

## LTTE urges Norway to initiate steps to restore normalcy

Noting that the Tamil people have been highly perturbed over the brutal rape and the murder of Tharshini Ilayathamby in Punguduthivu, and the military-unleashed violence on the peaceful demonstration where the Vice Chancellor of the Jaffna University was attacked and a lecturer was shot, has created "tension, panic and uncontrollable civilian unrest," the Political Head of the Liberation Tigers, Mr. S.P.Thamilchelvan has called for meaningful steps on the part of the Norwegian facilitators and the International Community in a letter addressed to the Norwegian Ambassador, Mr. Hans Brattskar on Wednesday. "The international community has a moral obligation to prevail upon the government to pull back its forces into the barracks and bring about normalcy in the life of the peace loving people," the LTTE Political Head has told the Norwegian Ambassador.

### Assassination is a Blow to the Peace Process - Tamil National Alliance -



The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) accused the Sri Lankan state for the assassination of Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham. TNA said that the assassination raises serious doubts in regard to the genuineness of the Government's commitment to the honest and purposeful pursuit of the peace process.

"We consider it our duty to point out that the assassination of Mr. Pararajasingham, a Tamil leader unequivocally committed to the resolution of the Tamil question by peaceful means is a serious blow to the credibility of the peace process," the Leaders of the Tamil Parliamentary alliance said. "The assassination of Mr. Joseph Pararajasingham has occurred at a critical time in the peace process."

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## LTTE firm on venue, Co-chairs "committed and impartial"

*TamilNet, December 24, 2005*

"The Tamil leadership is firm and will oppose Colombo's effort on imposing geographical limitations and preconditions on the venue of talks on the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and thereby alienating the Liberation Tigers from European countries," the LTTE Political Head Mr. S.P. Thamilchelvan told media after a two-hour-long meeting with the Co-Chairs' representatives held in Kilinochchi Saturday. Head of the EU Delegation to Sri Lanka, Ambassador Julian Wilson, speaking to the media, reiterated the Co-Chairs statement on Monday and urged the parties to "start talks on Ceasefire Agreement's Implementation immediately," adding that Co-Chairs were "committed" and "impartial."

Head of the EU Delegation said they had a good discussion with the LTTE, passed firm messages, and emphasized that the Co-Chairs remained committed and impartial to helping Sri Lanka achieve the goal of reinvigoration of the peace process.

The LTTE Political Head, welcoming the Co-Chairs' initiative to visit Kilinochchi and to listen to the Tamils' concerns told the media that he explained that Tamil population has reached its limit of patience after the brutal rape and murder of the twenty-years-old Tharsini Ilayathamby in Punguduthivu, and attacks on unarmed students and staff of Jaffna campus.

Mr. Thamilchelvan said that rape by the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) troopers in Punguduthivu and the attempted cover up of the incident by dumping her body in an abandoned well have raised the spectre of past similar crimes against women, including Sarathambal, Krishanthi and many more young Tamil women who were raped and murdered, and the Chemmani graves where many mass graves of disappeared Tamil youths were found.

During the period of Ceasefire and when the world is concerned with enforcing the rights of women and children, Sri Lanka Government cannot create the culture of impunity where the security forces can get away with rape, murder of women and attacks on academics including the Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna. Tamils' reaction to such crimes will inevitably turn violent, Thamilchelvan said he told the EU delegation.

The hostile acts by the Sri Lanka Army and the Sri Lanka Navy must cease and Colombo should take meaningful steps to contain the situation by entering into the talks on the implementation of Cease Fire Agreement without delay and without politicizing the issue of venue, LTTE political head told the media.

## Withdraw armed forces from civilian inhabited areas in NE- TNA

*TamilNet, December 20, 2005*

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) in a statement tabled in parliament Tuesday demanded the Sri Lanka government to withdraw all armed forces from all civilian inhabited areas in the North East. TNA further called the government to take disciplinary and legal action against all members of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces who are responsible for the attack on Tamil civilians in Jaffna district in the last several days.

## Disarm paramilitary, stop Claymore attacks - SLMM

*TamilNet, January 13, 2006*

The Scandinavian truce monitors, who condemned the Claymore attack on Sri Lanka Navy personnel in Chettikulam on Thursday, have blamed the Government of Sri Lanka emphasizing that the current situation also stems from "the fact that alternative armed elements have been able to operate freely in the East" in Sri Lanka Army controlled areas. While urging Colombo to "face up to its responsibility" to disarm the paramilitaries, the truce monitors said that the LTTE involvement in Claymore attacks cannot be ruled out. The SLMM appealed to both the parties to come up with firm confidence building measures with the "truthful aim of reaching a peaceful solution."

## Join hands to arrest spread of violence- EU Commissioner

*TamilNet, January 12, 2006*

Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations, European Commission in a message issued Thursday said that inspite of the escalating violence "Sri Lanka's leaders may yet be able to build on to pull back from the brink: it is the profound desire of the people of Sri Lanka for peace," and added that "it is imperative that the government, other political parties and the Tamil Tigers heed the call of the people and join hands to arrest the spread of violence prevailing in the north and in the east."

## "Sri Lanka Marxists rap Norway minister, attacks escalate

*AFPCOLOMBO30 dec.05 -*

The main Marxist backer of Sri Lanka's president has asked him to reconsider the role of a key Norwegian peace mediator as fresh attacks left at least five more security personnel wounded.

Norway's International Development Minister Erik Solheim issued a similar warning and urged the parties to return the negotiating table, but his remarks drew the ire of the Marxist JVP.

The Marxists slammed Solheim over his remarks that Colombo and Tamil Tiger rebels should stop a debate over the venue and get on with talks to salvage their truce.

"Mr. Solheim should realise that he is not a governor of a colonial Sri Lanka," the JVP said in a statement. "Hence, this person has no right, whatsoever, to issue commands pertaining to the Sri Lankan government."

