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A canadian Tamil Rally

Funding Peace and Dignity

A Response to HRW report "Funding the final war"

The International Federation Of Tamils, IFT, wishes to assure the Tamil diaspora at the very outset itself that it could be proud of its determined and continued dedication to sustain the healthy existence of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka for over two decades. Jo Becker Report - "Funding the Final war"(dt.15.03.06) - using the high pedestal of Human Rights Watch, a great organisation, to hurl abuse and insult at the Tamil diaspora as a nation responding to LTTE demands out of fear, need not hurt its susceptibilities as a freedom-loving breed.



Tamil's rally in Greater Toronto city; Over 50 000 Tamil people gathered to show their strength and support to Tamil struggle

At the dawn of the twenty first century, there's no nation in the world other than the Tamil diaspora that knows more the value of peace and freedom, independence, fear of oppression, persecution, the loss of loved ones, loss of home and uprooting from one's own traditional homeland and yearns more for freedom from intimidation, whether from friend or foe.

Tamils who fled their country had a shaky start in cocoons of limbo called refugee camps in whatever country they found refuge. Uprooted and thrown to the mercies of the world, they thought themselves lucky compared to those kith and kin left behind to continue suffering at the hands of the oppressive Sinhala polity. It was this that urged them to consider it their duty to determine firmly that they should look after their own, suffering way back in their land.

The Tamil diaspora, in its early days watched with wonder and appreciation at the munificence of the International Community, IC, responding profusely to wipe out hunger in famine struck Ethiopia. It could not understand the politics at play when the IC, while rushing to help a nation smitten by natural disaster, turned a blind eye to the man-made suffocation of a nation, in the North-East Sri Lanka.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, successive governments, from J. R. Jayawardena's to Chandrika Bandaranayake's, fortified their territorial and naval barriers around the Tamil Homeland and imposed the draconian economic embargo including inhuman ban on medicine and essential food items expecting to starve the Tamils into subjugation and slow death.

The Report ("Funding the Final war" dt.15.03.06) using the high pedestal of Human Rights Watch to hurl abuse and insult at the Tamil diaspora as a nation responding to LTTE demands out of fear, need not hurt its susceptibilities as a freedom-loving breed.

Necessity was the mother of invention that brought forth the LTTE to defend the land, and a number of life-saving humanitarian institutions including TRO, to save people from impending death. While the LTTE was born from the womb of the land to ward off the Sinhala army onslaught, TRO was first evolved to bring order in the chaotic refugee camps in South India into which Tamils from Sri Lanka flooded first as they fled, following the 1983 pogrom. TRO's spirit soon transcended North-East the moment starvation from the economic embargo threatened to have its toll. It worked in parallel to a number of productive and rehabilitation organisations the LTTE had already structured in the war devastated zone for re-building.



A Tamil rally in front of EU office at Brussels

The efficacy of the support the Diaspora Tamils rendered to the LTTE and the TRO was justified beyond any doubt when the Tsunami struck the Asian coasts

From the very beginning, Tamil diaspora steeled its will to support LTTE in its struggle for the redemption of the rights of Tamils, and organisations such as TRO in their endeavour to save Tamils from starvation and death in the homeland. Therefore the will of the Tamil Diaspora to stay on track to support the LTTE and the TRO, never needed any coercion. To them, it is voluntary, obligatory and spontaneous; moral and spiritual; it is an ongoing process; perhaps difficult for a Jo Becker school of corrugated materialistic mind, to comprehend.

The efficacy of the support the Diaspora Tamils rendered to the LTTE and the TRO was justified beyond any doubt when the Tsunami struck the Asian coasts. An overflow of human kindness from the International Community flowed towards the victims, to be stopped, only in the case of Sri Lanka, at the border of North-East by an aid-embargo imposed by the Sri Lanka government, reflecting the innate abomination the Sinhala polity had towards the Tamil nation even at an hour of human peril, expressing to the world, loud and clear, the futility of forging of any kind of cohabitation, ever. Even the P-TOMS aid package proposed by the IC was shelved by Colombo. But the Diaspora Tamils did not hesitate to double their help and stood by their kith and kin back home. They strengthened the hands of the TRO in Europe and Australia, White Pigeon in the UK and SEDAN in Canada, perhaps an anathema to Jo Becker line of thinking, giving it courage to attribute malice.

Could Diaspora Tamils who love and respect LTTE and organisations like TRO that work for the emancipation of Tamils, be considered as living in fear? Could 90% of the 600,000 - 800,000 living mostly in the West, be mentally not healthy, then? Is some kind of quarantine for Tamils in the West being recommended by Jo Becker report? Is this report not a hyper bloated imagination, with no complaints to police in any western country of an epidemic of LTTE intimidations warranting?



