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Op-Ed Contributor
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Pity the poor Sri Lankan voter. As presidential elections loom on Jan. 26, the public is faced with a choice between two candidates who openly accuse each other of war crimes.

The current exchange of charges and counter-charges between retired Gen. Sarath Fonseka and President Mahinda Rajapaksa must be particularly confusing to those Sri Lankans who consider both to be war heroes rather than war criminals. Many from the ethnic Sinhalese majority feel that, regardless of the human costs in the last months of the long-running civil war that ended last year, both leaders deserve credit for finally finishing off the terrorist Tamil Tiger rebels.

With the Sinhalese nationalist vote thus split, the two candidates are focusing their energies on winning the votes of the country's minority ethnic Tamils — which is surely one of the stranger political ironies of early 2010. After all, both General Fonseka and Mr. Rajapaksa executed the 30-year conflict to its bloody conclusion at the expense of huge numbers of Tamil civilian casualties.

By early May, when the war was ending, the United Na-

tions estimated that some 7,000 civilians had died and more than 10,000 had been wounded in 2009 as the army's noose was being drawn tight around the remaining rebels and hundreds of thousands of noncombatants, who could not escape government shelling. The final two weeks likely saw thousands more civilians killed, at the hands of both the army and the rebels. After the war, the Tamils' plight continued. The government interned more than a quarter million displaced Tamils, some for more than six months, in violation of both Sri Lankan and international humanitarian law. Conditions in the camps were appalling, access by international agencies was severely restricted, and independent journalists could not even visit. Barbed wire and military guards insured people could not leave or tell their stories to anyone.

By the end of 2009, most of the displaced had been moved, and the nearly 100,000 remaining in military-run camps were enjoying some freedom of movement — important steps brought about mostly as a result of international pressure and the authorities' desire to win Tamil votes. However, a large portion of the more than 150,000 people recently sent out of the camps have not actually returned to their homes nor been resettled. They've been sent to and remain in "transit centers" in their home districts.

Now, put yourself in a Tamil's shoes, and decide whom to

vote for in the presidential election: Choose either the head of the government that ordered the attacks against you and your family, or the head of the army that carried it all out.

On Jan. 4, the Tamil National Alliance, the most important Tamil political party, made its choice and endorsed General Fonseka after he pledged a 10-point program of reconciliation, demilitarization and "normalization" of the largely Tamil north. There is some hope his plan might be a sign that top leaders realize that, after decades of brutal ethnic conflict, peace will only be consolidated when Sinhalese-dominated political parties make strong moves toward a more inclusive and democratic state.

What counts more than campaign promises, though, is what the winner actually does in office, and based on past performance, it is hard to imagine either candidate making the necessary constitutional reforms to end the marginalization of Tamils and other minorities — the roots of the decades-long conflict. Left unaddressed, Tamil humiliation and frustration could well lead to militancy again. While Sri Lankan voters face a difficult decision, for the international community, the choice is clear. Whoever wins, the outside world should use all its tools to convince the government to deal properly with those underlying issues to avoid a resurgence of mass violence. In the interest of lasting peace and stability, donor governments and inter-

national institutions — India, Japan, Western donors, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank — should use their assistance to support reforms designed to protect democratic rights, tie aid to proper resettlement of the displaced, and a consultative planning process for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged, overly militarized north. U.N. agencies and non-government organizations should have full access to monitor the programs to ensure international money is spent properly and people receiving aid are not denied their fundamental freedoms. In short, this means not giving Colombo any money for reconstruction and development until we know how it will be spent. And if we see funds not being used as promised, it means not being afraid to cut them off until. While there may not be much to choose between the candidates, the rift between General Fonseka and Mr. Rajapaksa — and the consequent divisions among Sinhalese nationalist parties and the renewed vigor of opposition parties — has at least put the possibility of reforms on the agenda. International leverage, correctly applied, could help expand this small window for change, leading to the democratization and demilitarization the country desperately needs to move finally beyond its horrific war and its bitter peace.

Chris Patten is co-chairman of the International Crisis Group.

Report from ATC New South Wales



The Australian Tamil Congress attended, participated and addressed the National Conference of the Socialist Alliance held at Sydney University on Monday 4 January 2010. ATC was asked to comment on the current Refugee Crisis.

Whilst discussing the refugee dilemma, ATC also put into context the ground realities in

Sri Lanka and the current political climate.

ATC discussed the IDPs and political prisoners in Sri Lanka; Sri Lankan government's complicity in war crimes; political asylum seekers and what they were fleeing from; the up coming Sri Lankan Presidential Election and the various candidates. We also discussed the current

global political climate including the latest US Senate Report which gives importance to US's trade interests over the Tamil people's human rights.

Meeting with the Hon Laurie Ferguson, MP

ATC's representatives met with Mr Ferguson, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship to discuss and highlight issues arose from a special visit to the Christmas Island by our representative.

The following main concerns were raised with the Minister:

1. Seeming confusion regarding the uncertainty of the 60 day processing period and the understandable yet harder security checks relating to this intake. We requested that

more clarification of the process be provided to the detainees.

2. Many Tamil refugees expressed their desire to learn preliminary English language from informal Tamil instructors with higher level of English knowledge before taking up the formal Adult Migrant English programs.

Emerging from our discussion Mr Ferguson sent a letter to Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, highlighting our concerns for necessary action.

Labor Party's Trivia Night fundraiser

Six representatives from ATC's political team attended the Labor Party's Trivia Night event held on 21st December 2009. ATC's participation was to show support by the Tamil community for the event and to establish a working relationship with the party.

Community Projects

Working with Refugee Support Group with detainees in Villawood

ATC's representatives celebrated *Thai Pongal* with Tamil refugees at the Villawood Detention Centre. ATC donated work books to a little boy in the detention centre who starts schooling this year, and some emergency assistance to a pregnant mother.