The JVP, or People's Liberation Front, which provides crucial support for the government of President Mahinda Rajapakse, said the Colombo administration should "pronounce discontent on the serious matter pointed out by us".

"It is the main responsibility of the president and the present government not to allow such personnel to undermine the honour and pride of a sovereign state," the JVP's two-page statement said.

Sri Lanka's former president Chandrika Kumaratunga in a New Year message asked the authorities to act with restraint in dealing with the violence and condemned the "callous acts of crime" that had gripped troubled regions.

## Lanka rejects LTTE demand for Oslo talks

*PTI Wednesday, 21 December , 2005,*

Colombo: Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse on Wednesday rejected the Tamil Tiger rebels' demand to hold talks in Oslo, the capital of peacebroker Norway, and said the government was ready to go to any Asian venue for the parleys on upholding the fragile ceasefire.

"I am against going to Oslo. There is no change in our position. We are ready to go to an Asian venue. Japan has already offered to host the talks. I welcome that. The problem is that some people still have a colonial mentality and want to go to the West. I think the LTTE will also have to accept this and have the talks in some Asian country," Rajapakse told reporters.

*For News updates and Tamil perspectives:*

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## Rebels condemn attack on Norwegian monitors in Sri Lanka

*The New York Times* JANUARY 15, 2006

NEW DELHI Nordic officials entrusted with monitoring a fragile cease-fire in Sri Lanka have become the target of attack for the first time, with one of their vehicles being blown up in their compound.

No one was wounded in the blast, which occurred late Friday at the base of the Norwegian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission in the eastern town of Batticaloa. A spokeswoman for the mission, Helen Olafsdottir, said it was too early to say who was responsible for planting the explosives under the vehicle or whether the monitors would continue to patrol the area. "We haven't taken any decision on whether to close down the office," she said. "We will assess the security situation."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam said Sunday that they were "extremely disturbed and concerned" about the attack, Agence France-Presse reported from Colombo.

"We are very relieved that no one was hurt in this attack," the Tigers said in a letter to monitoring mission, AFP reported. "We would like to express our strong condemnation of this distressing attack on unarmed peace monitors whose presence has been invaluable for the people of this island."

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Christian prelates meet LTTE in Kilinochchi

*TamilNet, December 31, 2005*

Bishops and Senior Clergymen from different districts across Sri Lanka met with the Liberation Tigers leadership in Kilinochchi Peace Secretariat at 11.45 a.m. Friday. Discussions focussed on exploring ways to return normalcy to the NorthEast which has witnessed increasing levels of violence in the last few weeks, sources in Kilinochchi said. Prelates expressed their deep desire that peace return to NorthEast. "We told the prelates the how the Government of Sri Lanka's refusal to comply with the provisions of the CFA, has affected the lives of the people who have been displaced from the High Security Zones for more than a decade. People are frustrated and dejected by the inaction of the Government during the last three years of peace in bringing normalcy to NorthEast," Thamilchelvan said talking to the press after the meeting with the Clergymen.

"Peoples' anger will subside only when rights violations, harassment and unprovoked attacks by the Security Forces on civilians stop. If the Church takes constructive efforts to communicate to the SLA on the futility of their recent acts of violence, we will provide our full co-operation to these efforts," Thamilchelvan further said he told the priests.

### Jaffna Catholic hierarchy mourns the death of Pararajasingham

*TamilNet, December 29, 2005*

The Bishop of Jaffna and the priests belonging to the diocese expressed profound sadness at the loss of Joseph Pararajasingham and said the act was unjustifiable and unacceptable to men of good-will. "Perpetrators of this inhuman act will, one day, stand trial in the presence of the creator," Bishop of Jaffna Thomas Soundaranaygam said in his message.

### Lanka gets radars from India New Delhi, Dec 28,

*IRNA India-Sri Lanka-Defence*

India has provided Sri Lanka with two indigenously developed military radars on the eve of Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse's maiden visit.

The transfer of the radars, to enable low-level detection of fighter aircraft, marks the resumption of non-lethal military aid after five years.

The transfer adheres to the India-Sri Lanka draft defence cooperation agreement that does not encourage Colombo to opt for a military solution to the Tamil issue, a media report said

here today.

India agreed to supply the radars after Pakistan began taking interest in filling the void in Sri Lankan military supplies.

Former external affairs minister Natwar Singh made the formal offer during his visit to Colombo earlier this year as India felt uncomfortable with the idea of having Pakistan-installed surveillance equipment near its shores.

## World Bank drops five loan commitments to Sri Lanka

*LAN Colombo, December 26*

The World Bank has recently dropped five loan commitments to Sri Lanka amounting to a massive Rs. 21 billion (US\$213.7 million) raising many an eye brow, the Weekend Standard newspaper reported (standardnewspaperslk.com).

They were on port efficiency improvement (US\$64 million), urban settlement improvement (US\$60 million), power sector restructuring (US\$40 million), postal sector reform (US\$37.2 million) and Sri Lanka statistical capacity building (US\$12.5million).

## India should keep eye on Sri Lanka - CPI

*ColomboPage News Desk, December 27, 2005*

Dec 27, Colombo: The Communist Party of India (CPI) says India should keep a close watch on recent political developments in Sri Lanka.

CPI National Secretary D. Raja told Indian media, "The disturbing developments, including the killing of Tamil legislator Joseph Pararajasingham [on Sunday], would have an impact on India and the government should tread cautiously by properly assessing the situation."

He also said, "The CPI wanted the ceasefire and peace talks to continue for solving the rebel problem in Sri Lanka."

## Tamil party to form alliance with LTTE

*Dawn COLOMBO Dec 19*

A political party representing the Tamil community of Indian origin in Sri Lanka's plantation sector has agreed to forge a new 'broader' political front following talks with the LTTE leadership, party officials said on Monday.