Annual Cry For Freedom:
*Tamil diaspora in Europe seeks support for self determination
opposite UN office at Geneva*

ng action? Could the majority living in fear flock on their own in thousands to honour the martyrs on the Heroes day, every November? For example, in London, the ceremony drew large crowds into two huge stadiums in 2005; while in North America , four halls were packed to capacity to pay homage on the Heroes Day. In Switzerland, to coincide with the Human Rights Day, a crowd of 12,000 to 15,000 people from all over Europe had been congregating every year opposite UN Headquarters in Geneva, to express solidarity with the LTTE in its struggle for the emancipation of the Tamils. Could all these people be congregating out of fear or have forcibly been brought there? Never!

Jo Becker Report refers to people in the North-East living in fear of the LTTE. But could hundreds be leaving their traditional homes and moving to Vanni to seek protection from the LTTE, when army excesses become fearfully intolerable? Towards the end of 2005, at least in 10 towns, huge Tamil Resurgence Conventions were held. Could all these people have attended them out of fear? Would they have passed unanimous resolutions extending wholehearted support to the LTTE and asking it to lead them win their right to self-determination, if they were harbouring fear in their hearts? Never!

Jo Becker report very conveniently attributes all its sources to confined anonymity. It is either, "Human Rights Watch Telephone interview; or Human Rights Watch interview London / Canada; or E-mail communication to Human Rights Watch." No other report has been quoted. This

makes one wonder whether the name of a highly respected organisation such as Human rights Watch, has been abused and hijacked by an individual to write a convenient imaginary report and seek protection behind masked imaginary witnesses.

The writer of the report expresses horror at the condition of the place her favourite temple-trustee was allegedly made to stay in Vanni when he visited the island. Every building other than the ones newly built, is damaged and bullet-riddled there. People are living in these. In an area that suffered economic embargo and ban on medicine, insects and rodents are aplenty still. Finding a dead rat in the water-pot, in the morning is often a common occurrence. All that one does is to empty the pot, wash it well and fill it again. Perhaps the writer expects what is available in the West be made available for her client in the war-torn Vanni as well.

Another worthy client the writer of the report mentions by name for 'quality testimony', is not available at the moment for cross-checking as he is currently serving a sentence in a Swiss jail allegedly for running a forged passport factory and credit-card fraud. Most others surrounded with anonymity cannot be verified at all, regarding the alleged instances of intimidation by the LTTE.

Human Rights Watch is a much-respected organisation. It is a pity its image has now been tarnished by an ill-prepared report with fictitious characters and anonymous statements. Jo Becker, whose contributions in the past to Human Rights has a commendable place, needs to get back on track.

Ms Jo Becker, in this report, reminds us of an average theatre producer of the early twentieth century, capable of producing a series of plays with a subtle change from a base of a stock morale, stock theme, stock stage-props and stock actors just as a modern day chef in a fast-food service would do, providing a variety of dishes from a common base stock. She has been able to produce two quick stock reports on

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The Tamil Diaspora (North America, Europe and Australia) 'en masse' to respect the fallen Tamil Freedom fighters (National Heroes Day).

the same stock country, with the same stockpot bases in Canada and UK, using the same stock organisers and interviewees in both countries. She has used the same stock theme, but of course with slightly different flavours. But , what she has forgotten is a sense of accountability, if not towards the Human Rights of a downtrodden nation, at least towards a great organisation that has entrusted her with a responsibility. A person of such educational acumen , experience and ability to be parochial and to stoop so low is beneath her.

Tamil diaspora can rest assured that despite the circumstances in which it fled its shores, it has groomed itself well. As an expatriate nation, seeking asylum, it has conducted itself honourably. It has proved itself trustworthy and dependable. It has adapted itself to its new environment. It is law-abiding. It has given its new generation the right



LTTE Delegation to Geneva Talks received by Swiss Tamils

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exposure and education to assimilate itself in the new land. It has acted with responsibility towards the Tamil nation at home. Although the Jo Becker Report tries to undermine and insult the self-respect of an independent, fearless and responsible nation, it has also made the Tamil diaspora re-assess itself and learn it is on the right track. How democratically and healthily it is responding to Jo Becker Report is amply manifest in the recent intellectual deliberations of the young Tamil Canadians.

To all members of the diaspora who express their feeling of exasperation at the malicious comments expressed in the Jo Becker report, IFT wishes to assure that we will do our utmost to draw the attention of the International Community as well as Human Rights Watch and drive home the truth. More than any other nation in the world today, the Tamil People feel the pain of indignity, injustice, humiliation, and flight-in-fear while the International Community stood by, watching silently. Tamil nation is not clamouring an eye for an eye. It is crying out and loud for its right to reclaim whatever it has lost.