats causing the enemy to retreat around 5.45 p.m.

According to the Navy Chief air engagement by SLAF air craft resulted in the sinking of another LTTE boat and is presumed to have destroyed some more.

The naval craft P-421 and P-497 sustained slight damages with two sailors on board injured while P-421 suffered partial damages.

Navy Commander, Vice Admiral Karannagoda paid glowing tributes to Lt. Commander E. A. L. P. Edirisinghe, Sub Lieutenant R. M. D. H. S. Ratnayake and 15 other sailors of the P-418 Naval craft who made the supreme sacrifice in preventing the deadly onslaught on the Pearl Cruise by Sea Tiger boats.

Commenting on the incident, the Navy Chief said that it appeared that the LTTE deliberately chose the day prior to Vesak for the attack on a vessel with over 700 unarmed troops with the intention of instigating the people in the south.

About 90 minutes after the sea-battle broke out the airforce launched strikes on selected targets in LTTE held areas in the Vanni. It was believed that the LTTE's Iranamadu airstrip had been targeted. Airforce headquarters declined to release details. The Airforce spokesman said that aircraft and helicopter gunships were deployed in support of the Navy after Sea Tigers triggered the latest sea battle.

Two Israeli built K- firs and one Ukrainian Mig 27 aircraft engaged in the air strikes. In the first phase the three aircraft began bombardment at 5. 40 pm and continued for till 5. 55 pm. In the second phase the bombing began at 6. 25 pm and went on for twenty minutes. The K- fir planes dropped six bombs each while the Mig dropped two during the first strike. The k-firs dropped eight each during the second strike with the Mig dropping four. The bombardment was over areas in the Kilinochchi, Vavuniya and Mullaitheevu districts.

The Air force did not target places in Kilinochchi town or Puthukkudiyiruppu where the LTTE has set up most of its political facilities and development oriented infrastructure.

The bombs fell in areas south of Kilinochchi, north of Mankulam and west of Mullaitheevu. Bombs fell in areas around Iranaimadhu where the LTTE

has reportedly constructed an air strip in the area. Bombs also fell in the areas around Murigandy, Vavunikkulam, Mallavi and Kokavil. Bombs also fell in the Thunukkaai area said Northern sources.

SLMM spokesman Helen Olafsdottir said there were two monitors on a Dvora and the troop carrier during the incident and they were safe. She also said the troop carrier was safe and added 'it seems to be in Indian waters'.

Ms Olafsdottir said that they contacted the Kilinochchi-based LTTE leadership immediately after the Sea Tigers triggered the clash off the Mullaitivu coast. "We urged them to cease the offensive and reminded them of the presence of Nordic naval monitors," she said, adding, "They asked us to get them out."

Earlier on Thursday another sea battle erupted in the sea off Mutur between the Navy and the LTTE. During the confrontation, the LTTE attacked a Navy Dvora craft, which had a ceasefire monitor on board. Ms Olafsdottir said the SLMM said that a Nordic monitor based in the East too came under fire earlier in the day. This was during a mortar attack on the Navy detachment at Muttur jetty at about 1. 10 pm. Subsequently the Navy and Sea Tigers exchanged heavy fire off Muttur East in the afternoon.

While the evening sea battle off Vettalaikerni was raging, the Navy and Army directed artillery fire at LTTE bases in the Sampur area, military sources said. Meanwhile, around 30 rounds of artillery and 2 rounds of Multi-Barrel Rocket Launcher (MBRL) fire was reported towards LTTE controlled Sampoor area in Trincomalee East from Sri Lanka Army base in Monkey Bridge, sources in Colombo said.

The navy acknowledged the the LTTE attack on 11 May was undoubtedly the biggest since the Oslo-arranged Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) came into operation in February 2002. However, its spokesman also said that the LTTE suffered heavy damages due to the Navy retaliating, with five LTTE boats being sunk during the battle.

Condemnations: The United States condemned an attack on naval vessels by the LTTE, warning the violence risked returning Sri Lanka to civil war. According to a statement by Assistant Secretary of state for South and Central Asian Affairs, Richard Boucher, "We are deeply concerned about the escalating violence by the Tamil Tigers, which has put Sri Lanka at risk of a return to war. We urge the government of Sri Lanka to continue

to show restraint in the face of these provocations." Boucher called the attacks "a clear violation of the cease-fire agreement between the government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers."

The statement was issued today by the Spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: said, "The Secretary-General is disturbed by the news of major sea and aerial attacks in Sri Lanka, including an attack on a vessel that had unarmed international monitors on board. These attacks have caused the deaths of 18 Sri Lanka navy personnel and a number of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members. The Secretary-General has taken note of the statement by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), demanding that the LTTE immediately cease all operations at sea, and describing these as a serious violation of the Ceasefire Agreement. He adds that it is unacceptable to attack vessels that are carrying SLMM monitors.

The Secretary-General appeals to both the Government and the LTTE to change course and bring the country back on a path to peace. He repeats his call on all the parties to summon the political will to resume their dialogue under the facilitation of the Norwegian Government."

A statement issued by the European Union on 12 May said, "The Presidency of the European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the attacks yesterday by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on the Sri Lankan navy.

"The LTTE have committed gross violations of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) at sea in recent days. The attack on a troop carrier and the reported sinking of an accompanying navy vessel is the latest and most severe violation. The known presence of SLMM monitors on board that vessel adds to the seriousness of the violation.

"The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission has ruled that the sea is a Government Controlled Area. The LTTE should respect this judgement.

"The claim by LTTE that SLMM has put its own monitors at risk by allowing them to travel on naval vessels is utterly unacceptable. This seeks to abnegate LTTE responsibility for the safety of monitors. This is a clear violation of the Ceasefire Agreement that requires all parties to take all measures to preserve the safety of the SLMM monitors.

"The reckless behaviour of the LTTE in the last days can only contribute to a dangerous escalation that results in growing hostilities and jeopardises any possibility for future peace talks.

The Issue of Sovereignty

Who has sovereignty over the seas off the Northeast coast of Sri Lanka? The Government asserts that it is the Sri Lankan state that is invested with sovereignty over these waters. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) agrees with the Government and states that the LTTE being a non-state actor has no rights at sea under international law. However, the Tamil Tigers dispute this assertion. "We are not prepared to relinquish sovereign rights to the seas which we have won with the sacrifice of our people," they say, and angrily protest that the SLMM's "job is to monitor breaches of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), not pontificate on the character of the LTTE and its leadership. Nor is it his brief to theorize on sovereignty or to interpret international law."

LTTE has no rights at sea - SLMM

May 11 - Following the fierce battle in the seas off the northern coast on Thursday (11) in which the Sea Tigers targeted MV "Pearl cruiser", a merchant vessel, carrying 710 military personnel on board escorted by Navy gunboats with monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring

"The EU urges the Government of Sri Lanka to show as much restraint as possible.

"This is the latest episode in a wider escalation of violence that has been witnessed on all fronts in the last month. The EU condemns these acts that have caused death and suffering among all communities, be they Tamil, Sinhalese or Muslim.

"The EU calls on both parties to do all in their power to show restraint and to prevent further violence.

"The EU supports the government statement yesterday that it condemns absolutely all acts of violence in government controlled areas and that it will do all in its power to pursue perpetrators and bring them to court.

The Ceasefire Agreement is what stands between Sri Lankans and outright war which neither side can win and which the vast majority of Sri Lankans - regardless of ethnic group - desperately want to avoid. The voice of that majority should now be heard." □

Mission (SLMM) on board, in denouncing the LTTE action as a gross violation of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA), the SLMM said in a statement that the "sea surrounding Sri Lanka is a Government Controlled area. Non-state actors cannot rule open sea waters or airspace. The LTTE has therefore no rights at sea."

The full text of the statement issued by the SLMM on May 11 is as follows:

"The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have committed gross violations of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) in recent days by moving at sea with the aim of provoking the Sri Lankan navy and now finally embarking on an offensive operation against the navy sinking one vessel and putting SLMM monitors in grave danger.

"The sea surrounding the Sri Lanka is a Government Controlled Area. This has been ruled so by the Head of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in line with international law. Non-state actors cannot rule open sea waters or airspace. The LTTE has therefore no rights at sea.

"The LTTE has made, what the SLMM feels are threats to our monitors warning them not to participate in patrols in Navy vessels. The SLMM takes these threats very seriously and would like to remind the LTTE of its responsibility as an equal partner to the Ceasefire Agreement to do everything in its power not to jeopardise the monitors's safety.

"We therefore demand that the LTTE immediately ceases all activities and operations at sea as they are a serious violation of the CFA. This sort of reckless behaviour can only lead to a dangerous escalation resulting in growing hostilities and jeopardising any possibility for future peace talks.

"We would also like to urge the Government of Sri Lanka not to be pushed by these provocative acts and to show as much restraint as possible."

LTTE's warning to SLMM

On the morning of May 11, not long before launching the attack on the SLN's vessels, the LTTE sent a letter to the SLMM warning that its monitors should not be on board SLN vessels. The letter from the LTTE's political head, Mr S P

Tamilselvan, warned the SLMM as follows:

"We have on several occasions verbally informed you to refrain from boarding Sri Lankan Naval vessels. We have also given this request in writing to you twice so far. This is the third request from us to you to refrain from boarding Sri Lankan Naval vessels. Sri Lankan Navy is entering the sea adjoining the land in our control and disrupting the fishing activities of the people. It is also disturbing the LTTE exercises in doing so. If Sri Lankan Navy disrupts our activities we will definitely retaliate. SLMM monitors are used by the Sri Lankan Navy as human shields in order to continue with these disruptions. We urge you for the last time not to be on board Sri Lankan Naval vessels until further notice from us. If you chose to ignore our warning and request, we are not responsible for the consequences. Please take this as the last warning to you to not board Sri Lankan Naval vessels" it said.

"SLMM has no mandate to rule on Tamils sovereign rights"- LTTE

May 12 - "We entered the peace process based on a status-quo achieved in the

battlefield in our territory. Nobody has the right to pass judgement on the sovereign rights of our access to the adjacent sea and airspace of our homeland," told LTTE's Political Head S.P.Thamilchelvan after having an urgent meeting with the Head of the Scandinavian truce monitors on Friday (12). The ceasefire and the entire peace process between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is a process based on parity of status and military power of balance. The SLMM statement issued on Thursday (11) was a serious statement affecting this framework, LTTE's Political Head told media.

"We did not enter the negotiations to be passed judgements based on classifications such as non-state actor. The CFA and the entire peace process is between two parties, it is not based on LTTE as a non-state actor and GoSL as a state actor," LTTE's Political Head said.

"The CFA was entered with the GoSL and the LTTE having a military with an Army, Naval force, and Air-wing. The party, LTTE, has been effectively running a civil administration in the liberated areas consisting 60 to 70 percent of the entire homeland. There are neces-

sary infra-structures for the civil administration, policing, judiciary. There are humanitarian bodies. The whole world has witnessed the efficiency of our infra-structure and civil administration," Mr. Thamilchelvan elaborated.

"You don't attempt to classify us as a non-state actor."

"We have conveyed our leadership's disappointment and objection to the SLMM statement in strongest possible terms to the Head of the CFA monitors," Mr. Thamilchelvan told media explaining the clashes that erupted in the seas off Vadamadachi East and the aerial bombardment by the Sri Lankan Air Force

(SLAF) bombers on Vanni on Thursday (11) evening.

"We have demanded an immediate response from the SLMM to the statement issued without apparent forethought," he further said.

Tigers claim sovereign rights over northeastern seas

May 12 - "We have openly established our control, and have unequivocally asserted our rights to maritime waters adjoining our homeland, in the same way we recovered and control large areas of northeast. We are not prepared to relinquish sovereign rights to the seas which we have won with the sacrifice of our people," said Col. Soosai when he met the press soon after the confrontation with the Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) in the seas off the northeastern coast of Jaffna on Friday (12).

"Today, the long stretch of northern seas extending from Nagarkovil to Kakkuththoduvai is under the control of Liberation Tigers. After we evicted the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) from the Mullaitivu garrison, our control of northern seas has expanded and strengthened.

"We move with complete freedom in these waters to transport our cadres and to distribute material needs to our movement. We will not hesitate to wage war with anyone who attempts to prevent us from exercising our freedom," Soosai further told the assembled press.

"We have the power and right to develop the necessary infrastructure and military strength to provide security to our people within our homeland."

On the legality of claim to sovereignty at sea, Soosai said: "Some say that International laws do not permit parties 'without a legal state' to own a naval force in seas belonging to a sovereign state. We have one thing to say to them. Every square-inch of land we control, and all infrastructure and areas we administer, were not given to us. We obtained these by force from our adversary.

"More than 1200 Sea-Tigers sacrificed their lives during the last 15 years of struggle over maritime waters. We have now evolved into a formidable naval force commanding control over the northeastern seas. The price we have paid to earn our sovereign rights to waters is immeasurable.

"Even during intense war, we were able to establish sea-links with distant lands at our will. No party was able to stop us then. How can anyone, especially

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within a period of peace, try to scuttle this ability? How can we permit this? Only recently the Head of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) shook hands with us and was ready to start Sea-Tiger boats on a journey to the east. Now he is advancing new explanations to label our sea movements as illegal.

“We are determined and will continue to engage in activities in sea in northeastern waters that lie within our control perimeter. Any obstacle will be overcome with appropriate debilitating force,” Soosai warned.

LTTE's feeble attempt at exploiting the CFA

Statement by the Government of Sri Lanka dated 15 May 2006:

The attention of the Government has been drawn to a news item appearing in the Tamilnet of 12 May under the heading. SLMM has no mandate to rule on Tamil sovereign rights in which S.P. Thamil Chelvam is quoted as stating; “We entered into the Peace Process based on the status quo achieved in the battlefield in our country. Nobody has the right to pass judgement on the sovereign rights of our access to the adjacent sea and air-space of our homeland”.

The Government categorically rejects this assertion which is contrary to the recognised position under International Law. The assertion of sovereign rights, jurisdiction or any form of control over maritime zones is an essential attribute of a State and accordingly such rights could be asserted only by States under International Law. No other entity could assert such rights unless recognised by the International Community as a State entity. A unilateral assertion by an entity of attributes of statehood does not confer on such entity any legal status. The assertion by the LTTE is yet another feeble attempt by them to exploit the cease-fire agreement to confer on themselves attributes of sovereignty.

The cease-fire agreement was concluded by the Government with the LTTE for the specific purpose of setting in place the modalities of a cease-fire with the objective of bringing about an end to hostilities. The agreement does not confer any right or legal status to a non-State entity which is a party to the agreement, outside the specific scope, purpose and context of that agreement. It does not

apply nor was ever intended to apply, nor is capable of being interpreted as applying to issues such as the so called sovereign attributes of a non-State entity.

The internal waters, the territorial sea and the territorial air space above, form part and parcel of the state territory over which it exercises sovereign authority. Accordingly, no sovereign state will acknowledge any other entity, state or non-state, exercising any rights or jurisdiction within its maritime areas or air space. The Government of Sri Lanka shall continue to take all necessary measures in the performance of its legitimate task of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

LTTE'S Claim to Sovereign Right to Sea and Balance of Power

Statement dated 15 May 2006 by the Government's Peace Secretariat:

A news report on Tamilnet of 12th May 2006 under the heading, “SLMM has no mandate to rule on Tamil sovereign rights” quotes the Head of LTTE's Political Wing S. P. Thamilchelvan, as having stated, “We entered into the Peace Process based on the status quo achieved in the battlefield in our country. Nobody has the right to pass judgement on the sovereign rights of our access to the adjacent sea and airspace of our homeland.” He further adds that the “ceasefire and the entire peace process between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) is a process based on parity of status and military power balance”.

With regard to the claim of sovereignty over the sea, the assertion of sovereign rights, jurisdiction or any form of sovereign control over maritime zones is an essential attribute of a State and accordingly such rights can be asserted only by sovereign States under International Law or an entity to which states have ceded such power. A unilateral assertion by an entity of attributes of statehood does not confer on such entity any legal status.

The LTTE's perception of the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA) is also clearly flawed. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), which is the sole authority to make rulings on the CFA, made a categorical ruling following the Sea Tigers attack on ‘Pearl Cruiser’, that, “it's

very clear that the Sea Tigers have no rights at sea – we have ruled it here in this mission that this is a government-controlled area, because non-state actors cannot control sea and open waters, so this is a very, very serious ceasefire violation”. The mere fact that the LTTE has a de facto naval capability, does not give it any legitimacy whether under international law or under the Sri Lankan Constitution. Similar naval capacities which could be an internationally destabilizing element of other sub-state entities have never been recognized by the international community.

As regards LTTE's position that the CFA is premised on the notion of parity of status and military balance of power, it must be conceded that any negotiations should be governed by mutual-respect, even if it is between a State and a non-State actor. The GoSL has applied that principle in all high-level negotiations with the LTTE, facilitated by Norway, and will continue to do so. But, it is clearly untenable to extend that principle of negotiations to apply to relations between a sovereign State and a non-State actor.

Likewise, although it has been argued by some conflict resolution experts that it was a hurting military stalemate that led to the parties to sign the CFA, it is fallacious to posit that a military balance could be frozen in time and space. In any event, the balance of power concept applies mainly to inter-state conflicts and not to internal conflicts.