The senior leaders of the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC), a political party-cum-trade-union, last week travelled to the Tamil Tiger controlled Kilinochchi district in the north to hold talks with the Tiger leaders, party members said.

## Muslim platoon in the army?

*BBC Saturday December 31*

Muslim United Liberation Front (MULF) leader Mujiber Rahuman told the BBC Sinhala service on Thursday that the violence against Muslims in the East of Sri Lanka can be contained only if the Muslims can "look after their own security".

"State security forces have proved its ineffectiveness to assure the security of Muslims in the East," said Rahuman pointing out that several Muslims have been killed in the past few weeks.

He said, "It is futile trying to find out who is behind these killings, as it won't save Muslim lives".

The MULF leader said that Muslims were not enthusiastic about joining the armed forces. This was due to 'an atmosphere that does not fit our culture and religion', he said.

However, he said that 'Muslim youth will be prepared to enlist once that problem is addressed and a separate Muslim platoon is set up'.

## Tamil parties oppose defence ties with Sri Lanka

*IANS 30 Dec 2005 Chennai*

Two allies of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in New Delhi from southern India have urged the central government not to sign any defence treaty with Sri Lanka.

A resolution adopted at a meeting, organised jointly by the UPA constituents Marumalarlchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) and Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) here late Thursday night, said any military help to Emerald Island would harm Tamils living in the island.

"Rajapakse will use any treaty with India to unleash violence against Tamils," the parties alleged.

"Defence ties with Sri Lanka will also hurt the interests of the Tamils living all over the world," they said.

## Killing of MP:Mourners Blamed The Government

*Sri Lanka Reuters Dec 29, 2005 By Peter Apps*

- A slain pro-rebel politician was buried in eastern Sri Lanka on Thursday as mourners blamed the government for his death and international monitors said the country may be sliding back into civil war. The government blames Tamil Tiger rebels for a string of attacks on soldiers that have stretched a 2002 truce to breaking point. But supporters of Joseph Pararajasingam, a member of parliament for Tamil National Alliance -- the Tigers' political proxies -- said they believe the army or government-backed paramilitaries gunned him down at a Christmas mass.

"My father was well known internationally," the dead man's son David, a supermarket manager in London, told Reuters.

"By cutting him off, they thought they could cut off the Tamil peoples' cries. My father has always been a voice for the LTTE and the Tamil people," he said, using the acronym for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

## Attacks deepen distrust between north S. Lankans and army

*Reuters Sri Lanka, Jan 6*

Tension and distrust, between soldiers and civilians are growing in Sri Lanka's northern army-held Jaffna enclave, with a spike in allegations of abuse by troops as fears rise of a return to civil war with Tamil Tiger rebels.

Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission said on Friday that complaints against the army have grown since dozens of troops were killed recently in a series of suspected rebel attacks on the peninsula.

"After those attacks, we have been getting more complaints," said the commission's regional coordinator, Rohitha Priyadarshina, a member of the Sinhalese majority working in a town where almost all are Tamils.

"Some report missing people, some were arrested by the army."

Other residents have reported being beaten up at army checkpoints, he said.

Of nearly 30 complaints of missing people, the commission was able to trace the individuals in all but four cases. Their families said they had all been taken by the army.

The military says Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, who have threatened to resume the war unless they are granted wide autonomy in the north and east, are trying to goad the army into over-reacting to win international sympathy.

"They shoot at us and hope that we will fire back," said one officer. "But we do not fire if there are other people in front of us. We only shoot if we can see the target."

Army officers say they are receiving intelligence about the rebels from residents and assert that 75 percent of the local population opposes the Tigers.

But many residents said they resent what they see as an army occupation. They feel sidelined economically by the southern Sinhalese and want to administer their own affairs.

RAPE, HARRASSMENT, THEFT

The rebels, the military and local civilians all say some families, mainly those with relatives in Tiger areas, have fled Jaffna. But estimates vary greatly.

Aid workers say the number of people leaving is likely very low, while officials estimate it is a couple of hundred families or less.

The Human Rights Commission says it has received complaints that the Tigers are recruiting child soldiers and torturing people. But on the streets of Jaffna, it is the army that is blamed for beatings, rape, harrassment and theft, particularly in the wake of the recent spate of attacks on troops.

"The violence is entirely instigated by the army," one local man told Reuters. "If they continue behaving like this, war will come. It looks as if, more than the LTTE, the people themselves will rise up and fight. We will definitely offer our support to the LTTE."Â

"I would definitely blame the military for all the misdemeanours that are happening," said an elderly man outside a Jaffna shop on a street that bears the scars of past fighting. "When someone does something, he scarpers (flees) and so it is the innocent person who is arrested and suffers."

## Sri Lanka exploring buying Chinese weapons

*Associated Press, Wed January 11, 2006*

Sri Lanka is considering the purchase of Chinese-made guns for its navy just days after an explosives-laden boat slammed into a patrol craft, killing 13 sailors, a news report said Wednesday.

The report follows the strongest-ever warning by United States that the Tamil Tiger rebels resist any resumption of their armed struggle for a separate homeland, with Washington making a veiled threat that it would give strong backing to the Sri Lankan government in the conflict.

The Defense Ministry was not available to confirm the report, but Beijing has in the past been a major weapons supplier to Sri Lanka.

