IPKF atrocities on civilians

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Massacre at Point Pedro

The recent massacre of civilians at Vellititurai by the IPKF is not an isolated incident. In July and August, two other civilian massacres occurred at nearby Point Pedro. Express Correspondent RITA SEBASTIAN visits Vellititurai and Point Pedro and gives an exclusive report through eyewitness accounts on how the peacekeepers turned into murderers.

As we walk down the sandy lanes of Vellititurai, now largely deserted since almost half of its population has fled to the hill country in the north of the island, the sight of the few remaining houses is令人触目惊心. When she heard the firing she and her five children jumped over the wall and sought refuge in a house further down the lane. What they found was blood and destruction. As the shooting was over the burning was the house shell of her house. A few yards away, the documents and money in the sack of the Raj Bhak had been burnt to cinders.

Raj Bhaks home of Sarabathan Selvendra, a chartered accountant who fled Colombo after the July 1983 communal riots and went to live in his ancestral home in Vellititurai, where he took over the chairmanship of the Citizens' Committee, we documented evidence of what really happened in Vellititurai, that August.

Selvendra, aged 42, was killed along with his wife and four children. They were killed in their own homes. The bodies which traditionally no Hindu woman would do.

Sudheera Devi and Malahaksini were among the women who had to do this. They came upon them behind the hilly front gate of one of the houses, where on that August 26 they were widows widowed of their husbands by each other. The men they were married to died in the civil war.

On 26th August, a four-year-oldhardtudda Sandamappa was a driver, and his brother Velumayum a labourer. Sunaheddevee weeps as she tells you her story:

"When the soldiers came into the compound they fired at the house, set fire to the ear and then came into the kitchen, into which we had all run. As one of the soldiers pulled my husband into the yard, my mother and I held on to his hands and tried to drag him back. The soldiers just didn't heed our pleas, and pushed us aside. My daughter was killed by the same bullet that killed Suvalumayum, the two are still on the missing list. Feared missing, 43 injured, 122 houses and 45 shops, ten cars, 50 bicycles, 175 fishing nets and fishing gear destroyed.

The Vellititurai Citizens' Committee is one of the very few Citizens' Committees in the Eastern Province, which has membership from the original eleven to three.

In the last three to four months there were no incidents in the area, says Mr Selvendra, "only a few incidents, but not of the magnitude of the LTTE. It was more of a minor band of LTTE ambushing the area."

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In another house, five sisters watched their 18-year-old brother, Nadarajiv, being brutally down. Fourteen-year-old Umbadee was witness to yet another scene of horror:

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