It must be clearly borne in mind that the primary objective of the CFA, as manifest in the preamble to the agreement signed on February 22, 2002 by the GoSL and the LTTE, are two-fold: (i) To bring an end to armed hostilities; and (ii) To create a positive atmosphere in which further steps towards negotiations on a lasting solution can be taken.

It is implied that the lasting solution would be within a united Sri Lanka, although one cannot preclude a permanent settlement that would entail acceptable constitutional restructuring, but where the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka is preserved and in a manner that does not violate its sovereignty.

Neither the notion of parity of status nor military balance of power, in addition to being fallacious and irrelevant in the manner that the LTTE uses it, can detract from this reality. □

EU to freeze LTTE assets and 'actively considering' listing it as a 'terrorist'

In a wide ranging resolution adopted after a lengthy debate on 18 May, the European Parliament called upon the Commission and the Member States 'to freeze the assets of the LTTE-associated bank accounts, holdings, companies or undertakings in Member States', and declared that the EU was 'actively considering the formal listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation'.

The EU press release issued after the adoption of the resolution stated as follows:

"In its resolution on Sri Lanka, Parliament strongly welcomed the move by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE to return to the negotiating table in February, and condemns, therefore, the LTTE's unilateral refusal to participate in the second round of negotiations in Geneva that were scheduled for April 2006. It urgently calls on the LTTE to resume peace negotiations with the Government of Sri Lanka without delay, to be prepared to decommission its weapons and to set the stage for a final political settlement of the conflict. It severely condemns the renewed campaign of attacks by the LTTE, the high level of human rights violations committed by both sides and the constant breaches of the ceasefire agreement.

"MEPs deplore the gross violations of the Ceasefire Agreement by the LTTE through actions at sea, in particular the attack of 11 May on the Sri Lankan naval force, which resulted in many casualties and put SLMM monitors in grave danger. They call on the parties to the Ceasefire Agreement to ensure the security of the SLMM which is an unarmed body invited by both the Government and the LTTE to monitor the Ceasefire Agreement, in order to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate, and commend the contributing countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, for their invaluable work. They call on both the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka to refrain from further actions liable to jeopardise the peace process, and in particular

attacks on civilians.

"Parliament condemns the appalling abuse of children through the recruitment of child soldiers, which is a war crime, and calls on all rebel groups and notably the LTTE to stop this practice, to release those it holds and to make a declaration of principle not to recruit any children in the future. It urges the Government of Sri Lanka to put into place legal measures to prevent and criminalise the practice. MEPs recognise that the LTTE does not represent all the Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka and calls on the LTTE to allow for political pluralism and alternate democratic voices in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka which would secure the interests of all peoples and communities. It strongly condemns the particular repression against Tamil language press and Tamil organisations, and calls for a thorough investigation into the murders of Mayilvaganam Nimalarajan and Dharmaratnam Sivaram, as well as the two employees of the newspaper 'Uthayan'.

"Parliament says Sri Lanka's recent election as a member of the UN Human Rights Council places an obligation on the government to manifest its commitment to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. It welcomes the announcement of new members of the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission and stresses the need for an effective independent investigation into all alleged human rights violations by security forces or armed groups, bringing the perpetrators to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards, and insists that all parties should subscribe to comprehensive human rights agreements as a key element of future peace negotiations.

"MEPs urge both sides, as an immediate gesture of goodwill, to cease the use of anti-personnel landmines and to assist in their removal. To this end, the Government of Sri Lanka should set an example by signing the Ottawa Convention and the LTTE should sign

the Geneva Call 'Deed of Commitment'.

"Parliament is worried that a deal to share international aid has still not been implemented, and believes that aid sent to Sri Lanka by the EU, and other international donors, in response to the tsunami must benefit the victims of that disaster without regard for their ethnic or religious denomination. It is concerned about the distribution and use of tsunami funds, which have not had the expected impact on the everyday lives of the victims or on Sri Lanka's recovery. MEPs note that the political gridlock on the 'Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure' has already delayed the release of a further € 50 million in aid, hindering reconstruction work in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

"Parliament deplores the fact that the demands of heavy defence costs have for many years diverted resources away from urgently needed investments in economic and social infrastructure in Sri Lanka. Finally, it calls on the EU Member States to do everything in their capacity in order to stop all illegal attempts by the LTTE to uphold a system of forced taxation among sections of the Tamil community living in the European Union."

Full text of the resolution:

"The European Parliament,

– having regard to the armed conflict which has torn Sri Lanka since 1983, taking over 60 000 lives and causing the displacement of more than 800 000 people,

– having regard to its previous resolutions of 18 May 2000 (1), 14 March 2002 (2) and 20 November 2003 (3) on Sri Lanka, and of 13 January 2005 (4) on EU aid after the tsunami disaster,

– having regard to the Oslo Declaration of December 2002, in which the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) agreed to try to find a federal solution within a united Sri Lanka,

– having regard to the Tokyo Declaration on Reconstruction and Development of Sri Lanka of 10 June 2003, which linked donor support to progress in the peace process, insisting on compliance with the ceasefire agreement between the Government of Sri Lanka and LTTE, which entered into force on 23 February 2002, participation of the

Muslim minority in the talks, promotion and protection of human rights, gender equality and progress towards a final political settlement,

– having regard to the support given by the EU and the wider international community in response to the devastating tsunami of 26 December 2004,

– having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the conflict in Sri Lanka has killed over 60 000 people, displaced over 800 000 and held back the island's growth and economic development, resulting in a miserable situation for so many people across Sri Lanka, whose lives have been devastated by the tsunami and who now have to suffer from renewed violence,

B. whereas there have been countless attacks in the Jaffna peninsula, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and the officially registered ceasefire breaches run into thousands, most of them committed by the LTTE,

C. whereas tensions have been deliberately exacerbated by the attempted assassination of Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka, the Sri Lankan Army Commander, on 25 April 2006, the assassinations of Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar in August 2005 and Joseph Pararajasingha, MP, in December 2005, and the attack on the Batticaloa district office of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) on 13 January 2006 in a deliberate attempt to undermine the ceasefire agreement,

D. whereas on 11 May 2006 the LTTE attacked a vessel carrying 710 unarmed members of the security forces on their way back after home leave, with members of the SLMM on board and flying the SLMM flag, which was escorted by navy gun boats, sinking one of them and killing 18 of the crew members,

E. whereas over 300 people have died in attacks and violence this year in Sri Lanka,

F. whereas international monitors say that the recent violence is the most serious threat to the 2002 ceasefire brokered by Norwegian mediators, previously weakened by a large number of reported ceasefire breaches, including armed ambushes, abductions, intimidation, killings, torture and recruitment

of children as soldiers,

G. whereas after the first round held in Geneva in February 2006, the peace talks have been suspended indefinitely after the LTTE again pulled out of a second round in April 2006, jeopardising the opportunity for political progress,

H. whereas any restoration of the peace process should seek the involvement of a wide range of communities and political organisations in Sri Lanka, including Northern Muslim representatives,

I. whereas human rights organisations have not been able to effectively investigate human rights abuses, and the SLMM does not have the mandate independently to investigate such abuses:

1. Strongly welcomed the move by the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE to return to the negotiating table in February 2006, and condemns, therefore, the LTTE's unilateral refusal to participate in the second round of negotiations in Geneva that were scheduled for April 2006;

2. Urgently calls on the LTTE to resume peace negotiations with the Government of Sri Lanka without delay, to be prepared to decommission its weapons and to set the stage for a final political settlement of the conflict;

3. Severely condemns the renewed campaign of attacks by the LTTE, the high level of human rights violations committed by both sides and the constant breaches of the ceasefire agreement;

4. Deplores the gross violations of the ceasefire agreement by the LTTE through actions at sea, in particular the attack of 11 May 2006 on the Sri Lankan naval force, which resulted in many casualties and put SLMM monitors in grave danger;

5. Calls on the parties to the ceasefire agreement to ensure the security of the SLMM which is an unarmed body invited by both the Government and the LTTE to monitor the ceasefire agreement, in order to allow the mission to fulfil its mandate, and commends the contributing countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, for their invaluable work;

6. Calls on both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government to refrain from further actions liable to jeopardise the

peace process, and, in particular, attacks on civilians;

7. Expresses its condemnation of the appalling abuse of children through the recruitment of child soldiers, which is a war crime, and calls on all rebel groups and notably the LTTE to stop this practice, to release those it holds and to make a declaration of principle not to recruit any children in the future; urges the Government of Sri Lanka to put into place legal measures to prevent and criminalise the practice;

8. Recognises that the LTTE does not represent all the Tamil peoples of Sri Lanka and calls on the LTTE to allow for political pluralism and alternate democratic voices in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka which would secure the interests of all peoples and communities;

9. Strongly condemns the particular repression against Tamil language press and Tamil organisations, and calls for a thorough investigation into the murders of Mayilvaganam Nimalarajan and Dharmaratnam Sivaram, as well as the two employees of the newspaper 'Uthayan';

10. Recognises that Sri Lanka's recent election as a member of the UN Human Rights Council places an obligation on the government to manifest its commitment to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights;

11. Welcomes therefore the announcement of new members of Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission and stresses the need for an effective independent investigation into all alleged human rights violations by security forces or armed groups, bringing the perpetrators to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards; insists that all parties should subscribe to comprehensive human rights agreements as a key element of future peace negotiations;

12. Urges both sides, as an immediate gesture of goodwill, to cease the use of anti-personnel landmines and to assist in their removal, and considers that, to this end, the Government of Sri Lanka should set an example by signing the 1997 Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer or Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the LTTE should sign the Geneva Call 'Deed of Commitment';

13. Is worried at the fact that a deal to share international aid has still not been implemented, and believes that aid sent to Sri Lanka by the EU, and other international donors, in response to the tsunami must benefit the victims of that disaster without regard for their ethnic or religious denomination; but is concerned about the distribution and use of tsunami funds, which have not had the expected impact on the everyday lives of the victims or on Sri Lanka's recovery; notes that the political gridlock on the 'Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure' has already delayed the release of a further EUR 50 million in aid, hindering reconstruction work in the North and East of Sri Lanka;

14. Deplores the fact that the demands of heavy defence costs have for many years diverted resources away from urgently needed investments in economic and social infrastructure in Sri Lanka;

15. Calls on the Member States to do everything in their capacity in order to stop all illegal attempts by the LTTE to uphold a system of forced taxation of sections of the Tamil community living in the European Union;

16. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, as part of this process, to follow the example of other countries and to freeze the assets of the LTTE-associated bank accounts, holdings, companies or undertakings in Member States;

17. Recognises that the EU has declared that delegations from the LTTE will no longer be received in any of the Member States until further notice, and that the EU is actively considering the formal listing of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation;

18. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to remain committed to a fair and sustainable solution to the Sri Lankan conflict and reiterates its support for all the people of Sri Lanka and their President, Mahinda Rajapakse, as they address together the challenges that lie ahead;

19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the other members of the Sri Lanka Donor Co-Chairs Group (Norway, the USA and Japan), the UN Secretary-General, the governments of Switzerland, Sri Lanka and the other countries in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and the LTTE." □

Implications of an EU ban on the LTTE

May 21 - An European Union ban on the LTTE will not deter cease-fire monitoring operations, senior officials and diplomats are quoted as saying despite the fact that three among the Scandinavian Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) being members of the EU.

Finland, Denmark and Sweden are EU member countries that have representatives within the SLMM. They were among the last of the EU states to be convinced about the necessity to list the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam as a terrorist organisation.

Officials said the reservations stemmed from how the ban could affect their work on the ground. But those reservations were overcome last Thursday (18), along with the 22 other EU member-states. The European Union is expected to rubber-stamp a ban on the LTTE as a terrorist group before May 30, a move that will effectively freeze their assets and clamp-down on pro-Tiger activity in the 25 EU block of countries.

Council talks are currently underway that will culminate in a ministerial council meeting to formally include Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on the EU's blacklist of terrorist organisations.

"If a listing was agreed, the operation of the SLMM will not be affected in terms of the cease-fire agreement," a senior diplomat involved in the process said, on condition of anonymity due the sensitivity of the issue.

The proscription will allow the Finns, Danes and Swedes to conduct their monitoring activities as usual that include probes into cease-fire violations on both sides, he said. The monitors do not represent their individual countries but function under a "white flag."

Ulf Henricsson, head of SLMM however said the "ban could affect relations." "If the ban does take place, I'm not sure it's coming at the right time, it could improve the situation or make things worse" he said. "Worst-case scenario might be a full-scale guerrilla war."

"It also depends on the LTTE's reaction and if they want to deal with members of EU member-states," he said, after a likely ban. "We are prepared to work

in Sri Lanka even under new conditions."

The Tiger chief negotiator Anton Balasingham issued a fresh caveat that a ban could deter any future peace talks. "The European Union is set to blacklist the LTTE as a terrorist organisation, hoping such a punitive action will force the LTTE to the negotiating table, irrespective of this ground reality," he said. "I gravely doubt that the LTTE leadership will bow down to pressure and humiliation. As such this move will be counter-productive." "Faced with global isolation and humiliation, the LTTE may be compelled to stay away from further talks," Balasingham said.

At the meetings to formalize the ban, each member state will be able decide on the legal and practical implications that will govern an organization listed as a terrorist group in its country, diplomats said.

"It's now not a question of 'if' but 'when' it is going to be done," the officials said, adding that the formalization would take place before the May 30 Co-chair meeting in Tokyo. The draft for proscription is finalized and ready.

EU is one among the four principal nations - the United States, Japan and Norway - that have led international support for Sri Lanka's quest for peace.

"Since the two parties have contradictory stands on the matter of proscription, Norway as facilitator cannot have an opinion," Mr. Erik Solheim, Norway's minister of international development said. Solheim who has played a pivotal role in brokering the Feb. 2002 truce agreement said, "This does not affect Norway. We do not use the EU list of terrorist groups, we use the UN list." "It certainly means that Norway may become even more isolated in the Sri Lankan peace process, since we will be one of the few countries able to deal completely impartially with both Sri Lankan authorities and the Tamil Tigers," Solheim told Norwegian national radio NRK.

The heat of a proscription will be most felt in Europe and not in Sri Lanka Europe accounts for an estimated 200,000 Tamil diaspora, whose financial support over the years has strengthened the backbone of the LTTE. It's not diffi-

cult to gauge the impact of a ban, which would also mean a moratorium on travel, restrictions on diplomatic contacts, bar on fund raising and propaganda activities.

In Sri Lanka, EU members' direct contact with funds associated with the LTTE will be a problem, a senior official involved in the process said on condition of anonymity. This would make association with corporations and non-governmental organization like the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization or TRO, "difficult."

But he stressed this did not mean that EU governments will starve off all humanitarian aid or work and force the people of the north and east to suffer as a result of the ban. On the contrary, such assistance will continue, he assured.

On Wednesday, following the European Parliament Resolution on the situation in Sri Lanka, Members of the European Parliament or MEP's said in a statement they "deplore the gross violations of the ceasefire agreement by the LTTE." It condemned the Tigers' recruitment of child soldiers, acknowledged that the LTTE was not the sole representative of Tamils and pressed EU states to freeze LTTE associated bank accounts, holdings, companies and undertakings.

Britain is the only EU member-state to ban the Tigers since 2001. However, EU nations, imposed travel restrictions on the LTTE in September, a month after the assassination of foreign minister Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar. As a result, the LTTE delegation that participated at the Geneva talks in February, were given a National visa by the Swiss and also by Norway, thereby restricting travel to other European states on a Shenzhen visa. Neither Switzerland nor Norway is an EU member.

The stepped-up moves to proscribe the LTTE came amid the strongest indications that Sri Lanka was sliding back to war and heavy pressure from the United States on the EU to follow their lead and ban the Tiger group. The US listed the LTTE as a terrorist organization in 1997. Donald Camp, US assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs advocated the ban last week during a visit to Colombo.

"We have encouraged the EU to list the LTTE. We think the LTTE is very deserving of that label," Camp said. "We think it will help cut off financial supplies and weapons procurement and the like." □

Sri Lanka: Between Peace and War

Alan Keenan

Sri Lanka has returned to a state of war, albeit as yet undeclared. The 25 April attack in Colombo by a female Tamil Tiger suicide-bomber – which badly wounded the Sri Lankan army commander, killed a dozen soldiers, and wounded many others - ratified with a jolt what many had begun to fear: that the four-year old ceasefire had run its course. When the Sri Lankan military responded with two days of bombing of Tiger positions in the northeast of the island - killing or wounding dozens, at least some of them civilians, and displacing thousands - it seemed full-scale warfare might be imminent.

After a brief respite from serious incidents, the attack on 11 May off the northeast coast by LTTE gunboats on a Sri Lankan navy ship carrying more than 700 unarmed troops threatened further disaster. The troop-carrier, apparently with some help from the Indian navy, managed to escape into international waters, though at least one Sri Lankan navy vessel was destroyed (as well, it seems, as at least one LTTE craft). The Sri Lankan air force retaliated with another round of bombing of LTTE positions. The LTTE attack triggered universal condemnation from the international community, including the Scandinavian-staffed ceasefire monitoring mission, one of whose monitors was onboard the targeted troop-carrier.

Overall, more than 250 people have been killed in various forms of political violence over the last six weeks: daily mine and grenade attacks by the LTTE on Sri Lankan troops stationed in the north and east of the island; retaliatory killings by the military, often targeting Tamil civilians and politicians seen as sympathetic to the Tigers; back-and-forth attacks between the LTTE and forces loyal to the former Tiger eastern military commander Colonel Karuna, with support from the Sri Lankan military; and abductions and disappearances from all sides.