## Para Military and SL Armed Forces : The secret probe

*sunday times(SL)> 25.12.05 Situation Report*

**Nine days before Mr. Haukland's report (30.03.2005) to the Peace Secretariat, the SLMM District Office had also sent its headquarters in Colombo a report. Dated March 21, this report referred to the Karuna camp in the village of Thivuchchenai. It also referred to a report made to the District Office by then GOC of the Army's 23 Division at Welikanda, then Brigadier Vajira Wijegunawardena. He had referred to a shooting incident near the village. This is what the office of SLMM's District 5 in Batticaloa said in its report to its own headquarters in Colombo:**

"Along A 11 Road on the way from Valaichchenai to Manampiriya, DO 5 (District Office 5) could observe an increased number of SLA checkpoints (approx 6, compared to normally 2). DO5 further followed the road from Sewanapitiya junction through Muttugala to Thivuchchenai approx. 7km north, where we stopped and asked villagers at five different places about the location of the alleged Karuna camp. They all acknowledged the presence of the camp, located in the Thivuchchenai, besides giving the location of a SLA army post in the village.

"Approx. 300m before the alleged Karuna camp, we asked at the said SLA army post (3 soldiers) about the location of the Karuna camp, and were informed that the camp was just around the corner.

"As DO5 continued a few hundred meters, passing through one unmanned checkpoint, a total of 20 men partly in civilian and military looking outfits (on both sides of the road), approx. five (5) with arms and one (1) armed man (45-50 years old) in full combat gear could be observed. Upon returning, another unmanned checkpoint was seen at the end of the village.

"When leaving the area, two men on a motorbike (passenger in military trousers/bike no.

363990) is following the DO5 vehicle, stopping at the nearest SLA army post, approaching the soldiers. Upon seeing our vehicle stopping next to the same SLA soldiers, they quickly move to the nearby shop. It was obvious that they did not want to be seen with the SLA.

Approx. 2km away from the alleged Karuna camp, DO5 met with a high speeding dark red Nissan van with the SLA Army marking in the front window, heading to the direction of Thivu chechenai (approx. 10:00am)

"When returning to DO5 office, HOD (Head of District) was contacted by somebody presenting himself from the "Army HQ", asking where we have been and what we have seen. No detailed information was given."

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Detailed Reports on the human rights situation in north east of Sri Lanka

[www.http://www.nesohr.org/](http://www.nesohr.org/)

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### Sri Lanka: Amnesty International concerned about escalation of violence

Amnesty International is appealing to all parties to halt the killings, abductions and "disappearances" being reported daily from the north and east of Sri Lanka.

Over one hundred people including around 40 civilians and 60 security forces personnel have been killed in a month of bloodshed.

Amnesty International is appalled by the news of the killing by unidentified attackers of Member of Parliament Joseph Pararajasingam, while he attended mass at St Mary's Church, Batticaloa on Christmas Eve, said Purna Sen, Asia-Pacific Director at the organization.

This was followed soon after by the killing on 2 January of five high school students from Sri Koneswara Hindu College and St Joseph's College in Trincomalee. Although the army first claimed they were killed by a grenade that the students were carrying, following a post mortem it was revealed that the students had been shot, three of them in the head. The President has ordered an inquiry into the killings.

Earlier, on 16 December, a young Tamil woman, Ilayathamby Tharshini, was raped and murdered in Punguduthivu and her body dumped in a well, near a Sri Lanka naval base. Amnesty International is very concerned about an increase in reports of the sexual abuse of women, said Purna Sen.

On 4 December a Sri Lankan government administrative officer, Mr A L M Faleel, from Kathankudy in the Eastern Province, was badly injured in a shooting allegedly carried out by the LTTE. He was taken to hospital in Colombo where he later died of his injuries.

Amnesty International is urging the government of Sri Lanka to institute independent and impartial inquiries into these killings and bring those responsible to justice. The organization is also appealing to the LTTE to abide by its commitments to uphold international humanitarian law.

At least ten people are reported to have "disappeared" following arrest by the security forces in northern Sri Lanka in the last two months. Amnesty International calls on the government to ensure full and impartial investigations into these reports of "disappearances" in order to prevent this heinous human rights violation re-establishing itself as a pattern in Sri Lanka.

In addition, the organization is extremely concerned at reports that at least 250 families have fled the Jaffna peninsula in the last few weeks, as the population fears a return to full scale war.

The deteriorating security situation will also drastically effect aid and relief operations to those displaced by the tsunami and by years of conflict who see no hope of returning to their homes.



## Press freedom under threat in Jaffna International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)warns

President of The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Christopher Warren, in a statement issued Thursday, warned that the "clamp down on media freedoms in Jaffna following incidents of journalists being beaten, arrested and news paper offices being searched," is just the beginning which will result in a total clampdown.

Excerpts from IFJ statement follows:

According to an IFJ affiliate in Sri Lanka, the Free Media Movement (FMM), the search was a direct result of an escalation in violence in Jaffna in the past few weeks, which has resulted in the deaths of a number of soldiers, citizens and separatists.

The FMM and the IFJ fear that the media will become a target as a direct result of the increase in violence due to the four daily Tamil newspapers in Jaffna, including the Namathu Eelanaadu's editorial support of Tamil nationalism putting them in ideological opposition with the military.

"It is essential that the role of journalists and the media is respected as independent from the conflict," said Warren.

"Intimidation of journalists such as the searching of a newspaper office is an attempt at intimidating the media against a pro Tamil nationalism editorial stance," said Warren.

## Protest against arbitrary arrests

*BBC06 January, 2006*

Hundreds of peace activists and trade unionists gathered in Colombo on Friday urged the authorities to stop violence against civilians.

The protest against 'arbitrary arrests under Emergency Regulations' was organised by Western Province Peoples Front (WPPF).

Stressing that the Tamil people do not need another war, WPPF leader Mano Ganeshan urged the authorities to let the Tamils in the capital to live without harassment.

## Journalists to demonstrate against Emergency Regulations

*TamilNet, January 11, 2006*

Media organizations including Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association, Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance, Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum, Media Employees Trade Union Federation and Free Media Movement, in a press release issued Wednesday, said they are planning to demonstrate in front the Fort Railway Station Thursday protesting against the Emergency Regulations that allows Sri Lanka Security personnel to detain and harass journalists.