An 'Inpathamil Oli' radio was also donated to a family in detention which certainly made them feel connected to the outside Tamil community.

We would like to thank 'Inpathamil Oli' for continuing to work with us in helping the refugees.



Dublin Tribunal finds against Sri Lanka on charges of War Crimes



The People's Tribunal on Sri Lanka (PTSL) in its preliminary findings from the hearings from 14 to 16 January in Dublin has found the Sri Lanka government guilty of war crimes and also crimes against humanity.

The PTSL, chaired by Francois Houtart, also said that further investigation is needed on the accusation on Tamil genocide by the government during the last phase of war between the government forces and the LTTE.

In a related news BBC Sandeshaya said that Dr. Jude Lal Fernando, a member of the convening committee has told that even members of Sri Lanka military have provided the PTSL with evidence of war crimes.

However it added that the Sri Lanka government has denied the findings of the PTSL.

Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Prof. Rajiva Wijesinha, has described the tribunal as a 'Kangaroo court'.

Any substantial evidence

found by the US State Department would be looked into by the Sri Lankan government, he said, but it has no desire to respond to the PTSL.

The Tribunal also accused the international community, particularly UK and the USA of being instrumental in the break down of the peace process between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil Tigers.

The PTSL is an initiative by the Ireland peace process supported by the University of Dublin and Dublin City University.

The hearings were conducted in public as well as in camera to protect the identity of key witnesses.

The Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka welcomed the preliminary findings of the tribunal and urged Sri Lanka to allow the UN to conduct an inquiry into the war crimes and to release all internally displaced people and former combatants.

The Irish Forum said that long term peace and stability

can only be established on the basis of full justice and rights for all the inhabitants of the island.

Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka Press Release 18 Jan 2010

In Dublin today, 16th January, at 2.00pm the Peoples' Tribunal Chairman Francois Houtart read the preliminary findings of the Peoples' Tribunal on the war in Sri Lanka and its aftermath. There were four findings:

- 1: That the Sri Lankan Government and its military are guilty of War Crimes;
- 2: That the Sri Lankan Government is military are guilty of crimes against humanity;
- 3: That the charge of genocide requires further investigation;
- 4: That the international community, particularly the UK and USA, share responsibility for the breakdown of the peace process.

Harrowing evidence, including video footage, was submitted by eye-witnesses of the use of heavy artillery and phosphorous munitions, and of the continuous violation of human rights by military activity to a panel of ten international jurors over two days.

The Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka welcomed the preliminary findings of the Tribunal. Responding to the findings, the Forum issued the following five demands:

- 1: We call on the Sri Lankan government to allow the United Nations to conduct an inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated during the final stages of the war between the Sri Lankan armed forces and

the LTTE, and during the war's aftermath;

- 2: We call on the Sri Lankan Government to release all those being detained in concentration camps and the estimated 11,000 people being held secretly at unknown locations;
- 3: We call on the Sri Lankan government to end the use of extra-judicial killings, sexual violence, and the deprivation of food and water as weapons against the civilian population;
- 4: We call on the Sri Lankan government to end the suppression of political dissent by violent or other means;
- 5: We call on the Sri Lankan government to fully implement human rights for all citizens of Sri Lanka, and the political solution involving the full participation of the Tamil population, ending the systematic historical discriminatory measures of the Sri Lankan state against the Tamil people.

The Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka asserts that long term peace and stability can only be established on the basis of full justice and rights for all the inhabitants of the island.

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On behalf of the Irish Forum for Peace in Sri Lanka (IFPSL)
www.ifpsl.org

A complete report has now been released by IFPSL and can be obtained at this web location.

http://www.ifpsl.org/images/files/peoples_tribunal_on_srilanka.pdf

Editorial Team

Looking for the Pony in 2010

JANUARY 2010

by **Roy Ratnavel**

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There is an old story about a young boy who bounds down the steps on Christmas morning only to find the living room brimming over with horse manure. Ever the optimist, the boy finds a shovel and starts digging with enthusiasm. When asked why he seems to be so excited, the boy cheerfully replies, "With all this manure, there must be a pony in here somewhere!"

In a world full of geopolitics and national interests, thinking or commenting about the future of Tamils is challenging. With the moribund political climate in Sri Lanka – almost everyone in Tamil Diaspora is confused by what's in store for Tamils in Sri Lanka. I would argue that if you're not confused, you probably haven't been paying attention.

The optimists who predicted a sudden peaceful resolution got it wrong due to the peace talk euphoria of 2002. At the same time, the pessimistic prediction of an outright meltdown has come to pass. Currently optimists look a little silly. Recent pessimists' consensus among political forecasters is that the 'Eelam' moment will never arrive. This is partly a bet that with time the showdown with the Tamils will be resolved by Sri Lanka. It is also, as is the case with all forecasting, a guess – not a certainty.

What is for certain is that Sri

Lanka's financial health is in deep water. It is bankrupt and swimming against global economic current with a begging bowl in hands as a floating device. The current financial mess is compounded with double digit economic declines, rapid inflation, beleaguered government, and ballooning military spending. But with the help of conscienceless communist China, idealistic India and the world's most dangerous Korean – Ban Ki-moon – Sri Lanka has so far prevailed, leaving us Tamils with more anxiety and heartache. Between their anodyne oratory, and unsteady grasp of the Tamil freedom struggle; not to mention torrent of boringly predictable childish utterances, I found that I had been lulled to sleep.

Generalizing about the differences between Tamils and Sinhalese is about as rewarding as sticking your arm into a blender. This issue is just too rife with controversy, contradictory data, deep-seated emotion, manufactured fears, and political agendas of all kinds. But the meltdown of Sri Lanka and its ethnic cleansing tendencies has lately shed new light on this decade old and deeply contentious conflict, leaving us – as possibly the world – with the question, should the leaders of Sri Lanka be criminally charged for their unsavoury behaviour?