The peace process that began in December 2001 and led to the ceasefire

agreement of February 2002 seems well and truly dead. Only a new process, built on different foundations, has any chance of eventually bringingsustainable peace to Sri Lanka.

The Karuna factor

The Sri Lankan peace process has, from its beginning, been a violent affair, especially in the areas in the north and the east that the Tamil Tigers either control or lay claim to as part of their Tamil homeland, Tamil Eelam. Soon after signing the ceasefire agreement, the Tigers took advantage of the access it granted them to government-controlled areas and proceeded to forcibly recruit thousands of children, murder hundreds of their Tamil political rivals, intimidate the Tamil-speaking Muslim minority in the eastern province, and generally clamp down on all forms of independent political activity. Despite the literally thousands of violations recorded by the ceasefire monitors, the Tigers were able with impunity to continue their violent quest for complete political domination of the north and east.

Political violence began to grow more complicated, and ultimately much worse, after Colonel Karuna broke with the Tigers in March 2004. Karuna was soon defeated in a three-day military campaign by the main northern faction of the LTTE, but escaped with many of his fighters and gradually regrouped. With the increasingly obvious support of the Sri Lankan military, Karuna's forces have established camps in or on the edges of government-controlled territory, from which they have been able to launch sporadic but effective attacks on the Tigers. All the main sides – the Tigers, the government and Karuna's men - protest their innocence of political killings, but the UN's special rapporteur on extra-judicial killings, Philip Alston, has documented these in an incisive and devastating report dated 27 March 2006,

The LTTE's assassination in August 2005 of Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar - himself a Tamil

but one of the fiercest and most effective critics of the Tigers - was in part meant as payback for the government's support of Karuna. Perhaps intentionally, it also had the effect of strengthening the hardline Sinhalese parties that had been arguing that the Tigers could not be trusted and that the peace process was merely the latest means by which the Tigers were working to establish their separate state.

The road back

These sentiments, together with an LTTE-imposed boycott on Tamil voters, led to the election in November 2005 of President Mahinda Rajapakse. Running on a platform critical of the ceasefire agreement and the Norwegian role in facilitating the peace process, Rajapakse also promised to defend the "unitary" state against proposals for a federal solution to the conflict that would grant significant autonomy to the predominantly Tamil north and east.

Soon after Rajapakse's election, the Tigers began their first frontal attacks on the Sri Lankan military in the form of repeated claymore mine and grenade attacks. Nearly a hundred soldiers were killed in December and January alone. It was at this point, too, that the military began to sanction a range of retaliatory attacks on the LTTE and those seen as their supporters and operatives, sometimes acting with the assistance of former members of various Tamil militant groups now opposed to the Tigers. After the government and the LTTE, both under intense international pressure, agreed to meet for talks in Geneva, political violence came to a temporary halt in late January and February. The cautious hopes of progress were further raised when the mid-February meetings produced an agreement by both sides to respect the ceasefire and prevent attacks on the other side.

But when it became apparent to the Tigers that the government was not, as they had hoped, committed to disarming Karuna's fighters (the Geneva agreement is itself ambiguous on this point), the Tiger assaults on Sri Lankan troops resumed. Today, both sides profess a desire to return to Geneva for more talks, though the Tigers have repeatedly placed obstacles to their return, apparently not convinced that there is much to be gained from talking.

The Tigers clearly intend their current wave of violence to raise the cost to the government and military of their support for Karuna. The attacks on government troops also seem designed to pro-

voke the military and their supporters in Sinhala supremacist groups to lash out at Tamil civilians, thus solidifying Tamil support and lending credence to Tiger claims that Tamils can only be safe with their own state.

Unfortunately, the Sri Lankan military seems content to play according to the Tiger script. The past few months have seen rising numbers of political killings that have almost certainly been carried out by the military or their Tamil operatives. Most shocking was the violence unleashed in April against Tamil civilians in the multi-ethnic northeastern town of Trincomalee.

There, after a deadly Tiger bomb blast in a Sinhala market area on 12 April, the military and police stood by and watched as truckloads of Sinhalese thugs and nationalist hooligans were brought in to rampage through Tamil sections of town. It was only a call from the Indian prime minister to President Rajapakse that finally got the Sri Lankan security forces to halt the violence. In the end, thirty-five people lay dead, scores of Tamil shops and houses had been burnt out, and hundreds had been displaced. The dreadful ghosts of the anti-Tamil violence in July 1983, which was directly responsible for turning Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict into a war, were reawakened (see the Human Rights Watch report, and another independent report).

For much of the peace process, as the Tigers acted against their opponents and their "own" people with impunity, the fundamental challenge has seemed to be how to influence them to moderate their predatory and anti-democratic practices. So far, several initiatives have been tried without success:

- * the \$4.5 billion in reconstruction aid promised by international donors to be shared between the government and Tigers should they be able to make progress towards a negotiated settlement

- * the many forms of "constructive engagement" whereby the international community sought to train the Tigers in more peaceful and liberal ways

- * more recently, the increased sanctions on the Tigers - the ban on travel to the European Union imposed after the assassination of Kadirgamar, or the recent decision by Canada to ban the Tigers as a terrorist group. The Sri Lankan government is now calling for additional countries to ban the Tigers and to help disrupt their lucrative international financial networks.

The way forward

The paradox that recent events suggests, however, is that effective pressure on the Tigers is possible only if and when the international community first steps in and demands that the Colombo government respect the basic rights of its Tamil citizens. This will require the government to rein in its death squads and actively prevent reprisal attacks on Tamil civilians. Such attacks, by conflating all Tamils with Tigers, effectively do the Tigers' work for them. Justice, and pragmatism, will also require the government to abandon their attachment to the "unitary" state and to develop a package of constitutional reforms that will offer Tamils real rights and an effective share in power. The rights of Tamils can no longer be held hostage to the Tigers' quest for power.

Pressuring the government to enact such reforms will amount to a fundamental shift in how the road to peace in Sri Lanka has been conceptualised. It means abandoning the idea that peace will come from a sequence of confidence-building measures limited to, and working within the comfort zone of, the government and the LTTE. It requires, instead, challenging the government to begin its long-overdue transformation in more plural and democratic ways, even as it is clear that this isn't what the Tigers themselves want. This in turn requires that the government and their international donors engage constituencies well beyond the Tigers: that is, the many Muslim, non-Tiger Tamil, and Sinhalese points of view that have been largely excluded from the failed peace process of 2002-2006.

All this amounts to the need for a new peace process - not the mere resuscitation of the old one, which is now (at best) on life-support. Sadly, due to the combination of militarism and failure of imagination of its political elites on all sides, Sri Lanka may well be forced to go through a period of devastation before a refashioned peace process becomes possible. In the meantime, international actors of all sorts must start making the paradigm shift necessary for a new peace to be possible, even as they pressure the two sides to minimise the cost of fighting on the hundreds of thousands of civilians who will be caught in the middle. (15 - 5 - 2006)

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A father's despair ... justice denied

Namini Wijedasa

First, they killed his boy. Now, he is being victimised for the loss of his son.

Voice often shaking with anguish, Kasippillai Manoharan spoke of how he couldn't live in Trincomalee anymore. How each new day felt just like the one before it – slow, painful and futile. I couldn't see his face over the telephone but I could feel his grief.

A little over four months ago, Manoharan had been a contented doctor with a successful private practice. Now he has no patients. Sailors and other navy folk had sought treatment from him. They don't any longer. He also had Sinhala friends. Some won't ring or come by anymore. Not even to ask: 'Doctor, how are you?' And most times, when the phone buzzes, he worries that it may be another threatening call.

His wife Thevakuncharambal is also a doctor. She is in deep despair. She doesn't practice medicine either. No more prescriptions to cure ill people. An Anglican priest visits the house regularly to pray and to provide whatever comfort he can.

Manoharan speaks slowly, disjointedly. But he manages to make sense. "I lost my son," he says. "I have lot of threats. I have stopped my work. All are in depression. My daughter and elder son are in UK. Every night they call and cry. My wife is sad. What is our life? We just wanted peace."

On 2 January 2006, Manoharan's 21-year-old son Ragihar and four friends were shot dead near the Trincomalee beach allegedly by members of the Special Task Force. Moments before, a grenade had been flung nearby and the boys were suspected. The details of this case are already known. It was a gripping tale that caught international attention.

The LTTE exploited the incident for its overwhelming propaganda value while President Mahinda Rajapakse boldly went public, directing a senior DIG to take action against anybody found responsible for the incident 'irrespective of their rank and position'. And after a meeting between Rajapakse and the foreign missions, the Presidential Secretariat

said this: "The President informed the Co-Chairs (of the Tokyo Donor Conference) that an investigation is pending on the recent deaths of five students in Trincomalee and that the perpetrators would be brought to justice."

No perpetrators have been brought to justice. The case regularly comes up before the Trincomalee magistrate but the police say they have no evidence. Nobody has been arrested. The Criminal Investigation Department has led a separate probe. Thirteen STF commandos were detained, questioned and released. Twenty-six firearms (including T56 weapons) that had allegedly been used in the crime were seized and sealed. The ballistics report came back negative. In other words, it said the weapons that were examined had not fired the shots which killed the boys.

Manoharan, the only parent who wasn't afraid to give evidence in court, now says he wants to write to President Mahinda Rajapakse but isn't still in the mood for it.

"I'm not interested in the case," he says. "My son, he is already died. I can't get him back. But now all say we don't know the killers. Why? I was there. I saw light when the guns were fired. I heard shots. All fall down. Forces rounded up the area. Now all say we don't know ..."

The Manoharans have four other children. A son and a daughter are in the United Kingdom. The two youngest boys live in Trincomalee with the family. One is 19-years-old and was due to re-sit his A/Levels this month. "He is not doing the exam," Manoharan said, despondently. "All the time he is coming home crying."

His other son – the baby – is seven-teen. He visits his brother's grave every day. He has just received his O/Level results: Five As and 5 Bs. The boy is clever, Manoharan observes. Just like Ragihar, who was a chess and table tennis champion in the district.

What worry the family now are the frequent threats. They started on the night that Manoharan gave evidence in court.

"Same night I got a threat call," he said. "The voice said if you come to court as a witness, we will kill you and your sons." The message was delivered in a mix of Sinhala and Tamil.

"After that I got threatening calls lots of times," Manoharan continued. It became so serious that he complained to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. The mission told the police who instructed Manoharan to lodge a complaint. "I don't trust the police," he said, flatly. "Because they rounded up the area and after that my son was killed. How can I trust the same officers?" He refused to file a complaint so the SLMM did it on his behalf, sending police the letter that Manoharan had written them. There has been no reply.

Towards the end of January, some men came to Manoharan's house on a motorbike and menaced him again. On 3 March, he installed call line identification in an effort to distinguish where the telephone threats were coming from. In desperation, he started disconnecting his phone line after 9.30 pm. He wrote to the Asian Human Rights Commission, appealing for assistance. They issued a worldwide appeal urging justice and protection for the family. On 6 March, two men came again on a motorbike. They were angry that Manoharan had complained to the AHRC. An argument broke out that lasted around 10 minutes before the men went off.

On 11 March, Manoharan received a warning letter in Tamil. "It was not in original Tamil," he said, implying that whoever wrote it was a different ethnicity. "Every day... threat," he said, quipily. "How to live like this, madam?"

Asked whether he was cooperating with the LTTE — and the Tamil National Alliance — to exploit the political aspect of his son's killing, Manoharan started crying. "I don't care about politics, madam," he said, in a broken voice. "I never trust LTTE. They are fighting. I want peace. That's the reason I left Jaffna and selected Trinco. Because all three communities are living here. If not, I should have stayed in Wannai or Vavuniya..."

The family grieves over the life they once led. They had lived in Jaffna where both husband and wife had been doctors. After his retirement in 1993, Manoharan opted to move to Trincomalee. He says it was because all three communities lived in the district.

"I have lot of Sinhala and Muslim

friends all over the country," he noted. "Gamini Dissanayake was close to my father and my father helped to sponsor his election. P N David Silva, who is well known businessman with a famous transport service, is my friend. Desmond Fernando, the lawyer, is my friend. The former SP of Trinco, Daya Samaraweera, knew Ragihar very well. Ragihar called him 'Daya uncle'."

"At the last election, LTTE said don't go," Manoharan said, referring to the November presidential poll. "But I went. I voted. Not only me, my dead son also voted."

"Kindly inform people what is our plight, madam," he pleaded. "Look how we are living. I have no single interest in politics..."

Manoharan feels trapped. He wants to leave Trinco but says that it isn't easy to move to Colombo. His two sons were born in Jaffna and have Jaffna addresses on their identity cards. He fears that they would be branded as Tigers. "I can't stay here but I have nowhere to go," he says.

This man's case is not unique. It is also not unique to Tamils. Sri Lanka has become a nation where impunity is fashionable. Where faceless men and women are arbitrarily eliminated and are forgotten before the sun sets. Even Kadirgamar is a vague, year-old memory now.

Butchery has become a habit and justice an illusion. It is no longer possible to divine who is murdering whom. Toothless policemen smirk through their gums, giving lip to anyone who dares question their worthless investigations. The government cowers behind them, taking shelter. Commissions are appointed. Statements are issued. Not a damn thing happens. Today, the murders are too numerous to probe meaningfully. North, south, east, west. Everywhere.

The LTTE recruits kids and marches them off to the battlefield, to die like flies. Many, many civilians — the majority of them Tamil — are slain regularly by the Tigers without a flicker of guilt. The assassinations of five young men in Trincomalee mean nothing to them. For the government, though, every murder on Sri Lankan soil must necessarily mean more. Justice is not a luxury. It is an entitlement to all citizens. Even the Manoharans of Sri Lanka.

Democratically elected regimes are not given the reins of power to behave as terrorists do... to tread down the same bloodied path leaving damp tiptoe prints around decaying corpses. (May 22, 2006)

Latest challenge to the peace process

Jehan Perera

The latest challenge to the peace process is the one posed by the LTTE to the validity of the prevailing Ceasefire Agreement. The LTTE has warned the international monitors of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission not to go on board Sri Lankan naval vessels.

This follows the abortive LTTE attempt to attack a naval troopship carrying several hundred soldiers as well as international monitors. The LTTE has not only rejected the SLMM's adverse ruling on their conduct. It has also issued a last warning to the international monitors not to take part in any Sri Lankan naval movements.

The LTTE warning to the SLMM not to board Sri Lankan naval vessels is a breach of their mandate in terms of the Ceasefire Agreement. At the present time the SLMM has temporarily given in to this LTTE demand.

The LTTE has also rejected the ruling of the international monitors that their activities and attacks at sea constitute a serious violation of the Ceasefire Agreement. The LTTE has challenged the legitimacy of the SLMM's rulings and brought in counter arguments of their own.

The Ceasefire Agreement was first openly flouted by the LTTE about a year after it came into effect in February 2002. By that time the LTTE had also withdrawn from the peace talks with the Sri Lankan government.

The LTTE commenced assassinating its Tamil political rivals and Tamil informants of the Sri Lankan military. Neither the government nor the international monitors sought to call the LTTE to account at that stage. Perhaps they wished to continue to politically engage with the LTTE, and did not wish to antagonize it.

The continuing killings and virtual breakdown of the Ceasefire Agreement are a result of the flawed implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by the government, LTTE, and also by the international facilitators.

But it is still not too late to take some corrective action. So far the incidents of violence have been contained. There is

still a sporadic quality to them that belies a full scale war. But it is also observable that each incident of violence is more serious than the one before.

Some form of corrective action is necessary, if only to give back credibility to the role played by the international facilitators. The general expectation at this stage is that the international community needs to do more.

Change needed

Unless there is a change in the relationship between the conflicting parties and the Norwegian facilitators and the international monitors, the situation on the ground is bound to tip over into war, or ever more lethal strikes that are part of an undeclared war.

The LTTE appears to believe that positive change can be achieved by its present aggressive military strategy. This is a continuation of the LTTE's long held strategy of political achievement by means of military success.

When the LTTE was a guerilla organization trying to oust the Sri Lankan military from the north east, its use of violence was effective in altering the political balance of power.

But now that the LTTE has set itself up as a parallel administration in parts of the north east, its violence has a greater tendency to be counter productive to its political goals.

Neither the international community nor the government has been prepared to accept the LTTE's legitimacy as a governing entity in the north east. This has made the LTTE frustrated with the peace process.

But its activities further serves to delegitimise the LTTE's claims.

Neither the LTTE's military attacks nor its challenges to the authority of the SLMM are likely to promote the LTTE's legitimacy in the eyes of the international community let alone the Sri Lankan government.

Instead the focus of negative international attention is falling on the LTTE's militaristic nature and will constitute further setbacks to the LTTE's ability to

extricate itself from the growing web of international sanctions.

But it appears that the LTTE's cost-benefit calculations do not take these facts into account. It is control over the ground that matters most to them and on which they place their trust.

The LTTE's failure to give political means the first place in its strategy constitutes the gravest threat to the peace process. The LTTE's inability to recognize the requirement of abiding by the rulings of the international monitors is a manifestation of its militaristic mind set.

The current peace process is based on the Ceasefire Agreement, of which the SLMM is the arbiter. But the LTTE is now prepared to threaten the international monitors with possibly fatal consequences if they disregard the LTTE's stance. This indicates that the LTTE may have decided to opt out of the peace process as it is presently structured.