## TNA accuses Security forces of killing Tamil youth in Trinco

*TamilNet, January 03, 2006*

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Tuesday charged that the State armed forces have killed five Tamil youths in Trincomalee town and injured two others. "The five youths killed came by their death as a result of gunshot injuries. The terror of the State's armed forces has been unleashed against the Tamil people. It would be futile for the State to think that the Tamil people can be suppressed in this way," TNA said in its press release issued Tuesday.

## Free Tamil women from fear of rape- Sithamparanathan

*TamilNet, January 03, 2006*

International community should condemn the acts of sexual harassment and rape by the Sri Lanka security forces on Tamil women and urge the Sri Lanka Government to vacate the

military from Jaffna, said Ms Pathmini Sithamparanathan, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarian for Jaffna and a social activist, in a letter sent Tuesday to Ambassadors of Co-chairs and other European countries in Colombo.

excerpts of the letter follows:

Two young women from Malusandi in Vadamadachi have lodged complaints with the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission on 02.01.2006 about attempted rapes by the Sri Lankan armed forces.

The women said that on 01.01.2006 the Sri Lankan armed forces cordoned the area where their home is located and while several soldiers were standing watch outside their home some of the soldiers entered their home and attempted to rape the two women. The two women have fought off the offenders and managed to escape.

Jaffna peninsula has come under severe military atrocities in recent times. Tamils, especially the women and children are pushed into a state of fear. This situation must be condemned by everyone with humanitarian concerns. We urge that they take all actions in their capacity to change this situation.

The rape and murder of Tharshini of Punguduthivu has made a deep wound in the minds of Tamil women. They are struggling to recover from this.

## STF fired at students in Trinco: The Sunday Leader

*TamilNet, January 08, 2006*

The execution style killing of five Tamil students, all under 20 years of age, on Monday at Dock Yard Road in Trincomalee town, was allegedly carried out by "a team of Police Special Task Force (STF) commandos," said the Situation Report column of Sunday Times in its 8th January Sunday edition. The paper further said the deployment of the STF was ordered by "a retired police official who has now been named as an advisor in the Defence Ministry," and the order was issued during the period "when Defence Secretary Gothabaya Rajapakse was away in India accompanying his brother, President Mahinda Rajapakse."

The paper added that "even if a dispute continued over how the incident [killing of students] began...there was no debate that there was gun fire. There was something highly disturbing too. With little or no knowledge of the senior armed forces officials in the Trincomalee district, a team of 24 STF commandos led by only a Chief Inspector had been ordered for deployment in Trincomalee. Responsible for this, The Sunday Times learnt, was a retired police official who has now been named as an advisor in the Defence Ministry. He is reported to have called upon the police commandos to act tough against terrorist elements."

The advisor referred to by the paper is former Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, H.N.G.B. Kotakadeniya, a hardline Sinhala Nationalist who was appointed to the advisor position by Sri Lanka's President Rajapakse.

"The Sunday Times learnt that a Chief Petty Officer of the Navy rushed to the spot with some sailors from one road. He met up with a three-wheeler. A Sinhala mother and her child were heading towards the town area. He let them pass before reaching the spot. By then, a team of Police Special Task Force (STF) commandos from a neighbouring location arrived at the scene along another road. They allegedly opened fire," the paper said.

"The Defence Secretary lost no time in politely reminding the retired policeman that all such actions [ordering STF deployments] in the future should be with his express approval. He told him to confine his role to offering advice and not to work at cross purposes," the paper said.

In an interview that appeared in Sunday Leader of 1st January Mr Kotakadeniya "had expressed the need to re-capture Government land in the north now held by Tiger guerrillas - a suggestion that a war should be waged. The publication of this interview prompted a response from former President Kumaratunga who is now holidaying in the United Kingdom," Iqbal Athas Sunday Times' defense analyst disclosed in his Situation Report column. Ms Kumaratunge had allegedly told Health Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, referring to the Kotakadeniya interview that President Rajapakse has "messed up" things.

## Rights Group faults AG for Chemmani prosecution delays

*TamilNet, January 05, 2006*

Noting that "six years after the exhumation of the graves however, the police were only able to tell the court that as there have been no instructions forthcoming from the attorney general's department, they have been unable to proceed with the case," the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), in a press release issued Thursday, accused the Attorney General's Department of "failing in its duties promptly and effectively prosecute perpetrators of serious crimes," and urged the AG's Department to "immediately initiate effective legal proceedings on the basis of the Chemmani exhumation."

"The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) understands that after the exhumation, the forensic experts submitted their reports to the attorney general's department and steps were also taken for DNA identification of some of the uncovered remains. As a result, two of the bodies were positively identified.

"Under any other justice system, the next step would be the filing of indictments at a high court. Six years after the exhumation, the Sri Lankan justice system has kept the case pending in a magistrate's court with no indictments being filed. Furthermore, the office of the attorney general, the agency responsible for such matters, has given no reason for the long delay in the proceedings. This situation raises radical concerns regarding its accountability and responsibility," the press release said.

Noting other serious failures of effectively prosecuting perpetrators of serious crimes in cases including Bindunuwewa massacre and Embilipitita disappearance of 48 school children, the AHRC said, "Yet another failing of the attorney general's department is the prolonged delays in justice found throughout the country, an issue the AHRC has raised previously. These delays in court trials as well as due process amount to a clear betrayal of justice. Being primarily responsible for criminal prosecutions, the attorney general's department cannot escape its duties by blaming other agencies for the delays. In the case of Chemmani in particular, the responsibility for the lack of progress in the last six years lies solely with the attorney general."

AHRC called for the "establishment of a commission of inquiry, headed by senior members of the judicial and legal professions, as well as other eminent persons, to review the work of the attorney general's department."

The Asian Human Rights Commission is a regional non-governmental organisation monitoring and lobbying human rights issues in Asia. The Hong Kong-based group was founded in 1984, the Organizations website said.