Regardless of the answer, Diaspora Tamils have a responsibility to care for and to protect our people, as the International Community –

especially UN, is inept at this. It all started when Sri Lanka's juvenile tactics and attributes were unbounded and unchecked, and Milošević types were allowed to run amok. As such, Sri Lankan atrocities were dialed up to unprecedented levels; preying on Tamils was outsourced without restraint which undermined the entire civil society, imperilling all, including the predator. World couldn't stop the carnage. It couldn't cure Sri Lanka's demons.

The claptrap bureaucrat Ban Ki-moon and his palsy brain, is famous for ignoring Sri Lankan atrocities; still can't boss up to the torture, rape and starvation of innocent Tamils, proving to us that he has all the characteristics of a popular politician: a horrible diction, bad breeding, and a vulgar manner.

As tens of thousands of Tamil refugees lingered under fire on a narrow strip of beach in Sri Lanka, Ban did nothing and then made a trip to war zone after war ended, issuing utterly forgettable statements and as such he has become a kind of accidental tourist, a dilettante on the world stage.

So UN isn't merely unhelpful to us Tamils – it's largely irrelevant. As a result the world is treating us Tamils like the proverbial tree falling in the forest with no one around to witness its crash – if they don't really hear us, do we really exist?

We can make them hear us if we unite together under

the right platform – which of course requires money – and lots of it. As the old Chinese saying goes "If you have money you can make the devil push your grind stone."

I believe, more than money we need unity – which we lack. The events of this year in Sri Lanka should have certainly increased our ability to unite together – but it hasn't. Unity will always be a magical commodity that is difficult to attain and easy to lose, and its badly needed at this juncture of our history to help us avoid getting conned, because Sri Lanka is always prone to deceive others.

Similar to financial markets, the political arena sometimes rewards contrary thinkers handsomely. It seems this very strategy by Tamils needs to be explored – at least for now. "The world," as philosopher Wittgenstein once noted, "is non-stationary. It moves around, and it does so in ways that make prediction problematic." With Sri Lanka tiptoeing and tripping around humanitarian issues, the political situation appears now to have changed direction again, but this time for the worse, at least from the Tamils' perspective.

While we go through five stages of grief we have a responsibility to make things right, our collective behaviour of infighting to-date has been abysmally pathetic. We lose the freedom cause when we change the principles of our behaviour. In the post-war era we have become so far in the minority and as a result we have all become free agents. We fight and argue over esoteric concepts

Looking for the Pony in 2010 (Continued)

while stranded in reality gap – a reality of nightmare. We never should confuse our position with our best interest. Sometimes best way to protect our interest is to give up our position.

Conflicts are often like flying. Frequent fliers are used to turbulence. When the skies get a bit choppy, the captain asks passengers to take their seats and fasten their seatbelts until he can find smoother air. Occasionally, when the ride gets very turbulent, the captain asks the cabin crew to take their seats as well — even if they are in the midst of serving dinner. With the kind of political turbulence in Sri Lanka, if we were flying a jumbo jet, one would now ask the cabin crew to take their seats and fasten their seatbelts. While we all still expect and hope a safe flight — it could be an unpleasant one for a while.

That said, with the exception of Sri Lanka's recent arrogance of seeking advantage by creating the impression that it is willing and able to deal with Tamil uprising rather than find ways to co-exist, all of the above is basically old news.

Even if we do have to wait awhile for clear signs of a resolution, the Tamils throughout the centuries have shown a remarkable capacity for muddling through hardship. Despite unprecedented setbacks, a nagging political problem, a sharp increase in misery, and a wave of non-reality-based media propaganda that decimated our collective confidence, Tamils still have a chance to make things right

despite the harshest inconvenience on record.

It is tempting to say that our failure in solving the Sri Lankan conflict is nothing new or that Sri Lanka has progressed into a fascist state — while both points would be correct, but neither is compelling. The recent developments, the resulting state of misery, the onset of war-fatigue is worrisome to Tamils living behind the lines and away from the conflict zone. Despite these lurid aspects, we must remain united.

Regardless of varying opinions and silly squabbles, what binds us together is greater than what drives us apart, and if enough people believe in this idea and act on it, then I reckon we might not solve every problem, but we can get something meaningful done. This challenge does not build our character as a race, rather it reveals it. Strength does not just come from winning all the time. Our struggle develops our strength as a community and shapes us. While we currently go through hardship, if we unite together and decide not to surrender, that is strength.

Despite our earnest efforts, to our dismay IMF approved the loan to the thug state. Seems to me if there is a moral point of no return IMF long since passed it. This shows we have no representation — confirming our long held belief that defending Tamils is Tamils' responsibility.

We are friendless Tamils facing annihilation. We are on our own. We need to

tackle Sri Lanka economically and optically. We shouldn't give drowning Sri Lanka a life-raft, rather a garden-hose in the throat. We need to get aggressive with our "No to Sri Lanka" campaign coupled with effective lobbying work to optically make Sri Lanka look as bad as South Africa during apartheid era and isolate them. So how can Tamils keep buying Sri Lankan products? It's unconscionable.

We cannot continue to belly-ache or commiserate about the world's indifference towards us if we are not willing to speak up forcefully for the silent victims. We can't expect much when are wearing Sri Lankan made garments while our stomachs are full of Rajapakse's groceries, tea, and planning a vacation on Sri Lankan Airlines to Sri Lanka. Such actions are hypocrisy at its apogee. The splattered blood from Tamil victims of Sri Lankan tyranny will stain our conscience forever if we have any part in supporting the Sri Lankan economy.