The question is what could persuade the LTTE to change its mind. Rescuing the peace process form the end stage it appears destined for calls for a bold move. It is unlikely that more international threats or sanctions will by themselves turn the LTTE back to the peace process.

On the contrary, such threats and sanctions are more likely to hasten the process of exit, and reinforce the LTTE's conviction that the rest of the world is ill informed and biased against them.

Bold moves

The type of bold move to which the LTTE may respond positively is one that has a bearing upon them at the ground level. In the past several months the LTTE has made it clear that their main interest is neutralizing the security threat to them posed by the Tamil armed or paramilitary groups associated with the government. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has now made it known through his parliamentary spokesman that he rejects the culture of impunity with regard to the use of violence. To say these words means nothing, but to mean them means everything.

An end to illegal violence by its related agencies is, of course, a basic requirement on the part of any democratic government that enjoys, and seeks to enjoy, international and domestic legitimacy.

But an end to the use of paramilitary violence by the government by itself is unlikely to induce the LTTE back to the peace process on a sustainable basis. There also needs to be a positive inducement in the form of a political solution

The Peace Process: Can it be Revived?

Jayadeva Uyangoda

1. The peace process that began in 2002 in Sri Lanka appears to have reached an end. It has exhausted its potential to produce a settlement agreement, even an interim one, between the GOSL and the LTTE. The main tangible outcome of the 2002 peace process is the Cease-Fire Agreement between the GOSL and LTTE. The CFA has also been under great strain in a twin context of regime change in Colombo that began in October 2003 and increasing violence primarily in the northern and Eastern provinces. The emergence of a new peace process seems to be quite difficult.

2. There seems to be some fundamental dissatisfaction, on the part of the GOSL, LTTE and the Muslim community on the outcome of the 2002 peace process. The GOSL views the CFA and the peace process as having

that wins back the hope of a just peace settlement in the hearts and minds of Tamil people everywhere, and thereby contributes to a momentous shift in the ground realities.

If the government sincerely intends to revive the peace process, and arrive at a just solution, it needs to persuade the main parliamentary opposition parties, and in particular the UNP, to join together in publicly proposing a power sharing political framework of regional autonomy for the north east.

Interestingly, even the Sinhalese nationalist JHU is reported to have said that a solution based on the Indian model is acceptable to it. Even if some Sinhalese nationalist parties do not accept such a solution, if the UNP joins the consensus for it, the guarantee of power sharing can be made secure.

It is the hope of all who want a negotiated and just peace settlement that President Rajapaksa will give the leadership in proposing the framework of a power sharing solution.

The real prospect of a political solution can contribute to a shift in the ground situation that the LTTE can and hopefully will not ignore. The role of the international community can also take on a new life in this changed context. □

resulted in negative consequences for state sovereignty and national security. The LTTE's assessment of the no-war no-peace situation is that it has not brought any tangible outcome to the LTTE or the Tamil people. Meanwhile, the Muslim political parties are angry that they have been excluded from the bi-lateral peace process between the government and the LTTE. They fear that even an interim agreement between the government and the LTTE would endanger their interests. The absence of a strong social support base for the 2002 peace process has been a major impediment to its success.

3. The Geneva Talks between the Rajapakse Administration have a limited agenda. It focuses on the proper implementation of the CFA. The Geneva talks are not intended to resume political negotiations between the two sides. Even with a limited agenda, the engagement between the two sides has been valuable in managing violence and protecting the CFA.

4. The CFA is facing a crisis of existence. One party to it defends it in its existing form while the other party wants to revise it. It is the pragmatic need felt by the two sides to control violence that can sustain the CFA as well as Geneva talks. Without GOSL-LTTE partnership, the CFA can survive only as a strategic condition. Sooner than later, it will become clear that without returning to political negotiations, the two sides may not be able to sustain the CFA. A post-CFA scenario can have two possibilities – all-out war or protracted low-intensity violence.

5. Concerning the future of the peace process, a maximalist trajectory of conflict resolution appears to be both unrealistic and impossible. Political conditions that exist in Sri Lanka do not provide space for a maximalist program of conflict resolution. Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim societies as well as major political actors representing these ethnic formations expect contradictory outcomes from peace. They conceptualise the idea of peace differently and

expect different outcomes from peace. For example, UPFA government's notion of 'peace with dignity' is conceptually and politically different from the LTTE's notion of 'just' peace. The goal of peace has not yet become a shared political perspective either. The inclination among the major parties to the conflict is to view peace as an outcome with unilateral gains.

There is also a fear of a peace settlement. In all the three ethnic formations, the fear of peace emanates from the apprehension that external actors — the global state system — might impose on Sri Lanka a settlement conceived externally. A peace settlement is certain to have its gainers as well as losers, but the fear of a settlement is a state of collective mind. It is concerned with the anxiety that an externally conceived peace agreement might favor one group over all the others. Then, there is the deep-seated suspicion of a peace settlement itself. Sinhalese nationalists fear that a settlement with regional autonomy would be a stepping-stone for secession. Tamil nationalists, particularly the LTTE, do not believe that the Sinhalese political class, even after signing a peace agreement, will implement

it. They want to maintain their military structures and war preparedness in order to ensure that the terms of a settlement agreement will be implemented fully and comprehensively. Meanwhile, Muslim nationalists fear that a peace settlement between the GOSL and the LTTE would reduce the Muslim community to the status of a permanently disempowered minority. Finally, the Sinhalese political class, which controls the Sri Lankan state at present, does not seem to be ready for a political settlement acceptable to the LTTE. It is extremely difficult to conceive an early peace agreement signed and implemented in Sri Lanka.

6. What, then, is the path to peace in Sri Lanka? In my assessment, there is no direct, or straight, road to ethnic conflict resolution and restoration of peace in Sri Lanka. It is a crooked path with many zigzags, turns and blockades. Sri Lanka's protracted conflict requires a protracted process of transformation, reconciliation and settlement. The first breakthrough in the peace deadlock in Sri Lanka will have to be a conceptual one. I suggest that the realization of the protracted, contingent and recurrently unstable nature

of the peace process constitutes that conceptual breakthrough. No sensible observer of Sri Lanka's politics can think of any other breakthrough in the peace process, except opportunistic and pragmatic 'deals' between the President and the LTTE leader.

7. A protracted period of no-war with no formal peace agreement without the GOSL and the LTTE relapsing to all-out war, seems to be the best available option for peace through conflict transformation in Sri Lanka. The maintenance of no-war no-peace is predicated on the willingness of the GOSL and the LTTE to honour, strength and amend the

CFA. At the moment, the two sides appear to have a rather narrow approach to the CFA. The government thinks that the CFA violated the constitution and the law of the country. It has committed to properly implement the CFA purely as a pragmatic necessity. The LTTE, on the other hand, does not see any need or political space to revise the CFA. Both these are narrow and partisan approaches to the CFA. To maintain the present no-war no-peace situation further, it is crucial that the two sides agree to strengthen the CFA by amending it at least in one crucial area. It concerns the capacity of the SLMM to monitor, enforce and ensure compliance on the proper implementation of the CFA. If the SLMM cannot perform these crucial functions, there should be an international body with powers to monitor and investigate violations and ensure compliance with the decisions of the monitoring body.

8. A protracted period of no-war will not be able to sustain itself without addressing humanitarian issues of the people living in the North and East. In this regard, the government and the LTTE need to build up a partnership. Such partnership will be based on the realization that addressing humanitarian issues should be linked to a rapid economic development process covering entire Sri Lanka. External assistance for a humanitarian agenda needs to be seen only as a short-term measure. Rapid economic development in the North and East requires the assistance of the Sri Lankan state and linking the North-East economy with the economy of the rest of the island. Similarly, rapid economic development in one region will enhance the economic development in the other. Realization of inter-dependence and mutuality of outcomes in economic development can ideally be an incentive for the government and the LTTE to work out a framework of partnership.

9. The question of political democracy will invariably emerge in a long period of no-war. This will pose a major challenge to the LTTE. The LTTE needs to realize that without democracy and plurality in representation, its agenda of representing the Tamil nation will face a serious crisis. The goal of peace needs to be conceived not as prior to democracy. In the politics of 'national emancipation' peace, justice and democracy should be simultaneous processes.

(FocusSriLanka, 27 April 2006)

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TAMIL NADU ELECTION

New political realities replace old separatist rhetoric

Rajan Philips

The outcomes of the recent State Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Assam and Pondicherry are good news for the Congress-led UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government in New Delhi. The winning coalitions in the state elections are all part of the ruling alliance in Delhi, although in West Bengal and Kerala the main contest was between parties who also constitute the Delhi alliance.

In West Bengal, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) recorded its seventh election victory while across the country in Kerala, the CPI(M) defeated the incumbent Congress State government winning two-thirds of the Assembly seats. Congress-led coalitions won the elections in northeast Assam and southeast Pondicherry, while the Congress, the CPI(M) and the CPI are all part of the Democratic Progressive Alliance (DPA) led by the DMK that won the election in Tamil Nadu.

CPI(M)'s victories in West Bengal and Kerala will help strengthen "the role of the left in national politics", according to CPI(M)'s Secretary Prakash Karat. The CPI(M) gives critical support to the Manmohan Singh government in Delhi, while taking it to task over government policies in regard to increasing foreign investment and privatization and over Delhi's growing closeness to the Bush administration in the US.

Ironically, the national leadership of the CPI(M) has little say over the Chinese-styled liberal economic reforms, focused on foreign investment and privatization, pursued by the Party's popular Chief Minister Buddhadeb Battacharya in West Bengal.

Only in Tamil Nadu the election led to the ouster of a state government that was opposed to the central government in Delhi. The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) led by Jayaraman Jayalalitha, the matinee actress turned political matron, has been in power since 2001 and is more of an ally of the BJP than the Congress and its al-

lies. In the 2004 national election she campaigned hard for the reelection of the BJP government in Delhi, but the latter lost every central seat in Tamil Nadu to the Congress alliance.

Among the reasons for Jayalalitha's defeat are her opposition to the government in Delhi and the implementation of central government programs in Tamil Nadu, her earlier association with the Hindu fundamentalism of the BJP, the alienation of educational institutions, and the resentment towards her autocratic and personalized style of politics, not to mention her passion for shoes like Imelda Marcos.

Her government's inept handling of the scandalous crimes involving Jayendra Saraswathi, the Shankaracharya of the great 2500 year old Kanchi Temple, did not go down well with Tamilian elites. Many thought that her government had grown out of touch with the people and becoming unapproachable to its constituents.

Rural Poverty in India's Detroit

More substantively, the election brought to the fore the issues of rural poverty and the state's agrarian crisis. Superficial observers had fun about the election freebies – quality rice at reduced price, two eggs a week in school mid-day meals, bicycles for students, television sets for the poor etc. etc. – offered by the competing parties. But as Karunanidhi himself noted the offer of rice was not a political one-upmanship but an admission of the plight of the rural poor.

The last time rice was an election issue was also the first time the DMK won the State election, in 1967, forming the first non-Congress government after independence, with its founder leader C.N. Annadurai as Chief Minister. Forty years later despite Tamil Nadu's achievements and despite being touted by foreign investors as India's Detroit (the motorcar city in the US) and one of India's economically successful states, poverty and

landlessness continue to stalk rural Tamil Nadu.

Apart from rice the DPA's manifesto includes a more substantial response to rural poverty – apparently at the insistence of the two Communist Parties: 2 acres of land to an estimated 4 million landless families and the waiver of loan payments after a farmer's death. As his first act after swearing in, the new Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, signed the administrative authority to implement these measures.

The World Bank and the IMF may see these measures as wasteful populism but they are in fact a reflection of the market's failure to serve marginalized populations. They are also a sad commentary on India's much vaunted Green Revolution and a reminder of the subversion and failure of land ceiling laws introduced since the 1960s. Apart from legal loopholes, successive governments have failed to redistribute surplus (ceiling) lands to the landless.

Adding injury to insult was the outgoing Jayalalitha government's controversial Wasteland Development Programme that allowed state lands to be given to Indian and foreign businesses. By the government's own figures about 4 million acres were divested under the programme benefiting just 110,000 farmers. This translates to 50% of land that the new government will have to find for nearly 40 times larger number of beneficiaries.

But giving land to the landless is hardly sufficient to address the agrarian crisis. Additional measures like irrigation, credits and marketing support, skills education of farmers, linkages with small industries and trade, and avenues for exports have to be promoted or undertaken by the state. The DPA's manifesto identifies these measures and the Left parties have indicated that they will push the new government to implement them in Tamil Nadu just as they have been implemented in West Bengal.

Social Fragments and Voter Patterns

The election results are by no means a verdict on the agrarian question only, but indicate multiple factors at work. This is the first election in Tamil Nadu in which the leading party did not win a majority of the seats in the legislature. The DMK-led alliance won 164 of the 234 seats but DMK alone won only 96 seats and will have to depend on its DPA

partners to sustain the new government. The Congress Party won an impressive 35 out of the 40 seats it contested, while the CPI(M) and CPI won 9 and 6 seats respectively. These parties have decided to support the new governments from the outside without representation in the cabinet which is drawn from the DMK legislators only

By winning 61 seats against the DMK's 96, the AIADMK has shown that although defeated it has retained a strong electoral base in the State. In fact, it has made significant inroads in traditional DMK territory. In Chennai, the capital district, the AIADMK ended the DMK's total monopoly by winning seven of the 14 district seats, and it did even better in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu's industrial capital and the home of the Gounder caste, winning 10 of the 14 seats and reducing the DMK's tally from 8 to 4.

Another feature of the voting pattern is the shift in party loyalties across caste boundaries. The 1977 split of the DMK into the Karunanidhi faction and the splinter ADMK faction led by Jayalalitha's mentor and acting partner M.G Ramachandran came to be sustained mostly by their separate bases among the

so called non-Brahmin backward castes. DMK has had its vote bank among the Vanniyars in the north-central and upper north districts of the State, while the ADMK has been relying on the Thevars who are distributed among the southern, western and the Cauvery Delta districts.

Interestingly in this election, the two castes have spilt along district lines and supported both parties. Additionally, the Vanniyars have their own party now (Pattali Makkal Katchi - PKP); the PKP won 17 seats and is supporting the new government. On the other hand, the DMK and its Congress ally have maintained their traditional support among the minority Muslim, Christian and the Dalit (Harijan) groups.

Only 22 of the new legislators are women, accounting for less than 10% and far short of the targeted 33%. Women's groups have called on the new government to implement the widow's pension scheme as promised and make the State Commission on Women a statutory body. Jayalalitha had put the Commission into disuse but tried to address the gender question in her own matriarchal way by promising in her manifesto to give four grams of gold to marrying women.

From separatist demagogue to national powerbroker

Tamil Nadu, previously Madras, was one of the first states in the Indian Union to raise the cry of separation. The DMK which raised the cry and its offshoot AIADMK have alternated as the governing party for nearly 40 years, but Tamil nationalism or even regionalism was hardly an issue in the recent election. The Sri Lankan Tamil question was also not an issue in the Tamil Nadu election despite claims to the contrary south of the Palk Straits.

The political debate in Tamil Nadu is no longer about the Aryan North versus the Dravidian South but about which political alliance in the state is more capable of working with Delhi for the benefit of Tamil Nadu.

No one signifies the shift from regional separatism to functional federalism better than the DMK leader M. Karunanidhi, once the past master of aliterative separatist rhetoric but now a shrewd bargainer and a formidable powerbroker on the national political stage. At 83, despite not unfounded allegations of family bandyism, Karunanidhi has won again and is now Chief Minister for the fifth time since 1969. □



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NEWS TRACK

Woman shot dead: May 1 - A 29-year old woman, shot and seriously injured by unknown gunmen near the old bus-stand in the Jaffna Islet of Velanai Sunday (30 April) evening at 6 p.m., succumbed to her injuries at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. Two gunmen riding a motor-bike fired at the victim identified as Ms E Bothini at close range while she was walking along the main road, and fled the scene.

In another incident on the same day, Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) soldiers Allaipitti area in Kayts within High Security Zone (HSZ) reportedly shot and killed a 74-year old civilian in his home at 8 p.m. Rasamany Sangarapillai was with his wife when the SLN soldiers in civil clothes allegedly entered the house, asked him to lie face down. They then shot him at close range. His wife was also injured in the gun fire as she tried to prevent the soldiers from firing. Kayts police removed his body and transported it to Jaffna Teaching Hospital the following morning for postmortem examinations, hospital sources said. These incidents followed the claymore attack on SLN foot patrol the same day when two SLN soldiers were injured.

Six killed, 5 injured in landmine blast: May 1 - Two Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) soldiers and four Tamil civilians were killed in a claymore landmine attack in Trincomalee town, around 9.45 a.m, on Monday (1). Three more SLN personnel and 2 civilians were wounded in the blast that occurred at Vidiyalayam Road. The police who blamed the Tamil Tigers for the attack said the blast was caused by a claymore mine fixed to a bicycle, parked on the road side. The bomb went off when the soldiers on a road clearing operation began examining the bicycle, "the police said. The civilians killed in the blast were identified as Praba, a three wheeler driver, Ms.Chitra Thurainayagam, and her two children-Vanitha and Thulasithasan. Roads in the town centre were deserted as movement of civilians and traffic came to a standstill following the blast..

