



## தமிழீழ விடுதலைப்புலிகளின் சமாதானச் செயலகம் Peace Secretariat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

16<sup>th</sup> September 2005

### **Recognising the Lankan Peace Process? Role of the International Community**

Recognising the concern and overwhelming support rendered by the European Union and the international community at large in resolving the long standing racial conflict with a history of oppression in the island of Sri Lanka, we wish to bring to your attention the realities pertaining to the changing political landscape in Colombo. We place these facts before you by virtue of our position, both as equal partners in the Cease Fire Agreement of 2002 and as the Tamil peoples' declared representatives through the popular mandate in the General Elections of 2004.

The bedrock of the CFA being confidence building, normalcy in the life of a people affected by two decades of war and progressively moving towards negotiations that would provide a political resolution and, it is shocking to find that Colombo is moving in the opposite direction. The incumbent Prime Minister, you would have observed, is engaged in entering into hard line pacts with extremist political entities to do away with the internationally supported post-tsunami joint structure, advocating the continuance of a Unitary form of government that is totally inappropriate for the resolution of the racial conflict, to name a few. You are also aware of the fact that the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister and many other Sinhala formations engaged in electoral pacts are shaping up adversary positions against Norway that is working with commitment and unique patience in resolving the racial conflict. It is our intention to highlight the fact that these positions tend to nullify all sincere efforts undertaken to resolve the conflict.

Proper implementation of the CFA became an absolute necessity in the wake of 'orchestrated violence and killings'. LTTE insisted on proper implementation of the CFA through the facilitators in view of the growing discontent and frustration of the Tamil people in the context of non-implementation of the government's obligations as the responsible party in the CFA and to clear its name in the wake of unfounded allegations relating to killings. Venue for the discussion was to be Oslo. Colombo rejected it and LTTE opted Kilinochchi as the alternative for reasons of security. In such a deadlock situation, Colombo Airport has been suggested as a venue for the talks.

Conceptually, parties to a cease fire that have not had a dialogue on a one-to-one basis for quite some time for reasons that stalled the peace process, necessarily need a venue that would provide the congeniality and conducivity to both, one that would be an ideal ice breaker. LTTE members passing through Colombo Airport on transit and an LTTE delegation sitting in session for serious political negotiations are altogether different. Changing political situation in the south and the security situation notwithstanding, Colombo Airport or for that matter any other place in the south does not provide the feeling of ease that a venue common to both the parties would provide. Armed groups with masters who have political agenda,



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hired killers, underworld gangs and military deserters are aplenty in the south and it is not feasible for LTTE to engage in discussions in such an environment. It is also our studied opinion that talks in such venues would not bring out any fruitful results.

In fact, when the Sri Lankan government that was the party per-se to the CFA was in power and there did not exist such serious security threats and violations of the CFA in permitting proliferation of armed groups as is being done now, political negotiations were always conducted outside Sri Lanka. The mistrust that has reached its peak between the parties, further dictates the necessity to select a venue common and comfortable for both the parties to engage in serious political discussions.

Talks on improving the implementation aspect of the CFA, some may opine, is not a serious political discussion, but the ground realities are otherwise. LTTE being portrayed as the 'violinist' engaging in serious crimes is a creation of the government. The Sri Lankan military that keeps armed groups for its clandestine sabotage activities against the LTTE and a government that pays scant respect to the CFA clause 1.8 that prohibits armed groups are matters that need a political decision making at the top level that would improve conditions on the ground.

The Sri Lankan government's relentless attempts in seeking international sanction on the LTTE as a 'terrorist' organisation, makes us strongly suspicious of the real intention. This, for all intent and purposes, is a well-planned strategy to scuttle the peace process

Successive governments in Sri Lanka, in order to justify their discriminatory and oppressive governance mode vis-à-vis the Tamil people, are making use of the internationally hated 'terrorist' stamp on them. Looking back into the post colonial political history of this island, one finds that it is the Sinhala ruling elite that started 'state terrorism' against innocent unarmed Tamils in the mid fifties, in 1958 precisely, when they asked for their due share in power through devolution or federalism. Tamils were killed and beaten up and driven away from the south. The terroristic oppressive measures the Sri Lankan government let loose on the Tamil people under the cover of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) have been all registered with many Human Rights organisations and the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

State terrorism was nakedly seen in many pogroms against the Tamil people after 1958, so much so that the Tamil people, out of frustration and helplessness, made use of their franchise to mandate for secession in 1977. The entrenched constitutions of 1972 and 1978 removed all what could be called 'safety arrangement for minorities' in the 1948 constitution and the state forces ruthlessly dealt with Tamil democratic opposition, leading to Tamil youths taking up arms against the oppressor, first to defend themselves and then to drive away an army that is alien to the Tamil people and occupying their homeland. It is this armed struggle that, over time, expanded itself as the bulwark of Tamil National defence.



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In this context, the Tamil people and the LTTE have a message to the international community: Identifying a nation of people who had their own identity and sovereignty in this island when it came under colonial rule, is very essential to contextualise the artificial amalgamation of the two nations, making the Tamils an artificial 'minority' in the new dispensation. This has to be read with the abrogation of the various peace agreements reached in the past and the artificially minoritised and numerically dwarfed parliamentary representation the Tamil people have in the parliament that is guided by an entrenched constitution enacted without Tamil participation. One can, without any hesitation, decide to call this a 'rogue state' and the cacophony of Tamil bashing in the parliament and outside substantiates it. Collective Tamil thinking voiced by the LTTE in the international arena is not a pleasant matter for Colombo and hence the intransigence in the venue for discussion.

Ground realities notwithstanding, Colombo expects that the international community exert indiscriminate pressure on the LTTE. This pressure, the Sinhala ruling elite believes, would weaken the Tamil cause and we trust that the international community is aware of it. If the international community complies with what Colombo intends, then the Tamil people are made to feel being left alone in their struggle for justice. A people who opted for secession through popular vote in 1977, respect the sincerity of the international community in its support to the peace process. The unilateral cease fire and the commitment to the current CFA - unproductivity vis-à-vis the peace dividend notwithstanding – and the flexibility exercised during formulation of the Joint Mechanism for post-tsunami humanitarian delivery are all positive moves that the LTTE considered appropriate to express its respect for the international community's efforts.

The Tamil people expect therefore that the international community recognise their struggle for the reasonableness it deserves and exercise balance in pressurising parties to a conflict. No move of the international community should push the Tamil people to the fringe of frustration and it is all the more important to keep a people, the stakeholders, intact with the peace process. In this context, we believe that it is inevitable that the international community initiate meaningful steps to bring home to the government of Sri Lanka the need to be just and fair.

LTTE Peace Secretariat,  
Kilinochchi  
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