## Senior Editor accuses SL President of issuing verbal threats

*[TamilNet, January 13, 2006 06:05 GMT]*

Citing the complaint made by Editor of the Sunday Leader newspaper Mr. Lasantha Wikramatunge to the Inspector General of Police alleging that President Mahinda Rajapaksa threatened him with abusive language over the telephone, Free Media Movement (FMM) in a press release issued in Colombo Friday said, the incident "serves as a sombre reminder of the insecure and dangerous situation that journalists in Sri Lanka has to face."

## RSF dismayed by arrests of Tamil journalists

*[TamilNet, December 21, 2005 03:14 GMT]*

Noting the escalating political tension in Sri Lanka where a Tamil journalist was arrested and three assaulted in a two-day period, Reporters Without Borders (RSF- Reporters Sans Frontieres) in media release said, "Instead of calming down the situation, the police and the army are carrying out unjustified arrests that only stir up resentments. The security forces and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) should guarantee the safety of Sri Lankan journalists whatever their origin."

## International community: no double standards, please!

*(Editorial of the The Northeastern Monthly (edited in Sri Lanka ) January 2006)*

The assassination of Joseph Pararajasingham, MP (TNA-Batticaloa District) was an abominable act, carried out by gunmen while the victim was at midnight mass in the early hours of Christmas day. The plaudits that are pouring in on the life and work of the slain MP bear ample testimony to the immense contribution he made to Tamil nationalism, for which he laid down his life.

The state-controlled media, and sections of the privately-owned media in Colombo that slavishly repeat what their 'contacts' in military intelligence, or the military spokesman want them to say, declared the murder was committed by the hand of the LTTE.

The truth of the matter however is plain. Pararajasingham was killed in a high security area literally crawling with soldiers and policemen. How the assassins could have escaped from being challenged by military personnel present in the vicinity, unless of course they were specifically told not to apprehend the culprits, defeats the imagination.

In all probability this act of violence was committed by the security forces and/or pro-state Tamil paramilitary groups. It is an instance of the state forces silencing a voice that was keeping the international community posted about the atrocities committed by the government upon the Tamils.

The murder also shows very clearly the overall intentions of the pro-government forces. They were not going to refrain from even killing a member of parliament elected by voters of the east. The murder is a stark reflection of the grotesque intentions of those behind the killing, which appears to be opposed to finding a political solution to the Tamil National Question, but want to kill instead.

Pararajasingham has been described as a 'political moderate,' which is usually how parliamentarians advocating highly controversial political issues are described. Though this journal does not necessarily extol the virtues of an activist because he or she is a 'moderate,' preferring to believe instead that definitions of 'moderate' and 'militant' is a counter-insurgency tactic to divide a liberation movement, Pararajasingham's killing will act as a litmus test on the sense of justice and fair play among the various stakeholders in the Sri Lankan conflict, including the international community's.

When Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, who was generally described as a 'moderate,' was murdered in Colombo, the European Union led the rest of the international community in castigating the Tigers and took the drastic step of imposing a travel ban on them in the countries comprising the EU, while threatening to proscribe them fully if they did not mend their ways. This was despite the LTTE pleading ignorance of any involvement in the murder.

The EU ban was met with indignation by the Tamil people in Sri Lanka and overseas who felt it was an unfair imposition considering the number of cadre the LTTE had lost due to the wanton killing perpetrated by the Tamil paramilitaries and the Sri Lankan security forces.

Today, Pararajasingham lies murdered. He too was an MP – in status no less than Kadirgamar. What is the international community going to do? The assassination of course has been condemned by various countries and international bodies. But the Tamils are heartily sick of hearing words of condemnation when Tamil leaders are laid low by the hands of assassins.

If the killing of Kadirgamar was met with sanctions by the international community on those suspected to be behind the assassination, it is only but fair that the political forces behind the death of Pararajasingham too should be similarly dealt with.

Otherwise, the impression among the Tamils that the international community does not deal even-handedly between the two parties to the Sri Lankan conflict would only get more deeply entrenched, making political solutions all the more difficult to negotiate.

## Sri Lankan foreign minister discusses war, not peace, in Washington

*(K. Ratnayake – World Socialist Web Site jan10.2006)*

As Sri Lanka rapidly heads back to open civil war, Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera was in Washington last week for three days of high-level talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other defence, treasury and state department officials.

Officially, both sides reiterated their commitment to "peace". In bland diplomatic language, a spokesman for Rice declared that she and Samaraweera had discussed "the current status of the Sri Lankan peace process and the importance of strengthening the ceasefire". Samaraweera told the US media that he had assured Rice that Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse was "still willing to walk that extra mile for peace".

No one should be taken in by any of this. Since Rajapakse narrowly won the November 17 presidential poll with the backing of Sinhala extremist parties, there has been a dramatic escalation of violence in the North and East of the island as well as a provocative crackdown by security forces on the Tamil minority. More than 100 people, including military personnel and members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), have been killed in ambushes and assassinations in less than two months.

Even as Samaraweera was in Washington, there were widespread protests in eastern Sri Lanka over the cold-blooded killing of five Tamil students in the town of Trincomalee on January 2. Last weekend's Sunday Times revealed that the special task force (STF) commandos responsible had been stationed there by a presidential defence adviser—in all likelihood, H.M.G.B. Kotakadeniya, a former police deputy inspector general and leading figure in the Sinhala chauvinist Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU).

The Sri Lankan military has implausibly denied any involvement in the killing of Tamils and LTTE members, either directly or indirectly via closely associated paramilitary outfits. But a series of provocative attacks, including the assassination of a pro-LTTE parliamentarian Joseph Pararajasingham on Christmas Eve, has inflamed communal tensions throughout the island. In response, there have been ambushes of military personnel, the latest being the ramming of a naval vessel on Friday that killed 12 sailors. Like the military, the LTTE has denied responsibility for these attacks.