Soldiers killed in attempt to rescue Karuna men: May 1 - The LTTE commando unit that returned to LTTE Forward Defence Line (FDL) Sunday (30 April) after completing the attack on three Karuna camps in Welikande area, claimed that 5 Sri Lanka Army troopers, including a Captain rank officer, who took part in an attempted rescue operation to save the Karuna cadres, were killed in confrontation with the Tigers. The Tigers have alleged that the SLA deaths were not revealed to avoid reports of SLA complicity with the Karuna group.

LTTE sources identified the Sri Lankan captain killed in action as LLOYD Fernando (SVIR RSP) from Kalwatte, Kurunegala, and the other soldiers killed in the confrontation were identified as Upul, Jeyakody, Tissanayake and Anura. However, the Sri Lankan military rejected the LTTE's allegation of its involvement in the encounter.

Three attacks on SLA on May Day: May 1 - Three incidents of hand grenade attacks on Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers in Arasady junction, Iyanar Kovildady and A9 near Puttur junction marked the May day in Jaffna district on Monday (1), though no processions or meetings were held on the day. Suspected Tamil Tigers hurled a hand grenade at the sentry located at the Arasady Junction along the Point Pedro Jaffna Road 12.15 p.m. In another incident, three SLA soldiers were injured in a grenade attack at the SLA mini-camp located at the Kullapitti Junction, Iyanar Kovildady along KKS Road at 12.30 p.m.

A convoy of SLA vehicles came under Claymore attack on the A9 near Puttur Junction at 12.45 p.m. The convoy was taking soldiers from Muhamalai, Kilali Forward Defence Lines (FDLs) on leave to Palaly airport when the attack happened. Traffic along

A9 was stopped for more than an hour as the SLA combed the area for the attackers.

Two traders shot in Jaffna, one dead: May 2 - Armed men riding a motorbike entered a hair-

dressing saloon near Thirunelvely junction in Jaffna and shot a client, a trader from nearby public market, seriously wounding the trader and saloon owner. The trader succumbed to his wounds at Jaffna hospital. Eyewitnesses at the site alleged that the SLA had withdrawn its soldiers from the nearby posts, 10 minutes prior to the shooting incident, which took place 50 meters close to the junction, on Adiyapatham Road. Fellow traders at the site rushed to hospital with the wounded business owners, Vallipuram Suganthan, 34, the saloon owner and Arumugarajah Theyvendran, 54, the public market trader who later succumbed to his wounds.

Auto-rickshaw driver shot dead: May 2 - Armed men riding a motorbike shot and killed a young auto-rickshaw driver in Kodikamam in Thenmaradchi division, Jaffna, on Tuesday (2) around 10:30 a.m. The victim, Selvaratnam Mathiseelan, 22, was the 8th auto driver to be gunned down in Jaffna. The killing took place near Kodikamam Fish Market on Kodikamam Point Pedro Road. Kodikamam police is conducting investigations into the killing.

Woman farmer killed, 2 wounded: May 2 - The LTTE claimed that a group of Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers who penetrated into LTTE controlled Madu division, shot and killed a 50-year old woman farmer. A 60-year old man and another 50-year old woman were wounded. The woman farmer, Sivagnanasundaram Kalarani, 50, was killed on the spot. The shooting incident took place at Chinnavalayankattu in Mannar district Tuesday (2) around 4:00 p.m. according to LTTE sources.

Veeraya Jeyaladchumy, 50, and Udayppan Veerappan, 60, were rushed to Adampan district hospital. The farmers were returning from their fields with rice straw bundles when they were shot by the penetrating group. The penetrating group came from Iranai Iluppaikulam SLA base, 8 km west of Mullikulam, LTTE sources said.

Gunmen attack 'Uthayan', kill two: May 2 - Five armed paramilitary gunmen who entered the main office of the Jaffna daily 'Uthayan' on Tuesday (2) night around 7:45 p.m., opened fire on editorial staff, killing at least two staffers, including the daily's marketing manager and wounding two, according to initial reports. At least 40 gunshots were heard, according to local residents.

The Marketing Manger, Bastian George Sagayathas (Suresh), 37, and Rajaratnam Ranjith, 25, were killed. S. Uthayakumar and N. Thayakaran, two staffers at the office were rushed to Jaffna Hospital with wounds. Two editorial staffers who were working at the top-floor of the office escaped as they had managed to hide inside the office.

"The gunmen were shooting at will, everybody they found inside the office were shot. Finally, they smashed all the computers in the office," an employee who managed to escape from the attackers told media. The four attackers were reportedly armed with T-56 rifles and the other was firing using a handgun. LTTE sources claimed that one of the attackers, in black civil clothes, was identified as an EPDP cadre by eyewitnesses.

Abducted lorry drivers released: May 2 - Thevarajah, 45, and Kanagasundram, 53, lorry drivers of Vaharai Multi-purpose society in Batticaloa, abducted by armed men on the 25th April at Palainagar on the Batticaloa-Colombo road, were released on Tuesday (2), said sources from Batticaloa. The two men and the fuel tanker they were driving from Valaichenai with Rs 500,000

worth of fuel were abducted by an armed gang. The fuel tanker, however, has not been released.

Protest against attack on Vice Chancellor: May 2 - Members of Teachers Union and Non-Academic Staff Union of the South Eastern University in Amparai district on Tuesday (2) morning began a boycott campaign till 5th of May condemning the attack by unidentified gunmen on the life of Mr. A.G.Hussein Ismail, Vice Chancellor of the South Eastern University on April 28 when he was on his way to his office from Adalaichchenai where his official residence is located. The vice-chancellor and his security guards escaped unhurt in that attack.

The protestors demand that the President and the education authorities should hold an inquiry into the incident. Meanwhile about 350 members of the non-academic staff of the university resolved to hold a demonstration in the Oluvil premises of the South Eastern University on demanding the authorities concerned to bring the culprits in the shooting incident before court of law and to stop the gun culture from the university.

SLTMA extends plea to save Tamil Journalists: May 3 - "The killings of the two Uthayan staffs and the extensive damage to the Uthayan office and equipments by paramilitary cadres directed by the Sri Lanka government (GoSL), pose serious threat to the media in Sri Lanka," said the Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance (SLTMA) in its statement released on Tuesday (2). The GoSL conducts "customary eyewash inquiries," into the killings of several Tamil journalists, the statement added.

"The organisations which fight for the Freedom of the press and the International Community should come forward to demand the GoSL to conduct thorough investigations and trials into the repeated assassinations of Tamil journalists, and to bring the criminals involved to justice without its customary eyewash law enforcement," the SLTMA statement said.

Woman shoots policeman: May 3 - A woman opened fire on a police officer and a civilian riding a motor bicycle on Wednesday (3) around 6 p.m at Rambaikulam in Vavuniya, said Vavuniya police. The injured men were rushed to the Vavuniya general hospital and are being treated for gunshot wounds, according to Vavuniya police who are investigating into the incident. The identity of the attacker and the motivations for the attack are not known.

Suspects in Uthayan killings released on bail: May 3 - Four students and two traders arrested by the Sri Lanka security forces on Tuesday (2) as suspects in the killings at the "Uthayan" office and produced on Wednesday (3) at the Jaffna Courts were released on bail by Jaffna Additional Magistrate Ms. Sirinithi Nandasegaran after being subjected to an identification parade held in the presence of the magistrate. 42 persons participated in the identification parade, conducted in six groups. A security guard and two staffers from Uthayan offices did not identify any of the 42 as the gunmen.

Ms. Srinithi Nandasegaran, presiding over the identification parade, then released the six arrested on personal bail each worth 10,000 rupees and fixed the next date of trial to May 12 2006. Earlier it was believed that the Police had arrested only the four students. The two traders who were also arrested are Selvarajan Janarthan 27 and Rathinam Sabesan 22, employees in a food shop in the Jaffna town area. The traders were playing cards after their food shop closed business, when they were arrested by Sri Lanka security forces immediately after the Uthayan killings, said the two youths in the courts.

Grenade attack wounds 2 policemen: May 4 - Five civilians were rushed to Vavuniya hospital with gunshot wounds when Sri Lankan troopers opened fire after a grenade attack by suspected Tamil Tigers at the heart of Vavuniya town on Thursday (4)

noon. Two policemen were wounded in the grenade attack and transferred to Anuradhapura hospital with serious wounds. SLA and SLAF troopers launched a joint cordon and search operation with the Police in Vavuniya town, following the grenade attack and detained around 300 persons for inquiry, police sources said. Truce monitors from the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission visited the attack site.

2 killed in Claymore mineattack on settlement: May 4 - Two home guards were killed and four injured on Thursday (4) around 8.55 a.m., when a chain of Claymore mines exploded one after another targeting a group of 9 Sri Lankan homeguards, in Avaranthulava, a Sinhala settlement located 15 km northwest of Vavuniya. The homeguards in Avaranthulava, were returning from their posts after night duty, Vavuniya Police said.

Seven killed following grenade attack: May 4 - Sri Lanka Army soldiers opened fire and attacked with Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) launchers two three-wheelers with 7 youths inside, killing all of them on the spot. The attack took place inside a lane near SLA Intelligence Camp in Navindil, 300 meters from Nellyyadi junction in Vadamradchi, Jaffna, around 2:15 p.m. on Thursday (4). The victims were attacked by the SLA men in retaliation to a grenade attack that took place behind their Intelligence camp where 3 SLA personnel, including an officer, were wounded.

The seven victims from Rajakirramam in Karaveddy were identified as: Selvarajah Suman, 22, Veluppillai Vimalan, 21, Nagaratham Naguleswaran, 18, Palachandran Krishanthan, 18, Thamotharampillai Sharmilian, 17, Navaratnarajah Nathanna, 19, Subramaniam Subash, 19. Sri Lankan defence sources claimed that the youths who were killed were attackers who lobbed grenades into a nearby EPDP camp near SLA checkpoint.

Firefight following abduction attempt: May 4 - Sri Lanka security sources said two soldiers were seriously injured in an attack launched on their patrol team in Inuvil, a village located between Kankesanthurai and Jaffna, on Thursday (4) around 7 a.m. According to military sources, there was firefight when suspected Tamil Tiger attackers attempted to abduct the soldiers. All traffic between Inuvil and Maruthanamadam junction on Kankesanthurai road was blocked while armed forces rounded up and engaged in an extensive search of the whole Inuvil area from 7.30 a.m to 12.00 a.m. Though the army has not admitted, reports indicate that at least two soldiers had been abducted by the attackers.

Grenade attack on sentry point: May 4 - Two helmeted men on a motor bicycle passing the Sri Lanka police sentry point on the Batticaloa-Trincomalee main road in Batticaloa, lobbed a hand grenade into the sentry point on Wednesday (3) around 7 p.m, injuring Mr. Bandara who was rushed to the Batticaloa Teaching hospital, said the police. The hand grenade had landed directly on the injured in the police sentry point, called CTB sentry, which was manned by four policemen at the time of the attack, added the source.

3 policemen, 3 civilians wounded in mine attack: May 5 - Three policemen and three civilians including an eight year old girl were injured on Friday (5) around 1.20 p.m at Station Road Vairavapulliyankulam in Vavuniya in a Claymore landmine attack targeting a vehicle taking lunch to the police cadres, said Vavuniya police who blamed the Tamil Tigers for the attack. Out of the six injured, five were rushed to Anuradapura hospital from Vavuniya general hospital. The Claymore device was attached to a Margosa tree near a Police check post.

SLN sinks LTTE boat off Kalpitti: May 5 - A boat belonging to the Sea Tigers that came under gunfire from a Sri Lanka Navy vessel in the seas off Kalpitti between the Kuthiraimalai shore and Vathalankunru islet, in the seas of north-western Sri Lanka

was sunk having been fired upon by the Sri Lankan Navy. The incident took place around 9:20 a.m. Friday (5). Meanwhile, military sources in Colombo said SLN attack vessels had destroyed an LTTE boat in Palugathurai in Bathalangunduwa in Kalpitti lagoon. Three LTTE cadres were in the boat destroyed by the Navy, according to military sources in Colombo.

Three attacks - policeman, soldier killed: May 5 - One Police constable was killed on the spot and two police officers seriously injured in a claymore land mine attack along Point Pedro, Jaffna Road in Puraporukki in Vadamardchy district at 3.45 p.m. on Friday (5). The attack at Puraporukki was targeted against a three vehicle convoy that came from Palaly military base towards Point Pedro. The two injured Police constables were immediately taken to the Palaly military hospital in a private vehicle that came by the site of the mine explosion.

Meanwhile, in Urikadu, Valvettiturai (VVT) one Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier has been reported killed, one soldier and a policeman were wounded, in a grenade attack around 12 noon. Another attack on SLA troops was reported at 4:45 p.m. at Maruthanarmadam in Valikamam. The military blamed the Tamil Tugers for the attack.

Policeman shot dead in Batticaloa: May 5 - Unidentified gunman shot and killed a policeman M. Vajisiri, 39, of Batticaloa police station on Friday (5) around 11.35 in an attack on the 3 policemen posted near Batticaloa Hindu College playground. The seriously injured policeman succumbed to his wounds while being rushed to the Batticaloa hospital, said the police who blamed the LTTE for the attack. The shooting took place just 100 meters from the Batticaloa police station, added the police.

Farmer arrested by SLA, reported missing: May 5 - Mr. Visanthy Aloysius, a Tamil farmer of Vellalarkaddu in Nanattan division in Mannar district is now reported missing after being arrested by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) on April 29. He was arrested by a group of soldiers when he was going to Sooriyakaddaikadu to sell vegetables. Several villagers witnessed the arrest. Now, SLA officials are denying arresting the farmer, said Mr. Selvam Adaikalanathan and Mr. S. Noharathalingam, Wanni district Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarians in a letter sent on Friday (5) to the Sri Lanka President Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse. "The wife and children of Mr. Visanthy Aloysius are living in fear for the safety of Mr. Aloysius. We appeal to you to instruct SLA officials concerned to furnish information regarding the whereabouts of Mr. Visanthy Aloysius to his wife and children," the MPs requested the President in their letter.

Tamil youth shot dead in Kantalai: May 5 - Unidentified men who came in motor bike shot dead a Tamil youth, Sivagnanam Theepan, in Kantalai on Friday (5) evening around 4 p.m. The dead youth worked in sand mining and transportation of sand for the construction industry. Kantalai is located about 39 km off southwest of Trincomalee town along Trincomalee-Colombo highway. Theepan was repairing his lorry parked close to Vikneswara Vidiyalayam and his residence when the attackers shot him at close range and fled from the scene, Kantalai police sources said.

2 soldiers wounded in gunfire: May 6 - An unidentified attacker, armed with a handgun, fired on Sri Lanka Army soldier who was guarding policemen providing security to Uthayan newspaper office located on Kasthuriar Road in Jaffna. The incident took place around 12:15 p.m. on Saturday (6). The soldier, seriously wounded was rushed to Jaffna Hospital and later transferred to Palaly military hospital. Meanwhile, in a separate incident, another gunman in Vadamardchi, shot and wounded a soldier around 1:00 p.m. More than six gunshots were fired on SLA troops at Malu Santhi in Navindil, Uduppiddy in Vadamardchi.

SLA raids LTTE's Jaffna political offices: May 6 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers damaged the building which functioned as

the political office of the LTTE in Kokkuvil in Jaffna, in the early hours of Saturday (6). The troops entered the building at Potpathy road around 12.30 a.m. and smashed doors and windows. Another building used by the women members of the LTTE's political wing at Kokkuvil east was also damaged. The LTTE's police office was established in Jaffna after the signing of the cease-fire agreement in 2002. The office had remained closed since the LTTE cadres of the political wing withdrew from Jaffna.

Two Jaffna youths missing: May 6 - Two youths who had travelled to Jaffna town from Point Pedro to buy provisions for their carpentry business on Friday (5) have been reported missing, according to complaints made by their relatives at the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission offices in Jaffna. Navartnam Sasikumar, 23, of Katkoyalam in Pt. Pedro and Subramaniam Krishnakumar, 23, of Kudaththani in Vadamardchi East were working together as carpenters. They went to Jaffna on the day and had not returned home till Saturday 12.00 noon, the relatives said in the complaint. Any temple road, KKS road and Cross road in Inuvil were searched by the troops.

De-mining group suspends operation: May 6 - "Horizon," an Indian de-mining group, has left Vankalai in Mannar district citing security and escalating violence in North East Sri Lanka. Horizon has been engaged in de-mining activities in three suburbs, Thomaspuri, Swarnapuri and Rathinapuri in Vankalai area for the last two years enabling resettlement of hundreds of displaced families after several years. Officials of the Horizon de-mining group said they would return to continue their de-mining activities in other selected areas in the Mannar district when the situation in Mannar improves.

Protest against arrest Tamil journalist: May 6 - A female journalist arrested on suspicion at the UNESCO WPDF conference in Colombo on 1st of May 2006 and remanded in custody was released on personal bail Friday (5) when the police informed court that they did not have sufficient evidence to file a charge against the journalist.

Sivaramya Sivanathan, a Tamil female journalist attached to state owned Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC) as a relief announcer, was questioned by the police at the entrance of the conference. When she couldn't produce an invitation for the event she was arrested and handed over to the police despite her producing her identity card given by the SLBC. Director, Tamil services SLBC Mr. Jeevendra Kumar confirmed FMM that Ms. Sivaramya is working under him as a relief announcer.