Brave Tamils paid the ultimate sacrifice. They did not bear the shame. They resisted, sacrificing their life for freedom, justice, and honour; and now rest of us are forced to live in a world without them. In that process the Diaspora Tamils have borne witness to the cold destruction of a venerable struggle. Perhaps the evasive human beings of the bureaucratic kind who sought to end the lives of these brave souls might get a glimpse into the devastation that they have sponsored which the survivors face each day behind barbed

wires.

Decades ago we started on a journey to free our people. It is now clear that we still haven't reached the destination. Their state of freedom is as precarious as when we started — or worse. Without anyone's help we are like a soloist with two strings left: "Money and Unity." Sri Lankan tanks and guns can't take that away from us. Nor we will ever forget what they did to our kith and kin. We should be united not divided, determined not delusional, and dedicated not distracted. After such carnage of epic proportion is levied on our people, if we can't unite, turn the page, bury the hatchet, hit refresh on our browser of past then I am afraid we do not deserve freedom.

There are people who tell me Tamil freedom struggle is now a hopeless quest. Maybe our continuous efforts may help our people, maybe not. I can't speak for everyone in this regard nor have the foresight to predict the future of Sri Lanka's Tamils. I can however speak for myself. I can tell you that by witnessing my peoples' courage and humility and their willingness to be freed, I've learned the dignity of being loyal to something Tamils collectively believe in, and holding onto it. Above all else believing without question that one day my people will be freed and it will take me home — once and for all. In that, I feel like that young boy on Christmas morning looking for the pony.

Perceptions and Destinations

By Ram Mohan

We are all moving towards perceived destinations. But the perceptions are as many as there are minds and each perception will have many destinations, one of them ultimate and the others intermediate. Life is about finding a common perception and a common destination and then working towards them. Being common alone, even if it is among the majority, is not sufficient justification. The APPLICABILITY (even if it is not acceptable) to ALL is the critical requirement to be justifiable. A simple illustration is that it is not justifiable for anyone to perceive the ownership of 100 acres of land because then there is not enough land for ALL. The need for applicability for all is evident from the laws of nature and by implication evident from the laws of Divinity since the Source for both sets of laws is the Same. There is no distinction or discrimination based on any individuality or group identity in the application of the laws of nature and hence of the laws of Divinity. If this fundamentality is reflected in the laws of society, then it will be much easier to “Live and Enable to Live”.

If the intermediate destinations are on the critical path to the Ultimate Destination, then working towards the first destination on the criti-

cal path as priority is relevant. This justifies or is justified by the position taken by Liberation Theology that liberation from political, social and economic oppression is the forerunner of the Ultimate Salvation. So even those who have different perceptions of the Ultimate Destination can get together and work towards an intermediate destination if agreement can be reached for that. This approach helps to find common ground for immediate action and also once the intermediate destination is reached, perception about the Ultimate Destination could change, hopefully towards better understanding.

The search for common perceptions and common destinations is handicapped by the many whose only perception is the perception for the survival of the day and among those who have the luxury of perceiving the wider picture, individualization is taking a deep root and understandably (though not appreciated) that is being encouraged by the social forces who fear collective action. Even peoples who were united in protracted revolutionary armed struggles for liberation, say from occupation, tend to become individualistic after the achievement of the objectives nor do they become automatically sympathetic to other peoples in their former situation. Also in an-

cient times when individualistic indoctrination of the anti social forces was absent, spiritual leaders found that individualism developed as egoism, is the main obstacle to reach the Destination of Ultimate Liberation.

The above are not surprising since other living beings engage in collective action by “instinct” and can be disrupted easily by external forces and any reaction to the disturbance is random. But in the case of man, any collective action, whether it is oppression or resistance, it is a conscious choice by intelligence or intuition and therefore is protracted.. Naturally when the objectives are achieved, individualism takes over. The only social revolutionary leader to recognize this was Mao Tse Tung and he promoted the Cultural Revolution. Though it was not a success as envisaged, it has certainly left an impression in History and most likely that impression will prevent the Chinese Revolution from following the path of the Russian Revolution though forecasts (of inevitability) cannot be made in the age of conscious choice. If the Chinese society corrects itself, as it has shown in some cases and steers the civilization forward, then Mao himself will be transformed from a social revolutionary

leader to a spiritual revolutionary leader.

Returning to the present, the individualistic indoctrination by the anti social, anti spiritual and anti scientific forces, whether in education, whether in sports, whether in production, whether in cultural competition or whether even in spiritual competition (really a contradiction in concepts or conceptual miscarriage) is likely to be the most calculated powerful and long term retardation to progress of any kind, social, scientific or spiritual. The consequence is strengthening of the statement made at the beginning that there are as many perceptions as there are minds leading to as many ultimate destinations.

The Ultimate Destination by definition is one that will not change and therefore the Truth which has only one description without any internal or external contradiction. THIS IS THE MERGER OF THE ENTIRE MANIFESTATION AS ONE. This can only follow a conceptual merger. i.e. the merger of billions of perceptions as one.

Thus we find ourselves separated by a gap that is as large as we can imagine between available and desirable both in material terms and conceptual terms. The conceptual gap influences the material gap and vice versa. In this age of conscious development, the conceptual gap needs to be reduced for the material gap or even the spiritual gap to reduce. As Marx said, it is

Perceptions and Destinations (Continued)

important to discuss the poverty of the philosophy before discussing the philosophy of poverty.

