

## **International Seminar: Envisioning New Trajectories for Peace in Sri Lanka**

Zurich, Switzerland 7 -9 April 2006

Organized by the Centre for Just Peace and Democracy (CJPD)

in collaboration with the Berghof Foundation, Sri Lanka

### **Session 4: Dynamics of the Peace Process**

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#### **Why a Muslim Perspective to the Peace Process?**

Historically the Muslim Community has never been a warring community that has stood aggressively against any structure of governance. This is not to say there has not been turbulence but following the tenets of Islam, it has upheld peace and unity. However, the popular global image that has percolated through to Sri Lanka in some places, is of a violent terrorist born of the Al Qaeda. The majority of the Muslim community if not all, refer to themselves as Sri Lankan and they find it strange that amidst today's complexities that prevail in the Island that their fate has become exclusively the concern of the community. An issue is looked at from many perspectives and I am reluctantly faced to look at it from the Muslim perspective because of the reason quoted above

The Sri Lankan voice chauvinistically considered, is the majority voice shows little interest in the fate of the minorities in spite of the truism, that a majority is judged by the treatment meted out to the minority. I for one was always on national issues but after March 2006, I find that I am forced to give voice to the Muslim issues because of the isolation, neglect and disregard of the problems of the Muslims in the North and East.

I regret the time taken to explain my position.

#### **Some Issues**

Talking of the CFA it refers to the affected Muslim as an indirect group. The fact that Muslims are primary stakeholders has been ignored. This fact needs to be recognized and clearly delineated and addressed otherwise it could spill over and affect adversely the peace in the East.

A special delegation for direct contact and communication, security and certainty of life needs to be discussed since living has become difficult. An environment cannot be fashioned out of the air. The necessary atmosphere has to be created out of co-operation and coordination – framework for constructive negotiation. Carved out to guarantee security to proceed with the livelihood activities and protect their economic activities. Human security is of paramount interest.

#### **Track II and III – Concerns**

Discuss problems of mutual interest to both the North and East. As Kumar Rupasinghe says 'existential problems of a beleaguered population'.

Human security

Resettlement and reconstruction

Confidence building measures

Land

Power sharing arrangements

Building sustainable democratic institutions

Representation

Minority rights

Protection of Human rights of all, specially the minorities  
What sort of delegation?

### **Criteria**

People of the community, topmost concern  
for consultation and communication

Should be sincerely interested and feel that they have an ownership. If not, included could be frustrated.

Many different people – Civil society, religions, youth and media

Muslims from the South too have a stake

To be as inclusive as possible as/or more radical action could emerge as many disappointed young people could mar the process.

This engagement should be on purely a humanitarian level where one group of insecure citizens needs another group to discuss life living in a spirit of adjustment or effective and fair attitudes of compromise (give and take).

The ideal in this context would be to go to meetings and discussions with an open mind without an agenda.