Protesting against the arrest of the journalist, the Free Media Movement (FMM) urged the Sri Lanka government to "instruct the police to speed up the investigations and release Ms. Sivaramya Sivanathan if she is proved innocent." The FMM pointed out that a number of journalists who didn't have invitation cards were not asked to be produced at the entrance. "The only reason FMM could think of for asking Ms. Sivaramya for an official invitation was that she belonged to the minority Tamil community. FMM understands security concerns of the government in dangerously volatile situation developing in the country but would like to emphasize that discriminatory practices usually do more harm than good," Sunanda Deshapriya, convenor of the FMM said.

Youth shot dead in Thirunelvely: May 7 - Unknown gunmen shot dead a youth in Thirunelvely, Jaffna at 5.30 p.m., Sunday (7), sources in Jaffna said. The youth was walking along Palaly road towards Thirunelvely junction when he was shot at close range by the gunmen who escaped from the scene. The youth received four gunshot wounds and died on the spot. The youth was wearing white shorts and white T-shirt and is reported to be from Neervely area. His body has been taken to Jaffna Teaching Hos-

pital and is awaiting identification.

12 Police officers injured in grenade attack: May 7 - Twelve police cadres including a police woman, and two civilians were seriously injured in a hand grenade attack by unidentified men riding a motorbike on Sunday (7) around 7.30 p.m, in front of Batticaloa police head office, said police sources who blamed the Tamil Tigers for the attack. Police were talking near a vegetable stall just in front of the police head office when the attackers lobbed the grenade.

Relatives await abducted youth's release: May 9 - Kirubairatnam Suthahiri 22, a building contractor in Kinnaiyady in the Valaichenai police division was abducted along with his motorbike by unidentified gunmen on 28th April 2006 around 7 p.m. near the Mankerny Sri Lanka Army (SLA) check point while returning from Pannichankerny. Although abductors have indicated through third party that they would release Suthahiri, the victim has not been released yet, sources said. Relatives have registered a complaint made to the Valaichenai police regarding this abduction. Suthahiri, a building contractor constructing tsunami houses in Pannichankerny and Mankerny region, had 200,000 rupees with him when he was abducted, said the police. Kayankerny Village Officer's motorbike and mobile phone were robbed by unknown armed men in the same location where Suthahiri was abducted, added the sources.

Youth shot, injured in Batticaloa: May 9 - Seenithamby Logeswaran, 25, of Panichankerny, riding towards Valaichenai with a friend on his motorbike, was seriously injured when he was fired at by gunmen allegedly belonging to Karuna group in Kayankerny Tuesday (9) around 10.45 a.m., sources said. Logeswaran received serious injuries to his head and was rushed to the Batticaloa Teaching hospital. He was later transferred to Batticaloa hospital for additional treatment, said medical sources. The gunmen who had lain in ambush near Kayankerny bridge escaped after shooting Logeswaran. Panichankerny is located in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) controlled area.

Two Forestry workers found dead: May 9 - Two civilian employees of Forestry Resources Protection unit attached to the civil administration in Vanni, were found shot dead in Panikkankulam jungle, 5 km west of A9 road northwest of Mankulam on Tuesday (9). The employees who went to the jungle on Tuesday, 2 May, were reported missing on 5 May. The decomposed bodies had bullet wounds. The police found four empty cases from the location. The victims were identified as Veerakody Somarasa, 60, from Thiruvaiyaru in Kilinochchi and Thoppilan Periyasamy, 58, from Kilinochchi. The bodies have been brought to the Kilinochchi Government Hospital. Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Liaison Officer to Kilinochchi, Mr. Matti Vainionpaa, visited Kilinochchi Hospital, visited the Hospital to inspect the bodies.

Gunmen abduct Pt. Pedro traders: May 9 - Unidentified gunmen who came in a white Hiace van abducted two traders in Pt. Pedro town in the high security zone, in the Vadamradchi sector of the Jaffna peninsula, around 5.30 p.m., on Tuesday (9), sources in Jaffna said. The men were abducted when they were getting ready to go home after closing their shops. One of the abducted has been identified as Gopi, 25, who owns a hair dressing saloon. The other is yet to be identified. He owns a shop close to Gopi's saloon.

Student with driver reported missing: May 9 - Maheswaran Umatharan, a student from Chettiyar Madam at Araly North, Vaddukodai in Jaffna district, on his way abroad to continue his education, has disappeared without any trace on entering the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) check post in Omanthai on 6th May 2006

around 2.30 p.m, along with the driver of the van, Kanthasamy Eelারণan of Kandavalai Kilinochchi, according to the parents of the driver. Eelারণan's vehicle is a blue coloured Hiace van with the registration number: WP JU 7533, the parents seeking help from the public.

Two soldiers wounded in land mine attack: May 10 - Two Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) troops were seriously wounded in a Claymore land mine attack in the Jaffna Islet of Velanai on Wednesday (10) at 9:10 a.m., Sri Lankan military sources said. SLN conducted a large scale cordon and search operation between 9.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. in Velani Vangalavadi area where the explosion took place, and have arrested an elderly civilian, according to sources. The soldiers were on foot patrol on Rasiah road in Velanai when the attack took place. The sailors were rushed to Palaly Military Hospital. Sri Lanka Navy troopers took all local residents to the Ilanthaivanam Pillaiyar temple and paraded them in front of a hooded-paramilitary. S. Balachandran, 62, a civilian nominated by the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) for Kayts local council position, was identified and was taken by the SLN for interrogation.

Two students reported missing in Mannar: May 10 - Mothers of two students on Wednesday (10) lodged separate complaints with the Mannar Citizen Committee about the disappearance of their sons. Ms L.Thangarasa (44) of Kallimoddi in Murunkan in her complaint said that her son Johnson (13) a student who went for school on April 14 this year did not return thereafter. Ms B.Soosaiammah (52) of Panankattikottu in Mannar in her complaint said her son Antony Sureshkumar (17) who left home on April 24 morning had not returned thereafter, sources said. Mannar Citizen Committee has forwarded these complaints to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) and Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in Mannar for necessary action.

Youth shot succumbs to injuries: May 11 - Seenithamby Yogeswaran of Panichankerny, shot by Karuna group gunmen on Tuesday (9) around 10.30 a.m near Kayankerny Sri Lanka Army (SLA) camp, succumbed to bullet wounds at a Colombo hospital, medical sources said. Yogeswaran was transferred from Batticaloa hospital to Colombo Hospital on Tuesday, his relatives said. "My younger brother Yogeswaran is married and has a daughter. He works as a fishmonger at Sallitheevu in Panichankerny and he does not support any group or organisation," said his brother. "Karuna group gunmen stopped my brother and his companion riding a motorbike, 50 meters from the Kayankerny SLA camp and had asked my brother whether he was a member of any group. Though he had answered in the negative, the gunmen had shot him on the head with a pistol and escaped," the brother further said.

Trond Furuhoed passes away: May 11 - Retired Major-General of Norwegian army and the first chief of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), Trond Furuhoed, passed away at 67, in Norway on Wednesday (11). Maj. Gen. Furuhoed made an outstanding contribution to the establishment of the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and gave leadership to the monitoring mission through its crucial first year of operations.

Maj. Gen. Trond Furuhoed, who retired from his one year service (March 2002 - Feb. 2003) as Head of Mission in Sri Lanka, returned to Sri Lanka again in February 2004, when the Norwegian government re-appointed him after a controversy in November 2004 involving his successor, who was declared persona non grata by Colombo. Maj. Gen. Furuhoed, an experienced monitor in international conflicts, has earlier served as the Force Commander of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from 1993 - 1995. Furuhoed, before his retirement in

the Norwegian Army, headed the District Command of Trøndelag.

Soldier injured in grenade attack: May 12 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) trooper was seriously injured in a hand grenade attack on the SLA street patrol unit by suspected Tamil Tigers at Urikadu on the Valvettiturai-Thondaimanaru road in Jaffna on Thursday (11) around 12 noon. The injured soldier was rushed to Palaly military hospital. Though the SLA soldiers opened fire on the attacker, neither the attacker nor other people on the site were hit, sources said.

Students shot dead in Muttur: May 12 - Seventeen-year-old student Balakumar was shot dead on Friday (12) morning around 8.45 a.m. along the Church Road in Muttur town by unidentified persons who came on pedal cycles. Another Tamil student seriously injured in the attack is now warded in the Muttur hospital. The deceased student has been studying in a school in Trincomalee town and had gone home in Muttur for weekend vacation, Police sources said. This was the second Tamil youth shot dead in Muttur town within thirty-six hours, Police said.

On Thursday (11) morning Mr. Surendran alias Surya, (22) owner of a hairdressing saloon was shot dead by unidentified armed persons who came on a motor bicycle. He died on the spot inside his saloon with injuries on his head and chest. The saloon is located about one hundred yards away from the Kaddaiparichchan army camp in the government-controlled territory, police sources said.

Hair dresser shot dead in Atchuvveli: May 12 - Two gunmen on a motor bike shot and killed Mr. Gnanam, 45, owner of a hair dressing saloon at Thambalai junction in Atchuvveli north in Valigamam east, on Friday (12) morning around 8. a.m as he was opening his saloon, said sources from Atchuvveli. Meanwhile, a relative of another disappeared saloon owner was held in Atchuvveli checkpoint by Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers, tortured and threatened with death, sources said. Gnanam died on the spot. He is the latest victim in the continuing attacks targeting hairdressing saloon owners in the peninsula.

The fate of Vellautham Gopi, 26, a hairdressing saloon owner in Point Pedro abducted by unidentified gunmen on Tuesday, 9 May, is yet unknown. Meanwhile, Kandiah Sivapathasundaram, 30, Gopi's relative, has lodged a complaint with the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission (SLHRC) office in Jaffna, saying that as he was on his way to the SHLRC office to register a complaint regarding his abducted cousin, the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers of the SLA sentry point at the Atchuvveli-Vallai junction forced him down from the bus, kept him inside a latrine and tortured him, said SLHRC officials. Sivapathasundaram was held at the checkpoint for 24 hours. The SLA troopers had warned Sivapathasundaram not to make complaints either to the SLHRC or the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) and had further told that these institutions cannot do anything to help him, added the sources. Sivapathasundaram with severe injuries to his legs, is admitted to the Point Pedro base hospital from where he had sent a complaint to the SHLRC Jaffna office.

Six Jaffna youths abducted: May 12 - Six youths, all below 25 years, on Thursday (11) afternoon around 5.30 p.m were reportedly abducted by soldiers from a restaurant at Kalady junction near Jaffna University, sources in Jaffna said. The youths, two from Point Pedro and four residents of Jaffna town, were standing in front of the restaurant when they were rounded by SLA soldiers who arrived in motor bikes. The students were blind folded and were taken to the Atchelu SLA camp, witnesses said. The parents of the six abducted youths, registered a complaints with the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Jaffna Friday (12) morning that their sons had been abducted by the soldiers and that traders near the restaurant and others had confirmed this.

Body of disappeared youth found: May 12 - The body of Rasan Santhakumar 26, a fisherman from Karainagar, Jaffna was recovered from a fresh grave found in Karainagar area on Friday (12) afternoon, said sources from Karainagar. Santhaumar went missing on Wednesday (10) after he went out with his bike, relatives said. Kayts police recovered the body and had handed it to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital for postmortem examinations, hospital sources said. Relatives located Santhakumar's bicycle and after observing freshly dug soil close by, discovered his body in a grave filled with soil and gravel. This is the second killing within a month in this area which is under direct and full control of the Karainagar SLN.

Youth shot at Valaichenai Church: May 12 - Two motorbike riding gunmen shot and wounded a 25-year-old youth at the entrance of Valaichenai Church on Friday (12) at 7:00 p.m. Arulchelvam Arulraj, 25, from Astamam Road, Kiran, shot while walking into the Church, was rushed to Valaichenai hospital and later transferred to Batticaloa hospital. Arularaj, serving as warden in charge of boys at the Methodist Church for the last two years was shot at in front of the church while bringing food from a nearby food stall, said Rev. S. Sathees, the priest at the Methodist church. The gunmen, who shot the victim with AK-47 type automatic, fled from the scene in their motorbike. Valaichenai police are investigating into this shooting which took place 32 km north of Batticaloa town.

Soldier shot dead in Jaffna town: May 13 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldier on road patrol was shot dead by an unknown gunman on Jaffna Main Street near Chundukili Girls School at 9.10 a.m. Saturday (13) morning. The gunman was hiding behind a building in the Main street and escaped after the shooting. Large number of SLA troops cordoned off the area and conducted searches following the attack.

Father, daughter shot, injured in Kayts: May 13 - Two civilians from Mankumban, 5th District area, in Kayts were seriously injured when four unidentified gunmen entered their house scaling the perimeter wall, and fired indiscriminately inside the house on Friday (12) at 11.45 p.m., police sources said. P.Sunderalingam, 54, and his daughter S.Jeyarane, 29, suffered serious gunshot wounds. A local media organization brought the incident to the notice of the local Police and both were taken to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital in the early hours of Saturday in an ambulance from the local hospital. Both are receiving treatment in the Intensive Care Unit and their medical conditions have stabilized, hospital sources said. Motivations for the shooting and the identity of the gunmen are not known.

Three SLA soldiers injured in grenade attack: May 13 - Three Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were seriously wounded when suspected Tamil Tigers threw hand grenades at the SLA foot patrol near the Post Office Junction along Jaffna-Palaly Road at 7.30 p.m., Saturday (13). Assailants had approached the Post Office junction through the road that runs behind the Jaffna Campus and escaped after hurling the grenades at the soldiers. Soldiers indiscriminately fired after the incident, seriously injuring an elderly civilian who was passing by along the Palaly Road. He has been admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, medical sources said.

Karuna cadre shot dead: May 13 - Two unidentified gunmen shot and killed a Karuna cadre who was riding in a motorbike with another cadre. A T-56 rifle and a 9 mm gun was recovered by the Police from the site. The incident took place in front of Kattankudy bus stand on Batticaloa Kalmunai main street around 8:00 p.m. on Saturday (13). Dead body of the Karuna cadre was taken to Kattankudy hospital, police said.

Two youths shot dead in Muttur: May 14 - Two Tamil youths who were traveling in a two-wheel tractor were shot dead by unidentified armed men at Periyapalam, a village in the government controlled territory in Muttur town, around 10 a.m., Sunday (14), according to police. The victims were identified as Jeyachandran of Puliyadichchenai and Mathuran of Peruveli. The number of Tamil youths killed in the government controlled Muttur town since Thursday (11) has increased to four with the killings youths that took place Sunday.

Gunmen kill 4 more civilians: May 14 - Three civilians belonging to same family were reportedly killed at their home in Velanai West by gunmen, around 10:30 p.m. Saturday (13). A tea-shop owner was also found shot dead near Velanai junction. A petrol station was attacked. Meanwhile, armed men who came in a vehicle set fire to several shops and blasted a transformer at Puliyankoodal junction in Kayts, Saturday night. Villagers blame Sri Lankan forces for the attacks in the Jaffna islets. On Saturday alone, 13 civilians were reported to have been killed in Sri Lanka Navy controlled Jaffna islets. The victims were identified as M. Shanmugalingam, 62, his son S. Kantharoopan, 29 and his wife. Shanmugalingam owns a telephone centre close to his house which was also blasted by the attackers, the sources said. The attackers entered their house late in the night and fired indiscriminately, killing them on the spot.

Seven civilians injured in shelling: May 14 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) opened fire and launched shells on Ward 5, a thickly populated Tamil residential area in Eravur in Batticaloa district around 11:45 p.m. Saturday (13) night wounding seven civilians. Two of them, seriously injured, were rushed to the Eravur hospital, said sources from Eravur. This attack on civilians followed a mortar attack on the police sentry post located behind Eravur police station by suspected Tamil Tigers on the same night around 11.15 p.m. Shells were fired by the SLA and police for more than thirty minutes, injuring civilians and damaging six houses. SLA and the police resumed their attack on the civilians at 1:00 a.m. Sunday and continued for more than 45 minutes, said the sources. Meanwhile, However, military sources claimed that the LTTE launched the two attacks, one at 11.15 p.m. Saturday and the next at 1 a.m. Sunday (14).

Ms. Thambyappa Maheswary, 55, of Eravur hospital and Chandran Sangeetha 6, student of Eravur Vipulananda Vidyalayam are the two seriously injured admitted to Batticaloa hospital, said the sources.

Youth shot dead in Atchuveli: May 14 - A 23-years-old youth was shot dead by unidentified gunmen who came in a motorbike at Pathameni Junction in Atchuveli, Jaffna at 8:00 a.m, Sunday (14). Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troops were on road patrol when the youth was gunned down. The youth killed in Achchuveli was identified as Pasuwalingam Kandeepan, 23.

Killings follow grenade attacks: May 14 - SLA foot patrol that was moving towards Kopay junction from Irupalai Junction along the Jaffna-Point Pedro road came under grenade attack by suspected Tamil Tigers in front of Kopay Christian College at 12:45 p.m. on Sunday (14). One SLA trooper received serious wounds in the attack and was taken to Palaly Military Hospital. During a cordon and search operation following two grenade attacks, soldiers shot dead a youth in Kopay at 1:45 p.m., Sunday (14). Meanwhile, another youth was shot dead by unidentified gunmen who came in a motorbike in Avarangal area on Jaffna Point-Pedro road, on Sunday morning.