The evolution of man is characterized by language, technology and the collective spirit. In fact language and technology are expressions of the collective spirit. Neither language nor technology could have developed without the collective spirit. Further the full blossoming of this collective spirit is the basis of the ultimate Destination where the entire manifestation merges AS ONE. It is not surprising, therefore, that collectivism is at the core of the three fields of life, namely science, socialism and spiritualism. Spiritualism flourishes in group prayers and egolessness, science flourishes in teamwork and socialism flourishes in collectivism. Yet in spite of the natural perceptions of collectivism, team work and egolessness, individualism survives as a dominant perception because it is a cover for selfishness. Selfishness is not looking after oneself (which is self reliance) but rather expecting others to look after self and this is the basis for appropriating surplus (often made into surplus by compulsion or even coercion) values of others. Individualism as a base for independent perceptions is harmless as the perception can be changed when the context changes. But individualism as a cover for self-

ish appropriation of surplus value of others will never change unless selfishness is given up (this is seldom done voluntarily). The worst case of selfishness is expecting others to look after self without the self looking after the others. Individualism for independent perception is desirable (to eliminate errors in perceptions) but individualism for covering up selfishness is to be eliminated. This will help to reduce the gap between the available and the desirable, but easily said than done because what is desirable is subjective and influenced by the degree of selfishness which at higher degrees leads to oppression.

Though oppression is mostly associated with the exploitation and appropriation of the surplus values of others, national oppression, cultural oppression, racial oppression, linguistic op-



pression, intellectual oppression and the like are not uncommon. All forms of oppression need to be eliminated in the Ultimate Destination which is free from all types of contradictions. Naturally this cannot be achieved suddenly and hence the need for intermediate destinations. National Liberation, Independence of Countries, Political Liberation, Economic Liberation, Freedom from Exploitation, Communism, Fellowship with Beings, Merging with the Environment are some of the intermediate destinations and these are on the critical path to the Ultimate Destination of the Manifestation Merging AS ONE described above.

If Destiny is the path to the Ultimate Destination via the intermediate destinations, then destiny is tied up with Integrating Socialism, Science and Spiritualism with Sincerity, linking practice with knowledge, and extending all these to the peo-

ples at large without confining to the elite, resulting in the elimination of the differentials between manual labour and mental labour, between industry and agriculture and between the urban and rural environments.

In spite of the large gap at present as described above, it is encouraging that modern national liberation movements are operating on the basis of integrating socialism, science and spiritualism with sincerity and linking practice with knowledge. THE IMPENDING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS signal “either perish together or survive together” and more and more people are getting the message. The “WILL TO SURVIVE” will survive. The Ultimate Destination is desirable to all in the final analysis AND HENCE INEVITABLE.

“I have lost all wish for my salvation; may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls-- and above all my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the object of my special worship. He who is high and low, Saint and the sinner, the God and the worm Him, worship the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent, break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth nor death, nor going nor coming in whom we always have been and always will be one Him, worship; break all other idols “

Swami Vivekananda

A Young Tamil Australian Speaks his Mind

Though I was born in Sri Lanka, I have spent all but a few months of my life in Australia. Unlike many of my friends, I have been brought up shielded by my education and the influences of Western media to the realities of the lopsided scales of global justice. I had always believed in fairness and had the utmost of faith in the “West”. Never did I doubt that countries such as Australia would fulfil the same “global citizen” social responsibility that I had been instilled with my Australian education. Though I had never expected much decency from the state of Sri Lanka with its extensive track record of inhumanity throughout the past few years, never did I realise that it was not all that far ahead of many of the Western nations that claim to protect the not so fortunate population.

When the conflict in Sri Lanka began to escalate in early 2009 to catastrophic levels, my mother who had once lived in the North and had endured much as a Sri Lankan Tamil became very troubled. I comforted her and told her: Amma not to worry. She had no faith in the world but I assured her that the West would see the truth and that decent, civilised countries in Europe, the United States

and the Asia Pacific would come to the aid of the hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians caught up in the crossfire in Northern Sri Lanka.

When reports emerged that heavy artillery was being used in the “safe zones” killing tens of thousands of innocent Tamil civilians, again I told my Amma: not to worry. She had no faith in the UN, but I told her that Ban Ki Moon would see the hundreds of thousands of Tamils that set to the streets of the capital cities in just about every continent of the world. I told her he would see our placards, listen to the dozens that were on hunger strikes around the world, read our letters and take heed of our reports. He would have to accept that the Sri Lankan state was using cluster bombs and heavy artillery with no remorse targeting unknowing men, women and children, and would order the UN peacekeeping force to swarm in and put an end to the catastrophe that was escalating with each day.

Finally, when that shocking footage of naked men being ridiculed, made to kneel and shot in the head at point blank was screened on Britain’s Channel4 TV, I told my

Amma: I know life hasn’t always been fair, but not to worry. I told her that surely these videos were no different to the Al Qaeda execution videos from the not so distant past. As it was conducted by the very state that is supposed to protect the people, surely this was terrorism at its worst. I had no doubt in my mind that the United Nations would commission an investigation into War Crimes and bring those responsible for the death of thousands to justice.

Sadly, as my Amma predicted from the very beginning, the West never came, the UN offered no consolation for the millions of Tamils that mourned around the world, and as we have learnt recently, there will not even be a War Crimes Tribunal. Rather, the perpetrators of the war roam freely not only as key political figures in Sri Lanka, but as the ‘heroes’ that put an end to the war.

Around mid last year, after upwards of 20,000 innocent civilians dead and hundreds of thousands unlawfully locked up in concentration camps, I was nothing short of distressed. Reports emerged that Sri Lanka had been aided in its assault by the very same countries that I be-

lieved would take social responsibility to intervene to put an end to the bloodshed. Not only had I lost 20,000 of my brothers and sisters, not only had my extreme hatred of the perpetrators of this mass murder quadrupled, but I had lost faith in the very fabric of this world. Everything that I had been taught to believe in had crumbled. Every inch of politics where I searched for decency and humanity, I saw empty words and filthy bureaucracy. It enveloped me so much to the point where I stopped following the issues of Sri Lanka. I could not handle the disappointment week after week, the same sorry stories of death and destruction on one side of the world and the pain of devastating indifference on the other side.