The prospect of meaningful negotiations between the Colombo government and the LTTE are bleaker than at any time since the breakdown of talks in April 2003. Despite the efforts of Norwegian facilitators, there is no agreement on where any meeting would take place, let alone what would be discussed. Rajapakse is demanding talks to "strengthen" the 2002 ceasefire—to the advantage of the Sri Lankan military. LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran called in late November for the government to propose "a reasonable political framework" to satisfy the aspirations of the Tamil people, or face renewed war.

In this context, it is inconceivable that Samaraweera simply exchanged diplomatic pleasantries with Rice and other US officials. The foreign minister undoubtedly pressed Rice for US backing, political and possibly military, as the island slides back to war. He probably reiterated the suggestion, repeatedly made in the chauvinist media in Colombo, that the US should support, if not actively participate in, Sri Lanka's "war on terrorism"—just as the Sri Lankan government has tacitly backed the US occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq.

In an interview with the right-wing Washington Times, Samaraweera was less diplomatic in asserting what the US should do. "Tea and sympathy are no longer enough," he told the newspaper. "The United States must realise they are not dealing with a liberation movement but a ruthless killing machine more dangerous than al Qaeda." The LTTE, he declared, was "the godfather of modern terrorism".

Washington has already outlawed the LTTE as a "terrorist organisation" and, during negotiations in 2002 and 2003, refused to rescind the designation unless the LTTE formally renounced violence and disarmed. Samaraweera, however, pressed the Bush administration to go one step further and ban the activities of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO)—an LTTE relief organisation that has been active in assisting victims of the December 2004 tsunami.

As the representative of a small South Asian country, Samaraweera was no position to insist on more than "tea and sympathy". But he repeated his message to anyone who would listen, including Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar and other Congressmen. Lugar assured the foreign minister that Sri Lanka had the "full support of the US Congress as it seeks to move the peace process forward".

### The US response

More significant was the Bush administration's response. In the midst of the escalating violence in Sri Lanka, Secretary of State Rice made no criticism—even in guarded diplomatic terms—of the provocative stance of the Rajapakse government or the actions of the military. Nor did she make any reference, even obliquely, to the communal agitation of Rajapakse's allies—the Sinhala extremists of the JHU and Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

Instead, according to a state department spokesman, Rice, after expressing "concern over the recent upsurge of violence" then "lauded the Sri Lankan government for its restraint in the face of the Tamil Tigers' provocations". She declared that the US remained committed to working with Sri Lanka "to defeat terrorism and to promote peace". Rice announced that state department under-secretary for political affairs Nicholas Burns would travel to Sri Lanka to "talk about facilitating peace between the government and the LTTE".

The direction in which the Bush administration is leaning is unmistakable. To "laud" the Colombo government for its "restraint," even as the Sri Lankan security forces are engaged in attacks, murders and repression, is only to encourage Rajapakse, the military and Sinhala extremists to go further. Rice's remarks come in the wake of a meeting last month of the co-chairs of the Sri Lankan donors group—the US, the EU, Japan and Norway—which showed a similar bias. Its statement urged the LTTE to "put an end to its ongoing campaign of violence" and warned of "serious consequences" if it failed to do so.

The Bush administration is no more committed to "peace" in Sri Lanka than it is in Iraq or Afghanistan. Having largely ignored the brutal 20-year civil war on the island, Washington only wants it ended now because the conflict threatens to destabilise a region in which US strategic and economic interests are growing. Not only is India an expanding source of cheap labour for American corporations but South Asia is adjacent to the key resource-rich regions of the Middle East and Central Asia.

The Bush administration has been fostering a close relationship with India—a fact that was reflected in Rice's remarks last Friday. She told the media: "The whole South Asia region I expect to be very high on my list of priorities. Enhancing the relationship with India will be extremely important." President Bush is planning to visit India later this year.

US support for the so-called peace process in Sri Lanka has always been a purely tactical means for gaining its ends. While US diplomats have insisted on the resumption of peace talks, there has been a steady stream of top US military officers through Colombo to enhance "cooperation" between the two countries. The Pentagon seized the opportunity following the 2004 tsunami to dispatch US troops for the first time to Sri Lanka, creating a precedent for future US military involvement in the island's affairs.

At present, with the US military embroiled in a quagmire in Iraq, the Bush administration is not in a strong position to plunge into a civil war in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, as the island slides back to war, US officials are obviously in the process of calculating their response. By turning a blind eye to the Sri Lankan military's provocations and berating the LTTE, Rice is adding more inflammable material to what is already an explosive situation.

Rajapakse appears to have quickly worked out which way the wind is blowing in Washington. Last weekend he seized on the sinking of the naval vessel to markedly toughen his stance toward the LTTE. "It is a great mistake if anyone thinks that our decisions can be altered by means of terror. The LTTE should realise that we are not deaf and blind. If they think so, the time has come for them to give up such thoughts," he declared.

This is not the language of peace, but of war.

## Issues: Implement CFA, or quit Jaffna

*(J. S. Tissainayagam Northeastern Monthly - January 2006)*

Ever since the LTTE's Batticaloa-Amparai commander, Karuna, decided to raise the flag of mutiny in March-April 2004, the east has witnessed an orgy of killing. A contest that began by intelligence agents of the two sides – the Sri Lanka military and the LTTE – targeting each other, escalated till any member of the rival's forces was fair game for the others' assassins. Today however, the exchanges have taken on a totally new dimension with the murder of Batticaloa District's TNA parliamentarian, Joseph Pararajasingham.

There was however a distinct change in the nature of the violence as well as its theatre of operation after the recent presidential elections. On the one hand, the nature of the violence took on a qualitatively different form with the Tigers using claymore mines to target the government's forces on land, while in the waters they surrounded a navy vessel and attacked it. Second, the venue for the most intense skirmishes shifted from the east to the north.