There was another grenade attack near the same location at 1:45 p.m. After the second explosion during the cordon and search operation, Parameswaran Kapilan, 21, was shot dead by the SLA,

sources said. Three other friends of Kapilan was arrested by the SLA on suspicions and were handed over to Kopay police, police sources said.

Meanwhile, Ramachandran Surendran, 30, from Atchuveli North, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen along the same Jaffna-Point Pedro road, near Avarangal junction, sources said. This killing took place at 8:30 a.m., nearly the same time the youth Pasuwalingam Kandeepan, 23, was shot dead in Atchuveli pathameni junction.

This was the second killing involving youths from Atchuveli Sunday

Landmine attack injures 2 soldiers: May 15 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were injured in a Claymore land mine attack that targetted a road clearing patrol at Nelliyadi in the Vadamaradchi sector of the Jaffna peninsula, around 9 a.m., on Monday (15). Soon after the incident, the troops cordoned off the area and conducted a search operation. All transport through Nelliyadi on the Jaffna-Pt. Pedro road was brought to a halt for more than two hours, sources in the area said.

Two traders feared killed: May 15 - A restaurant owner and a grocery shop owner at Nilavarai, located in Valikamam sector of Jaffna district, are feared killed on Sunday (14) night near the tourist site of Nilavarai well in Navakkiri village where they were operating their businesses. Blood trace and scattered remains of flesh were reportedly found inside the shop and the restaurant. Villagers who heard gunshots around 8:30 p.m., on Sunday, and noticed vehicular movement during the night in the area, fear that the traders were killed and their bodies removed from the spot by the Sri Lanka Army troopers or their paramilitary cadres. Jaffna has been terrorized with killings on Sunday. The missing persons, Thiyakarajah Kirupaharan, 27, and Jeyaratnam Jeyakanthan, 25, are relatives who were operating their businesses at the tourist site located at Nilavarai Junction on Puttur - Punnalaikadduvan Road.

2 wounded in mine attack: May 15 - Sri Lankan troopers who penetrated into LTTE controlled area in Semamadu, north of Vavuniya, exploded a mine towards a tractor with two youths who were wounded in the attack, one seriously injured, according to LTTE sources. The attack took place around 9:30 a.m. Monday (15). The seriously wounded was identified as Kandasamy Sara, other wounded was identified as Panchalingam Thayaparan.

Karuna cadre shot dead in Hospital: May 15 - Suspected LTTE gunmen who entered the Batticaloa Hospital at 4:40 p.m. on Monday (15) shot two Karuna Group cadres, one of them undergoing treatment for his wounds sustained on April 30 in the Tiger commando attack in Welikanda. A cadre guarding the wounded cadre was killed and the wounded cadre was seriously injured in the gunfire and transferred to Colombo Hospital. Sureshkumar, undergoing treatment in both his hands, was seriously wounded, and transferred to Colombo. He has been admitted at the hospital since May 10. The incident took place at 9th ward, during the visit time. Another paramilitary cadre, named Iraniyan, 19, was also undergoing treatment at the hospital. The cadre, Keetha Konkalan Selvakumar, 22, shot dead, was guarding the wounded cadre, Arasaratnam Suresh, 24.

On 30 April, the LTTE's elite commando unit launched an attack on suspected Karuna camps located in Sri Lanka Army protected Kasankulam, close to Thibulana, located 7 km east of Welikanda in Polannaruwa - Batticaloa border.

Gunmen attack STF water tanker: May 15 - A Special Task

Force (STF) trooper was wounded and rushed to Amparai hospital after suspected LTTE gunmen attacked a water tanker of the elite counter insurgency wing of the Sri Lankan armed forces, the STF, in Komari. The bowser was transporting water to soldiers in the newly constructed STF camp, located one kilometer away from the tsunami destroyed old camp. The injured STF trooper was rushed to Amparai hospital for treatment. There were 3 STF troopers in the carrier at the time of the gunfire.

Six members of family injured in attack: May 15 - Six members of the same family in Kerniyady, Meesalai, Jaffna district were seriously injured in an attack allegedly by the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and collaborating paramilitary cadres who broke into the house of the family on Sunday (15) night around 9.00 p.m.. They were rushed to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and the condition of some members of the family were said to be serious. The injured were identified as Kandiah Jeyakumaralingam 59, his wife Thievanayagi, 58, Staff Kaithady Navatkuli Multi Purpose Society, daughters - Ratnalogini, 33, Umadevi, 31, Staff Jaffna Secretariat, Selvarathy, 28, Staff Chavakachcheri Regional Education Office, and Vijayakala, Jaffna University 3rd year Fine Arts student.

The SLA troopers and the paramilitary cadres arriving at the house in three troop carriers, smashed the main door and forced their way into the house. They accused the members of the family for concealing guns inside the house and assaulted all of them, said the sources.

Blast injures 9 Muslims in Akkaraipattu: May 15 - Nine Muslims were injured in a grenade attack at Pattiadiputty in Akkaraipattu police division when unidentified persons who came in a motorbike lobbed a grenade at them, around 7 p.m. on Monday (15), police in the southeastern town said. The attack came as preparations were underway to hold elections to several local government bodies in the Amparai district. Civil sources suggested political rivalry might have been the reason behind the attack. Five of the injured were warded in Akkaraipattu base hospital and the rest were transferred to Amparai general hospital as their conditions were reported critical. Elections to several local bodies in the Amparai district are scheduled to be held on May 20.

Series of incidents of grenade attacks and gunfire: May 16 - In several incidents of continuing grenade attacks against Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers in Jaffna district three SLA soldiers received serious injuries in the last 24 hours. In the indiscriminate fire by the SLA soldiers after the explosions three civilians also were injured and have been admitted to the Jaffna Teaching Hospital, according to sources.

Two SLA soldiers who were deployed for security duties were injured in a grenade attack at Kokkuvil Kulapitthy junction on Monday 8:00 p.m.. In the resulting gunfire by the SLA soldiers third year fine arts student at the Jaffna Campus, Ms Thevanthini Sivanesan, 26, was injured.

Unidentified gunmen hurled hand grenades at the SLA sentry in Muthirai Santhi, Nallur, along Jaffna- Point Pedro road at 12:00 noon on Tuesday. No details of injuries to SLA soldiers are known. In the gunfire by the troopers following the explosion, two civilians, Manikkam Rathinam, 73, and Paul Thevarani, 55, were seriously injured, sources said.

Grenade attacks were reported in Kulapitthy, Anaikkottai, Kalviyankadu, Udupidy, and Maasiyapitthy area Monday night. One SLA soldier was injured in the explosion at Maasiyapitthy in Alaveddi area. Another grenade attack was reported around Tuesday 12:00 noon in Sankanai, Jaffna where a firefight lasting ten minutes was also reported.

Claymore landmine attacks in Trinco: May 16 - One soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) lost one of his legs in a claymoreland mine explosion that took place on Tuesday (16) morning around 8.30 a.m. in Puliyankulam area in Uppuveli Police division in Trincomalee district. This incident took place when a group of SLA soldiers were engaged in road clearing patrol, according to Uppuveli Police. The injured soldier was airlifted to Colombo National Hospital in a critical condition, sources said. Meanwhile, one of the three injured home guards in a claymore explosion that took place Tuesday (16) morning at 99th milepost in Thampalakamam division succumbed to injuries. Other injured home guards were admitted at the Kantalai district hospital, sources said.

One LTTE cadre killed, 2 LTTE, 4 soldiers wounded: May 16 - A Liberation Tigers woman cadre, Yalisai, was killed when Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers who moved beyond the no-man zone at Palamodai, north of Vavuniya, attacked an LTTE Forward Defence Line (FDL) around 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday. Later, two LTTE cadres were wounded in Jaffna district when SLA soldiers attacked the FDL of the Tigers at Kandalkadu, located near Eluthumadduval between Nagarkovil and Muhamalai in Jaffna district, around 5:45 p.m., according to LTTE sources in Kilinochchi. Direct clash between the SLA troops and the Tigers erupted after the incident. Four SLA soldiers were wounded, according to SLA sources in Jaffna.

Families flee to escape harassment: May 16 - Large number of resettled war-affected families in Potkerni, a hamlet in the Thampalakamam division on Tuesday (16) began to flee their after a group of soldiers of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and home guards had begun a cordon and search operation following a claymore mine attack on Tuesday morning at 99th milepost in which one home guard was killed and two others injured. Injured were admitted to the Kantalai district hospital.

Grenade explosion kills Tamil woman: May 17 - Ms Jeyamalar Sakhthikumar, 31, of Thampalakamam was killed on Wednesday (17) early morning around 1 a.m. when unidentified persons lobbed a grenade into their house located at Kovilady near the historic Aathi Koneswaram Temple. Initial inquiry revealed that a group of unidentified persons had knocked the doors of the house. When no one responded, they had lobbed a grenade into the house through the roof. The body of the dead woman was lying in the mortuary of the Thampalakamam government hospital and the postmortem examination is to be held at Kantalai hospital later. Thampalakamam, a traditional Tamil village is located about 26 km southwest of Trincomalee town along Trincomalee-Colombo highway.

Claymore blast kills STF trooper: May 17 - A Special Task Force (STF) elite trooper was killed when a claymore mine targeted by suspected Tamil Tigers on the STF foot patrol exploded around 8.30 a.m. along the Main Street in Thirukovil around 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday (17). The STF soldier, Mr. Dharmaretna was seriously injured in the blast and succumbed to injuries while he was being taken to the Amparai general hospital. Sri Lankan Government troops immediately cordoned off the area and conducted a search operation.

Private tutor shot dead: May 17 - An unidentified gunman shot dead Selvarasa Kirithas, 35, a displaced resident from Ilavalai, on Wednesday (17) morning around 8.45 a.m. near Poobalasingham Book Depot at the Jaffna Central Bus stand. The gunman, who shot Kirithas while he was drinking tea in front of a tea stall fled from the site in a blue colour motorbike, civilians at the site said. The victim was a private tuition teacher, the sources said. Kirithas, originally from Kankesanthurai, was living in Ilavalai.

SLA sentry in Wellkanda ambushed, two killed: May 17 - Suspected Tamil Tiger attackers ambushed a Sri Lanka Army (SLA)

sentry post with a claymore landmine attack, killing two soldiers and wounding one at Sooriyaweve in Welikanda in Batticaloa - Polannaruwa border, on Wednesday (17) morning at 10:35, Police said. The SLA troopers, killed in Welikanda were identified as I.M. Lankasinghe and K.H.M.D. Jeyawardene. N. Najeem was wounded. The soldiers opened fire and launched a search operation around the sentry post after the ambush.

Two soldiers injured in Nagarkovil fire: May 17 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers were seriously injured in a fire with Liberation Tigers (LTTE) cadres near Kandalkadu, located near Eluthumadduval between Nagarkovil and Muhamalai, on Wednesday (17) afternoon. The injured troopers have been air lifted to Palaly Military Hospital, according to sources. SLA officials said Liberation Tigers shot at the SLA soldiers, triggering the fire. A direct clash between the SLA troops and the Tigers at the same location on the previous day injured four SLA soldiers.

Two SLA soldiers injured in grenade attack: May 17 - Two Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers were injured in a grenade attack at Uduppiddy, in the Vadamaradchi sector of the Jaffna peninsula, around 7 p.m. on Wednesday (17). The injured troops were transported to Palaly military base hospital. Two suspected LTTE men who came on a motorbike lobbed a grenade at a SLA camp situated on the road from Uduppiddy junction to Vathiri. The troops opened fire in retaliation, the sources said. Meanwhile another grenade attack on SLA troopers was reported at Kokkuvil, Wednesday evening.

2 LTTE posts in Muhamalai, SLA post attacked: May 18 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers on Wednesday (17) night reportedly moved into the no-go zone in Muhamalai close to A9 Road and attacked two Forward Defence Line (FDL) posts of the LTTE. No casualties were reported. The Tigers said they repulsed the attacking Lankan troopers. Meanwhile, an SLA FDL post in Mamadu, 8 km northeast of Vavuniya was attacked and destroyed on Wednesday evening. The attack on Mamadu SLA FDL post of the Sri Lanka Army took place on Wednesday evening around 5:45 p.m. Casualty details were not available. The attack was believed to be in retaliation to the SLA ambush on LTTE FDL on Tuesday (16) when an LTTE woman cadre, Yalaisai, was killed and 2 LTTE personnel were wounded.

TNA candidate, companion shot dead: May 18 - Unidentified gunmen shot dead a Tamil National Alliance (TNA) candidate contesting the Navithanveli Padeshya Sabha polls, and his companion riding with him a motorbike on the Kalmunai Central Camp Road, on Thursday (18) noon around 1.30 p.m. The shooting occurred in a location about 300 meters from the police sentry post at Central Camp 11th village in Kalmunai. The victims, Palasuntharam Kamalraj 32, and Samurthi Development officer Paskaran Sureshvaran 34, were shot when they were returning from Central Camp on a motorbike.

LTTE cadre shot dead: May 19 - Neelan, 23, a member of LTTE Political Wing and resident of Mankerny, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen on Thursday (18) night at 8 pm at Mankeny and Panichankerny border in Batticaloa. LTTE Batticaloa political wing head Thayamohan said that Neelan went home on leave when he was killed.

SLA soldiers cordon, search Kokkuvil East: May 19 - Sri Lanka Army (SLA) soldiers cordoned off and searched KKS road, Aadiapatham Road and Sabapathy Road in Kokkuvil east Grama Sevaka division in Jaffna Friday (19) morning between 5:00 a.m., and 8:30 a.m. The operation was carried out in the wake of several grenade attacks against the SLA camp located in Sabapathy road in Thalalyali, security sources said. SLA troopers conducted a house-to-house search demanding the residents to produce identity cards. People were allowed to enter and exit the cordoned off area after 8:30 a.m. SLA soldiers vacated the area after 12:00

noon.

Two dead bodies found in Katankudy: May 19 - Katankuddy police, on information from the public, recovered two dead bodies on Friday (19) around 6.15 p.m at the edge of Navalkuda lake in their division, one with gunshot wounds and the other with assault injuries. The decomposed bodies were handed over to Batticaloa Hospital morgue. The killings had taken place four days earlier, hospital sources said after concluding the initial inspection.

Attack on SLA troopers in Jaffna: May 19 - Unidentified gunmen opened fire on Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers on Friday (19) morning around 7.00 a.m at Sangiliyan Road in Muthirai Chanthi Jaffna. No one was injured in the attack and the SLA troopers fired indiscriminately around and arrested a man who was later handed over to the police, added the sources.

Clash erupts again at Nagarkovil: May 20 - Clashes erupted between the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers and the Tamil Tigers on Friday (19) night and Saturday (20) morning, on both sides of the A9 highway, in east and west of Muhamalai entry point. The civilian traffic from Jaffna to Kilinochchi via A9 entry point remained closed Saturday morning. However, the traffic in the opposite direction was flowing, travellers said. Mortar fire and artillery fire was reported in the area.

The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) troopers who were seen strengthening their FDL posts at Nagarkovil, 8 km northeast of Muhamalai A9 entry point, fired at LTTE FDLs from a tank continuously for 45 minutes from 7:30 a.m. Saturday, LTTE sources said. The attack which ceased when LTTE retaliated with mortar fire, resumed again when two tanks returned to the coastal site, firing again at the LTTE posts.

Soldier killed, one wounded in pressure mine attack: May 21 - A Sri Lanka Army (SLA) trooper was killed instantly on Sunday (21) morning when the soldiers hit a pressure mine at Iranai Iluppaikulam, 20 km northwest of Vavuniya, Vavuniya Police said. Another soldier was wounded in the incident. The troopers were on morning road clearance patrol when the pressure mine exploded, Police said.

Claymore explosion kills a soldier: May 21 - A Sri Lankan Army (SLA) trooper died and another injured in a claymore landmine attack on Sunday (21) morning around 8:00 a.m., at Left Bank Channel 3 in Lingapuram in Serunuwara police division in Trincomalee district, police sources said. A group of army soldiers on a road clearing mission became victims of the landmine attack. More troops and policemen rushed to the site and launched a cordon and search operation in the area, local sources said.

12 year old student shot dead: May 21 - Unidentified gunmen shot dead Selvarajah Ravichandran 12, a student of Valaichenai Hindu College, Saturday (20) night around 8.30 p.m. Ravichandran was standing in front of his grandmother's house in Mavadivembu, a village in the Eravur police division, when he was shot. Gunmen shot killed Ravichandran when he was on a visit to his grandmother's home located about 200 meters from Mavadivembu Sri Lanka Army camp.

Tamil civilian shot dead in Trincomalee: May 21 - Unidentified men shot dead a Tamil trader Mr. Gopal Balasubramaniam at Mullipottanai in Thampalakamam division in Trincomalee district on Sunday (21) afternoon around 12.15 p.m. when he was coming out of a shop. Mullipottanai is located about 28 km off southwest of Trincomalee town along Trincomalee-Colombo highway. Meanwhile, Serunuwara Police sources said a body of a civilian was recovered at LB-2 in Lingapuram after a claymore landmine blast which killed a soldier of the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) and injured two others Sunday.