Despite my utter disappointment that not one soul lifted a finger to aid the Tamil situation, during this period I did a lot of thinking. It was only towards the end of last year that I had, I guess, what could be called as an epiphany. I learnt, thanks to an astute activist by the name of Alpha Lisimba, a fundamental understanding of this world. The essence of this teaching is quite nicely summed up by former American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who once said:

A Young Tamil Australian .. (Continued)

"In the truest sense, freedom cannot be bestowed; it must be achieved." In other words, if politicians refuse to mobilise, then we must give them no choice but to mobilise. If the UN makes an excuse to weasel out of commissioning a war crimes tribunal, then we must give them pages of reasoning and books of evidence to the point where they cannot do otherwise. What I realised was the reason so little had happened in aid of the Tamil struggle was not because the world was unfair, but because we as Tamils had not done enough.

It is this fact that our Tamil struggle must come to terms with. Though all we expect from the politicians of our day is humanity, we must understand that if this humanity is not on common terms with party policy, it may come at the price of that politician's career. We must ask ourselves the question, how many of us have put our career on the line for the good of others? How many of us put the livelihoods of our own families to overrule the apartheid regime or for the struggle of East Timor? Keeping this in mind, we must give the politicians every reason to help us, because seldom will they jump the fence for us willingly.

When you are the

hunted, it is an unfairly difficult task to instigate any reform. Though it is true that there are systems and policies in place to protect those that are vulnerable and in need, it is even more true that when the perpetrators are the state, the same state that is responsible for policing these policies, and the same state that has important political and economic interests for the rest of the world, life becomes very difficult. Such is the case in Sri Lanka. But if we look around, history tells us that it is also the case in Darfur, West Papua, Congo and lest we forget our very own Australia. However, it is also the reality that no matter how unfair the system may be, if we have an unquenchable thirst and are willing to force change when it is not handed to us, then we can and will change the course of history to create a new Sri Lanka that even Tamils will be proud and happy to call their home. It has happened in the past with the East Timorese and South Africans, and it will happen again.

***Thamilarin thaa-
ham Thamileela
thaayaham.***

UN urged to probe alleged executions of Tamil Tigers

By Steven Edwards, Can-west News Service January 8, 2010

Sri Lanka faced new international scrutiny Thursday over allegations its soldiers summarily executed captured Tamil Tiger rebels as they defeated the separatist group last year.

Philip Alston, the UN's special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, called on the world body to launch an investigation into the claims after determining video evidence of executions was likely authentic.

Footage aired by the BBC's Channel 4 last August includes images of a bound and blindfolded naked man being forced to kneel just ahead of being shot from behind at point-blank range. A second man is also shot in the video, which shows the bound and blindfolded bodies of nine men.

The shooter is dressed in what appears to be a Sri Lankan army uniform.

Alston said he hired a forensic pathologist, a forensic video analyst and a firearms expert to review the footage after a Sri Lankan probe dismissed it as "fake" and "propaganda" by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"I don't really care about (any) group that presented it," said Alston. "I'm here today to present pretty com-

prehensive and thorough studies undertaken by experts whose credibility I don't think can be impugned."

Alston, who said Sri Lanka repeatedly refused him entry to the country to conduct his own probe, said an independent investigation needs to identify who authorized the alleged killings, and find out whether "there have been other such shootings."

Gen. Sarath Fonseka, former head of the army, alleged last year that Sri Lankan defence minister Gotabhaya Rajapaksa ordered the killing of surrendering members in the final days of the 26-year war.

Fonseka is now running as the opposition candidate against President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gotabhaya's brother, in elections slated for Jan 26.

While the Canadian government considers the Tamil Tigers a terrorist organization, the Tamil expatriate community in Canada is expected to back Alston's move.

But Maxwell Keepel, Sri Lanka's acting ambassador to the UN, accused Alston of violating UN procedures by releasing his findings without giving the Sri Lankan government time to study them.

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This is a set back only, Tamil struggle hasn't been crushed

Dr. Sam Pari, spokesperson for the Australian Tamil Congress was interviewed by Sri Lankan online newspaper, LankaNewsweb.com on January 03, 2010. The interview is reproduced here for our members.

As a human rights and Tamil rights activists where do you place yourself, in the context of present political situation in SL? Before that how do you characterize the political situ in SL today. Any personal experiences re developing situ?

In the current political situation two men who could be indicted for war crimes have drawn swords at each other while clamouring for the highest position in the State. From the Tamils' point of view there is absolutely no choice between the two. It is extremely difficult to say as to who could be worse. In this context, we would like to acknowledge the principle-based position adopted by Dr. Vikramabahu Karunaratne, with a programme recognising the Tamil homeland in the North and East, its right to self-determination and autonomy as solution for the Tamil National question. His policies on economy also confirm that he intends to do good for all peoples of the island. The Sri Lankan public and media should give as



much importance to him as the other protagonists.

From the Human Rights point of view hardly anything has changed and if at all things have only worsened. Arrests, detentions and even disappearances are continuing even though some of these are carried out on the sly.

How do you look at post war political developments in Sri Lanka? The defeat of LTTE what were the main reasons?

Unless there is a paradigm shift in the South with regards to sharing of political power with the Tamils and

other minorities there is not going to be any major change in the political landscape of the country. Absence of war is not peace. The Tamil Struggle for Freedom and Equality may have suffered a set back, but is far from being crushed. It will revive in its own ways in due course unless the root causes of the issues are addressed. The weakening of the LTTE is a very complex issue and has been caused by a number of factors, including the involvement of some key international players who are in geopolitical rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

You have been way for a long time, looking form afar what is your relationship with SL, where do you consider home today? How do you think of influencing politics in Sri Lanka? As Diaspora?