It has been stated before that the most important lesson arising from the nearly 100% boycott of the polls by the Tamil people of the north, is not that it was an undemocratic exercise, but that it was a very powerful demonstration by the LTTE of its determination to enforce its will on the civilian population three years after the ceasefire was declared and at a time when there was complacency, both in the south and within the international community, of war-weariness emerging among the Tamils.

It is also interesting to note that the boycott was enforced by various organisations that called themselves civic bodies, but which the south and the international community interpret as front organisations of the Tigers.

The almost 25 years of combat has led to certain patterns emerging in the way the government and LTTE engage each other: the LTTE attacks the military, and the military goes for the civilians. This has led to the build-up of a great deal of frustration and anger in the civilian population over the past three years, which is today at boiling point.

Against this background, the emerging battle plan appears to be: (1) urban guerrilla operations where the Tigers ambush vehicles transporting military personnel using mines, or assassinate them selectively and (2) civilian-based protests through strikes and other acts of civil disobedience that paralyse the government in the northeast.

What we are also witnessing in the northeast today is a consequence of another pattern that has etched itself in the Tamil mind over the past quarter century of war: the only language the south understands is violence. And if something needs to be said unequivocally to the regime in Colombo, it has to be accompanied by violence.

With successive governments baulking on implementing the contents of the CFA, this column has consistently argued for transforming the struggle to one which emphasises community participation through strikes, shut-downs, boycotts and picketing so that governance in the northeast would be paralysed. The logic of this is while it would not be an outright violation of the CFA it brings sufficient pressure to bear upon the government to understand the gravity of undermining the ceasefire.

In the September-October 2004 issue of *The Northeastern Monthly* this column said, "...Sustained non-cooperation, such as the hartals in the northeast have rendered dividends in the past. They could be tried out, especially if it affects communities other than the Tamils..." and in the November issue of the same year, "Meanwhile, concerted political action could be taken to disrupt the smooth functioning of government in areas of the northeast, especially nerve centres like Vavuniya and Trincomalee. Hartals have paralysed provincial towns before. Not only will it paralyse administration but the commercial interests that use the northeast to make tremendous profits."

Clashes between students of the University of Jaffna and the military on two successive days in December were compared to the Intifada of the Palestinians that was launched in the late 1980s. The Intifada was the consequence of Israel's disinterest in implementing the Camp David accords of 1978. Among the accord's provisions was establishing a transitional government in the areas occupied by Israel since the 1967 war and implementing a plan for self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But when Israel reneged on its commitments, backing it with severe repression and terrorising the civilian population in the area, it resulted in a popular outburst of violence that lasted years with civilians stoning and lobbing Molotov

cocktails at the Israeli army positions.

What is also important to note is that the Hamas was formed in 1987 as a consequence of the Intifada that has since continued to target the Israeli army and use suicide bombing as one of its main weapons of waging war.

Another model that could be compared with profit is the struggle in South Africa. Quoted below is an extract from this column on the black struggle against the apartheid regime that appeared in the September-October 2004 issue of *The Northeastern Monthly*: “An example of this is the ‘rolling demonstrations’ in South Africa. The violence unleashed by sections of the ANC was supported and enhanced by the civil disobedience and non-cooperation campaigns carried out by the blacks against their white masters. Strikes, pickets, go-slows and other actions crippled industry, agriculture, administration and normal, day-to-day life. Though the South African state responded to the campaign conventionally at first by using the law, police, prisons and the armed forces to overcome the resistance, it was no avail.

“This was because the South African economy and political institutions could not function due to the widespread civil disobedience and selective violence. The ruling classes were further retarded by the economic sanctions. Collectively, these measures took a terrible toll on the stability of the state. The pressure, assisted no doubt by the presence of Nelson Mandela, led to President F. W. de Klerk to agree to begin negotiations.”

It has to be said that Jaffna and the northeast in general do not form Sri Lanka’s commercial hub and sustained civil disobedience will not achieve the results it did in South Africa. But on the other hand, if shutdowns, boycotts, strikes etc. paralyse any part of a country, the governance, human rights and business related issues they throw up can be of great consequence to Colombo.

Concerted non-cooperation in the northeast has to be also seen in the context of agitation in Tamil Nadu against the Sri Lanka government. It could be said that for the first time since India became physically entangled in Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict by sending the IPKF, followed by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has there been such vocal denunciation of a regime in Colombo. It seemed to transport one back to the early 1980s, when political parties in Tamil Nadu competed with each other to express opprobrium at the Sri Lanka government.

But while violence and agitation have been upped to make the LTTE’s message to Colombo sharper, the question is: what is the reason for the agitation?

The LTTE has stated ever since the CFA was signed in 2002 that it wanted all the clauses of the CFA implemented thoroughly. After the Karuna rebellion, the emphasis shifted to a particular section of the CFA – Clause 1.8 of the document, on the disarmament of paramilitary groups, but there was no change in the overall objective of implementing the CFA in full.

But the latest increase in violence has been accompanied by a significant change in the demands attached to it. There have been rounds of handbills, signed by shadowy organisations, calling for the Sri Lankan military to quit Jaffna. In other words, the violence is not to tell the government that the consequences of not implementing the CFA would be bloodshed and mayhem. It is that if the CFA is not implemented the army would be forced to leave Jaffna.

Let us not forget that after 25 years of war, the maximum the Rajapakse government is willing to offer (devolution within a unitary state) is no different from what was promised in the Indo-Lanka Accord, which the LTTE rejected and fought on without a compromise for a separate state. A compromise was discussed leading to the Oslo Declaration to find a formula that would ensure internal self-determination through federal structures within a united Sri Lanka. But that is evidently non-negotiable as far as Rajapakse and his allies are concerned and hence, inevitably, the shift in the objectives of the Tigers.