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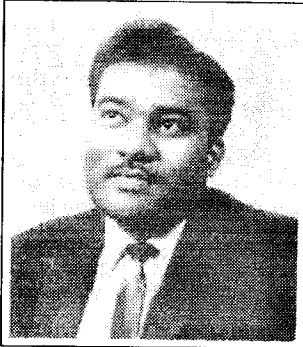
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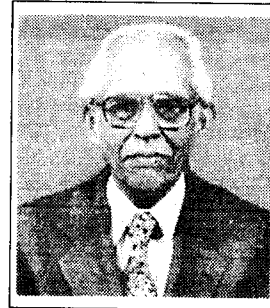
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wife Sarojini; loving children Nirmala, Baskeran, Shyamala
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CENTRALITY OF MURUGAN – THAIPUSAM TO HINDU IDENTITY THAIPUSAM IN MALAYSIA

Thaipusam with its centrality to Muruga worship is fairly widespread globally among the Hindus and this annual event draws millions of devotees to Batu Caves in Malaysia. This event was first organized in 1888 by Kayaroganampillai, founder of the Sri Maha Mariamman Kovil in Central Kuala Lumpur and later the centre of attraction shifted to Batu Caves – modelled on the lines of Palani and the Kavadi tradition there dates back to 1892.

At an individual level kavadi worship may be seen as an act of self definition, an inner transformation involving public surrender to the deity. At the outer level it is an act of public accomplishment which demonstrates both purification and spiritual worthiness. At the group level kavadi worship forms and consolidates social and network loyalties, where as at a community level it celebrates a South Indian Hindu (an increasingly Malaysian Hindu) ritual within the context of a culturally plural society. It is a ritual which simultaneously expresses uniqueness and pride, and underscores Hindu resistance to the multitude of pressures which threaten cultural and religious integrity. Finally, on every level kavadi worship signals allegiance to a wider cultural and political world, to pan-Hindu notions of pilgrimage and worship, and in generic terms to the Hindu heritage which was transplanted with the Indian emigrants, and is now gradually assuming a distinctive Malaysian identity." is the candid inference drawn by Dr

Vadivella following his deeply researched thesis.

The recently published dissertation of Dr Carl Vadivella Belle entitled "Thaipusam in Malaysia - A Hindu Festival Misunderstood" throws immense light on the gradual evolution of Hinduism in multi-cultural/ multi-religious Malaysia and how the kavadi tradition was woven around Muruga faith in the Batu Caves background. Dr Vadivella, with origins from Norway, was born in Southern Australia and is now the President of the Adelaide Vinayaga Temple and the Inaugural Hindu Chaplain of the Flinders University of Southern Australia. This much researched thesis earned him his doctorate from the Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria, Australia. A Skanda-Muruga devotee, has the rare privilege of having taken "kavadi" at Batu Caves fifteen times since his first visit in 1978.

The thesis of 548 pages has six lengthy chapters on The Phenomenology of Thai Pusam at Batu Caves, Malaysia: The social and ethnic context: Other Thaipusams: South Indian Hinduism: Hinduism in Malaysia: An overview and Thaipusam considered: The Divine Crossing: The extensive bibliography provided shows ample evidence of the depths the author has delved to bring to light the traditions, practices and myths from various sources that came to crystallise in the Batu Caves kavadi tradition.

The thesis traces in detail as to how the different streams of migrants such as Nattukottai Chettiers, North Indians, Jaffna Tamils, and other professional and clerical migrations have made distinct and enduring contribution to the overall fabric of Malaysian Hinduism which has developed in the absence of traditional authoritative sources and has evolved into a loosely integrated system devoid of authoritarianism. Hence the Thaipusam and the kavadi festival have helped to re-interpret traditional forms to create a new Hindu identity in the multi-ethnic context of Malaysia.

According to the author "it is the most visible and powerful assertion of Hindu identity and symbol of Dravidian resurgence" where millions gather annually. The author's field work in Malaysia, Singapore, Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka; the extensive interviews he had with knowledgeable academics and devotees and the research in the various libraries have brought to the surface a comparative study of Thaipusam in the various diaspora locations including Seychelles and discusses how Thaipusam is structured with themes and dominated by a logic drawn from the Muruga cosmology and also from wider Tamil belief structures.

Interesting evidence is brought out on Kavadi rituals, puranic mythology, Tamil Bhakthi movement, the relevance of the Saiva Sithantha philosophy, differences in agamic and popular Hinduism and in addition the ingredients of Tamil culture where all these concepts have their roots. The author has evidence to infer that waves of migration over decades from Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, with positive vibrations, have made Malaysia a meaningful multi-cultural state.

In conclusion he says "Thaipusam speaks to the Tamil/ Hindu heartland. It makes a clear statement about a proud, shared and continuing heritage, common membership of the great, rich and enduring civilization which not only includes metropolitan India but also the wider diaspora.....It states to Malays and Chinese just as they have sought religious forms and inspiration from external civilisational impulses, and as just as they claim allegiance to a wider religious community, so too do Hindus owe their genius to a broader cultural canvas, a religion which has moved from its metropolitan origins to become truly global.

This masterly work provides valuable source material for those interested to know more on Muruga worship, Kavadi festivals and their roots across the diaspora lands.

V.Sivasupramaniam Contact: vadiva@intermode.on.net
Seychelles.

Forthcoming Events

June

1. Shashti; Feast of St. Justin
5. Feast of St. Boniface
6. Feast of St. Norbert
7. Eekathasi
9. Pirathosam; Vaikasi Visakam; Feast of St. Ephrem
11. Full Moon; Sri Rajarajeswari Amman Temple Ther Festival
12. Sri Rajarajeswari Amman Temple Theertham Festival; Guru Pooja of Saint Thirugnanasampanthar
13. Feast of St. Anthony of Padua
14. Sankadakara Sathurthi
19. Feast of St. Romuald
20. Feast of St. Alban
21. Eekathasi; Feast of St. Aloysius Gonzaga
22. Karthigai; Pirathosam
25. Amavasai
26. Highgate Murugan Temple Annual Festival Commences with Kodi Eattam
27. Feast of St. Cyril of Alexandria
28. Feast of St. Irenaeus
29. Sathurthi
30. Guru Pooja of Saint Manikkavasagar

At Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ, Tel: 0207 381/4608

June 11th 6 p.m. Vani Fine Arts & The Bhavan Centre Presents Bharatanatyam by Smt. Priyadarshini Govind and Group From India

June 24th 6.30 p.m. Sangha Mitra presents 'A Variety Programme of Music & Dance'

25th 6 p.m. Vani Fine Arts & The Bhavan present – Pandit Vishwamohan Bhatt in concert with Sallil. V.Bhatt and accompanied by Rajkumar Misra

Wedding Bells

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Mugunthan, son of Mr. & Mrs T. Sivasubramaniam of 3/40-42 Stanley Road, Epping, N.S.W. 2121, Australia to Kristin on 23rd April 2006 at Sydney Murugan Temple, Mays Hill, Australia.

SANGEETHAM FESTIVAL OF INDIAN DANCE AND MUSIC

At Sadler's Wells

29th June – 2nd July 2006

Sangeetham brings the very best Indian musicians and dancers to London to celebrate the ancient Indian traditions of geetham (song), vadyam (instrument) and nrityam (dance). The festival will feature masterly recitals of contrasting Karnatic and Hindustani music along with performances of the grand dance genres of India's south by renowned artists. There would be two major recitals every evening. We hope that you would be able to grace the Festival.

The programme is also available on:
www.sadlerswell.com/sangeetham

Programme One

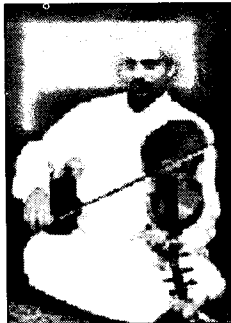
Thursday 29 June 2006 starts at 7.00pm also features

Jugalbandi (literally 'tied together') is an ancient Indian art



form where two musicians with different instruments or styles perform together. For Sangeetham both Hindustani and Carnatic (classical South Indian) music are brought together with **Pandit Ronu Majumdar** on Hindustani Flute and **Dr. Mysore M**

Manjunath on Carnatic Violin. **Pandit Ronu Majumdar**, India's Ace flautist is a powerhouse performer, solidly rooted in the Maihar Gharana. Renowned Carnatic violinist **Dr. Mysore Manjunath**, the son and disciple of Sangeeth Vidyanidhi S. Mahadevappa, was a child prodigy who matured quickly to emerge as one of the top-ranking violinists in India today



Programme Two

Friday 30 June 2006

starts at 7.00pm also features **OS Arun** and **Layatharanga**

OS Arun is the prince charming of Carnatic music, today and epitomises the true spirit of the masters of yesterday. His sonorous voice beautifully displays a passionate combination of rhythm and melody, making him the maestro of South India's classical music. For



the festival **OS Arun** teams up with **Layatharanga** to present a repertoire including Carnatic music and Devotional Music.



Layatharanga are a group from Bangalore consisting of: **Rajesh Vaidya** on Veena, **Jayachandra Rao** on Mridangam, **Giridhar Udupa** on Ghatam, **Anoor Ananthakrishna Sharma** on Tabla, **Arun Kumar** on drums, **Pramath Kiran** on Special Percussion and **Ravishankar Sharma** on Dholak

Programme Three

Saturday, 1 July 2006

starts at 4.30pm and also features **Nityashree Mahadevan**



Nityashree Mahadevan hails from a very powerful lineage of musicians, with **Palghat Mani Iyer** and **D.K. Pattamal** as grandparents, and **D.K. Jayaraman** as grand uncle. She is also a disciple of her mother **Smt. Lalitha Sivakumar**. She has a resonant voice & has a special style of singing, which crosses both classical and film music, appealing to thousands. She has numerous awards including **Kalaimamani** and **Innisaimamani**.

Programme Four

Sunday, 2 July 2006

starts at 4.30pm and also features

Urmila Sathyanarayanan

Urmila is one of the most inspired and dedicated **Bharathanatyam** exponents of the younger generation. Her nimble movements and the lucidity of her **abhinaya** (movement techniques), along with her intrinsic charisma, makes her a popular artist.



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Singer Hariharan is a leading exponent of both Hindustani and Carnatic traditions. He is also one of the most sought after popular music singers in both Bollywood and South India, winning the prestigious Indian National Film Award for 'Best Male Singer'. The evening promises to be a feast of classical, popular and contemporary music



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NATARAJA VAMADEVA - An Appreciation


Mr. Nataraja Vamadeva, youngest son of the late Mr. Sampanthar Nataraja passed away after a three week's battle at the Apollo Hospital, Colombo, on 25 April 2006. He was 75 years of age, but died in harness while employed as consultant to the Cashew Corporation.

Vamadeva lost his mother when he was two years old but the love and care his elder siblings and father showered on him compensated in some measure for the absence of his mother. He had his early education at the Anuradhapura Holy Family Convent and later at St. Joseph's College, Anuradhapura. He then joined St. Joseph's College Colombo for the Advanced Level studies

and entered the University of Ceylon, Colombo. After graduating with an Arts degree in 1954, he joined the English editorial board of the Lake House group. It was during this period he stood as my bestman at his elder sister's wedding. In 1956 he was selected for the post of Divisional Road Transport Officer and was posted to Jaffna where he continued until the post was suppressed by the then Finance Minister, Dr. N.M. Perera in the course of re-structuring the Public Service. However, Vama was placed in Class III of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. The post had its prestige as well as its risks. Motor car examiners generally were highly controversial yet influential persons. To have managed such officers in one's own home town amidst the overwhelming demand for driving licences, needed plenty

of tact, patience and diplomacy. The fact that Vama did that exceedingly well for six years without public protests or censure from his superiors, illustrates the intelligence and resilience he possessed in his capacity as a capable public servant managing a regional office. He was found alternate employment as Assistant Commissioner of Agrarian Services in Anuradhapura. He continued in this post for the next three years after which he moved higher as Deputy Commissioner of Marketing in Colombo. It was during this time, he wrote the extremely competitive examination for selection to Class 2 of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service and passed very creditably in the first attempt with consummate ease. From then on there was no looking back for Vama. He caught the attention of the Public Service Commission and cabinet ministers. When the post of Commissioner of Marketing fell vacant, he was chosen and cabinet approval too was given. In this capacity he performed exceptionally well. After a few years, he was appointed Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Trade and later to the Ministry of Transport which posts he held until his retirement from public service. Vama was so well known as an impartial, loyal, capable officer that successive governments appointed him to various posts - Chairman of Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Authority, Chairman of Fertiliser Corporation, General Manager of Urban Development Authority, Consultant of the Cashew Corporation, Consultant of Elders Unit of Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare. He enjoyed his work to such an extent that even after his sons sponsored their parents and got them permanent residence status in the United States of America, he chose to remain in Sri Lanka. He went annually to the States on short holidays to ensure the validity of the residence status. He did so purely because he loved to live and work for his country.

The part his wife Vimala played in his success story was quite considerable. Apart from being a full-time working woman, she raised their four children and looked after her husband in a loving, caring home environment. She was the ultimate wife who demonstrated her love and affection to her husband at all times. Her failing health during the past few years, gave Vama a lot of concern and he feared that she might predecease him. Even during his last days, she was herself in the intensive care unit of the same hospital. The children for their part fared very creditably in their



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Divya Kasturi
(disciple of Udupi Lakshminarayana)
with accompanists from Sri Lanka

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Saranya Ravindran
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chosen professions and made their parents proud.

The numerous tributes (both verbal and written) that followed his demise will remain a permanent testimony to Vama's greatness as a capable, loyal public servant, a true friend, an understanding, compassionate employer and above all an exceptional human being. He had a special place in his heart for the less-paid workers and went out of his way to

listen to their problems and to help them as best as he could. Although a good, practising Hindu, Vama had a great fascination for the Buddhist philosophy as is evidenced by the choice of names for his sons.

Vama leaves behind his beloved wife Vimala, his loving children: daughter Premini Surendran and sons Siddhartha, Rahula and Ananda and their families, an elder brother three elder sisters and

a younger sister and a host of close relatives and friends. To his wife and children his loss is indeed so sudden and very profound that the void could never be filled. Their only consolation could be that they had their finest hour with him.

May his soul find eternal Peace at the Lotus Feet of Lord Nataraja.

K.Jeganathan
Western Australia

UK TAMIL PAGES - 2006

A Review

At a time when information technology has brought the whole world in one's own finger tips, it is nothing but appropriate for the UK based "Tamil Pages" to have linked the Tamil community spread far and wide globally through its 768 page well documented and colourful edition of a world of information for ready reference with a diversified coverage. This rare type of publication is user friendly in the sense that it has an alphabetically arranged category index and advertiser index which makes it a child's play to choose from about 2000 organisations and about 70 different sectors ranging from education, medical, construction, computers to religion, travel services, car sales, charity organizations, groceries to restaurants and whatever more one wants.

It is a praiseworthy effort that was started over a decade ago, sustained it for so long and to have brought out this attractive and colourful 13th edition to benefit not only the 160,000 Tamil residents in the UK but also to serve the 150,000 Tamils spread all over Europe and it is a much sought after publication in countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and Sri Lanka. The coverage given to eight major European countries with location maps and the special Sri Lankan showcase introduced this time makes it a meaningful publication specially for visitors, tourists and the business entrepreneurs.

Another noteworthy feature in the publication is that it has done proud to the Tamils in bringing out congratulatory messages from ten Tamil councillors/ Mayors which go a long way to show how the Tamils have integrated well with the community in the land of their choice, gained the confidence locally while maintaining and sustaining their traditional cultural values.

The three editors need to be congratulated and given all the encouragement and support from the Tamil community at large for a worthy publication well accomplished.

V.Sivasupramaniam
Seychelles

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AUSTRALIAN NEWSLETTER

Tamils, both in Australia and New Zealand are increasingly gaining recognition in the public domain and it is evident from none other than the array of recognitions bestowed on to members of the community. Auckland recently honoured Mr Thilliar Varnakulasingam for his community activities, while New South Wales honoured Messers N Mahesan and A Venkatraman for their contributions to the community during the seniors' week in Sydney.

Auckland's Tamil Community Development Council in collaboration with Auckland City Council organised a seminar on "Barriers and Challenges for Tamil Parents in New Zealand" and the guest speakers included New Zealand's Minister of Ethnic Affairs Hon. Chris Carter, Parliamentarian Dr Richard Worth and Families Commission's Chief Dr Rajen Prasad.

It may surprise some to know that New Zealand's next Governor General would be none other than Judge Anand Satyanand, who has a Indo-Fijian background and of Tamil speaking paternal ancestry with roots in Chennai. Since the advent of the British Empire 166 years ago, Judge Satyanand is to become the thirty-fifth representative of the Sovereign, in a land that seems unflustered with Monarchy unlike her gargantuan neighbour across Tasmania.

Melbourne's suburb of Rockbank recently witnessed a grand foundation stone laying ceremony for the Kundrathu Kumaran Kovil, while Adelaide's Flinders University inaugurated it's Hindu Chaplin with the appointment of an ardent Murugan devotee Dr Carl Vadivella Belle for the position. Auckland's New Zealand Thirumurugan Temple commemorated the sixth year of consecration with grand sangabishekam ceremony recently.

New Zealand's encounter with nature is diverse as she sits above an area of the earth's crust where two tectonic plates are colliding and records more than 14,000 earthquakes a year; but only about 150 are felt above the ground. A magnitude five earthquake hit central New Zealand during May, shaking the nation's capital, Wellington. Also, a massive earthquake earlier during the month with a magnitude of 7.8 that rocked Pacific island of Tonga, triggered tsunami warnings and panic evacuations in some parts of New Zealand.

- Sivasupramaniam Sitsabesan

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