I consider Australia as my home, but that does not compel me to forget my roots. Coming to Australia was not a choice. I was forced to leave my land of birth and I am grateful for the liberty I enjoy in Australia. It is the same with many compatriots of the Diapora. The Tamil people in the island of Sri Lanka are under se-

This is a set back only (Continued)

vere oppression. They have no freedom of expression. The Diaspora most of whom live in democratic countries of the West are in a position to give free expression to the genuine grievances and aspirations of the people in the traditional Tamil homeland. Even some key international players are recognising the Tamil Diaspora's role in resolving the decades old conflict in the island of Sri Lanka. Our positive and determined stand will give strength to our people and their representatives back home. The Tamil Diaspora is politicised in many ways. We left with a lot of pain and our decision to leave was politically motivated making us stakeholders of the problem as well as the solution. Our sincere hope is that this will lead to a negotiated, peaceful resolution to the conflict and will eventually lead to genuine reconciliation amongst all communities occupying the island of Sri Lanka.

Do women play any significant role in Diaspora politics? Does Diaspora groups encourage female leadership?

Of course! In the recently formed Australian Tamil Congress, there are several women playing an active role. Tamil women have been in the forefront of Tamil campaigns for decades. The inspiration for today's Tamil women comes from back home where our women have shown to break through social barriers whether it be their partici-

pation in the Tamil Struggle for Freedom or defying the community's beliefs in the caste system and rituals such as dowry. The Tamil woman, through the struggle for freedom, was able to break the shackles of feudalism.

What are the social divisions exists in Tamil Diaspora in post war situation?

The Tamil Diaspora are part of a democratic system, and this strengthens our dynamics. There is open and healthy debating of various issues but the overwhelming majority of over 90% of the Diaspora shares the same views that reflect the political aspirations of Tamils of North-East Sri Lanka. There are no social divisions. However, as with all communities and social settings, there is a small minority with a difference of opinion to the majority.

Sri Lanka went thru dramatic political military changes in recent years, if I ask you for future political scenarios – how do you look at form afar...

Sri Lanka has built up a military that is far out of proportion to its population. Therefore this only reflects an increase in militarisation of the society which is neither good for democracy nor good for social welfare. In addition a former military commander with no political background and who does not answer to any political party is contesting for the highest position. We also see

the continuation of family rule; this time, in fact, total abuse of power by a single family. All these pose severe set-backs to genuine participatory democracy, rule of law and press-freedom. The Sri Lankan State should be reformed, with a new constitution that will allow for genuine democracy to flourish and to allow for all communities to be equal stakeholders in the running of the country. Any solution to the ethnic problem will be possible only in a situation where all can express their aspirations in a fear-free environment.

You form North/Jaffna/Killinochchi, what do you think of XXXX. today – when was you there last? How do you look at recent Tamil political developments/ or second generation Diaspora what are your feelings on Sri Lanka? Where is home for you? How do you look at your identity?

I have not been to the North and East since the current government was elected. I see the North and East as a land under occupation. A land where the inhabitants enjoy no freedom in any phase of their daily living. I believe the second generation Tamil Diaspora have the same feeling as I do - that true reconciliation comes when Tamil grievances are acknowledged and genuine attempts are made to address the Tamil people's legitimate concerns of oppression. I see myself as a Tamil Australian. Someone who is proud to be Tamil and proud to be Australian.

What is your message to Sinhala people at this juncture?

We have nothing against the Sinhalese people and we never had any ill will towards the Sinhala community. We recognise the existence and history of the Sinhala nation in the island of Sri Lanka, and we also acknowledge the sufferings of the Sinhalese due to the war. All we expect from the Sinhala people is a reciprocation of these sentiments, and the acknowledgement of the ethnic oppression and immeasurable sufferings faced by the Tamils. We expect the Sinhalese to be realistic and generous in supporting serious political reforms in the country, which will allow Tamils and other minorities to live with dignity, equality and peace, and also to allow these communities to manage and prosper in their traditional homeland without enforced erosion of their ethnic identity. There is a golden opportunity now in the post-war scenario to settle this once and for all, and we hope all communities in Sri Lanka will rise to meet this challenge. No one wants the whole agony to be repeated. We stress that a military solution can never resolve a complex political and ethnic conflict of the type afflicted Sri Lanka. The Oppressor is the same for the Sinhala oppressed people as for the Tamil people.

- Interviewed by Sunanda Deshapriya

On Sri Lankan Election, UN's Ban Silent on Abductions and Forced Texts



Matthew Russell Lee | Inner-city Press | UNITED NATIONS | January 25 2010

On Sri Lanka, the UN simply will not follow through. Since UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's statement last week about pre-election violence, grenades have been thrown at opposition supporters, cell

phone companies have been forced to send out messages supporting incumbent Mahinda Rajapaksa, and media members have been disappeared. But Ban Ki-moon has said nothing.

On January 25, on the eve of the election, Inner City Press asked Ban's spokesman Martin Nesirky about these of these abuses: grenades, abductions and manipulation of the airwaves with forced messages. Video [here](#), from Minute 47:04.

Mr. Nesirky has no specific comment on any of these, but rather reiterated two previous Ban Ki-moon positions -- elec-

tions should be free and fair and violence is to be condemned. He noted that "we don't have a presence on the ground for the election as such and therefore we are not able to assess how the election will be conducted."

In Sri Lanka, UN's Ban pictured, virtual presence on the ground? But the UN was asked to come and have a role in the election, to at least discourage the worst violence and intimidation. Nesirky explained that Mr. Ban had said "no," arguing that such an elections role would require a General Assembly vote and would take too long.

But also on January 25, Inner City Press asked about an upcoming election in Sudan, and Nesirky's response was entirely different: that Ban thinks the Sudanese elections are "crucial to the future of Sudan," and his "colleagues on the ground" will

give "guidance."

In Sri Lanka, apparently, there are no "colleagues on the ground," and the election are less crucial. Watch this site.

Footnote: Also on January 25, when the UN Mission in Haiti's principal deputy Tony Banbury appeared by video link, Inner City Press asked him for comparisons of the earthquake response in that country. Video [here](#), from Minute 32:28.

Banbury dodged the analogy of Myanmar, but instead listed as UN successes the response to the tsunami in Aceh and in Sri Lanka. But in the latter, much aid disappeared.

EU's Ashton "Concerned" By Rights in Sri Lanka, On Election, No UN Ban Follow Up

Matthew Russell Lee | Inner-city Press | UNITED NATIONS | January 22 2010

The European Union's new High Commissioner Catherine Ashton appeared at the UN on Friday, and was asked by Inner City Press about Sri Lanka in the run up to elections, and about the GSP Plus tariff reduction program, whether the EU would curtail it for Sri Lanka. Video [here](#), from Minute 4:05.

Baroness Ashton responded that, while she was Trade Commissioner, GSP Plus had been a concern. "If we have a scheme, where we award the way we operate directly because of... treatment of people and human rights, if that falls short, it should be re-examined."



She said that she was "very concerned" and had recommended that GPS Plus benefits for Sri Lanka "perhaps should be reconsidered."

She did not, however, comment on violence in the run up

to the January 26 election, nor on reports that Mahinda Rajapaksa has required cell phone companies to send out text messages supporting him.

Inner City Press had asked if the UN's Ban Ki-moon had any view on the pre-election violence and intimidation. Days later, Ban's spokesman read out a statement that Ban remains concerned. But since the statement, a major opposition supporter's house has been attacked with hand

grenades. At least five are dead and dozens injured. And from Ban, nothing.

EU's Ashton and UN's Ban: the former on GSP+, the latter now

silent

His spokesman wouldn't even allow a question on January 22:

Inner City Press: Can I ask one more?

Spokesperson Nesirky: I'd like, actually, to see if there are others, and I think I would ask Jean-Victor to join us. Just please do join. But, one thing I did want to respond to was, you asked a question, Matthew, yesterday...

He then gave an answer on Haiti, the topic to which the UN has sought to confine question for ten days now. And on and after the Sri Lankan election? Watch this site.

Can the new King of Sri Lanka bring deliverance to the Tamils?

Richard Dixon | On his blog, Voice for the Voiceless, in Telegraph, London | Friday, January 22, 2010, 11:20 PM GMT

RichardDixons@googlemail.com

From North to the South, West to the East, the skies of Sri Lanka are now filled with the empty and virtual deceptive promises of two desperate presidential candidates. While the Sri Lankan politicians are beating their drums, While the so called war heroes of the nation are busy launching mudslinging campaigns against each other, while the strategic think tanks with geopolitical interests are making last minute manoeuvres to influence the outcome of the election, while the local business leaders, industrialists and bankers are speculating the election results, **Sri Lankan Tamils are still on their knees praying what they have always prayed "Deliver is from the evil one"**

Their voices are suppressed. They have lost their strength to fight back the oppression. But their heart cries are obvious. "Free thousands of our loved ones who are going through hunger and torture in the notorious Sri Lankan prisons," "Give us back our homes and lands", "Give us the freedom to work in our own farms and fish in our own waters", "Stop abducting our sons and daughters" "stop abusing, torturing, raping and murdering our children", "Stop destroying our culture", "Give us back the freedom that we were all born with as humans on this planet"

Can the new King of Sri Lanka bring deliverance to the Tamils? If we look at the history of Sri Lanka particularly in the last sixty five years, the answer to this question will be quite obvious.

Sri Lankan Tragedy

Those who argue that Sri Lanka has finally brought an end to the Asia's longest running conflict, are not only ignorant but making a blunder by indirectly supporting

the dangerous regimes in Sri Lanka that are determined to wipe out a race from the face of this earth. Torture, murder and rape against the minority Tamils, abductions, summary executions, forced colonizations of Tamil lands, extension of military bases in Tamil areas even in the absence of war and various human rights abuses, have made this country as an island of hell.

Sri Lankan rulers use a simple binary logic that their categorise anyone who oppose their extremist policies and human rights violations as terrorists. They are able to see only two types of humans on this planet. Those who are with them or those who are against them. Since they identify the ones who disagree with them as terrorists, Sri Lanka has in many instances blamed Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Red Cross and many other humanitarian organisations as terrorist sympathisers. David Miliband, Hillary Clinton and many other western leaders were blamed as terror supporters. This is exactly like how the Al Qaeda blames the western countries as terror states and their leaders as terrorists.

Sri Lanka uses the same logic for the innocent Tamils who are fleeing for their lives in boats and ships to foreign shores. They blame the fleeing children and pregnant women as terrorists. Only crime they had committed was that **they cried when their fathers and brothers were brutally murdered and they objected when their mothers and sisters were raped.**

What make things worse in Sri Lanka are not just the atrocities carried out by the fascist forces but the compromise made by some international elements, who have decided to support the criminals but turned a blind eye to the victims. **They danced when the war criminals sang, and hid their faces in the sand when thousands of innocents were murdered in cold blood. UN, who is supposed to be a guardian for the oppressed and vulnerable in the world, had in fact assisted Sri Lanka in mass murdering innocent Tamils, simply**

by ignoring the cries of the dying at the crucial hours.

Sri Lankan Tragedy is also about an unfair world that is **letting the murderers and rapists to walk on red carpets but ignoring the plight of the innocents** that are languishing in torture camps and prisons.

Sri Lankan conflict is sometime quite a complex one to understand not because the conflict itself is complex but, corrupt politicians, career minded journalists, biased terror experts, countries with geopolitical interests and those who are short sighted have twisted the stories that many in the world don't exactly know what has been going on in Sri Lanka.

Those who are responsible for the misery in Sri Lanka for years have been successful in hiding the root cause of the problem in order to continue with their own agendas.

While many are doing this deliberately, there are also people **including some Tamils** tend to misinterpret the crisis in Sri Lanka, by **looking and analyzing isolated incidents or judging various parties to the conflict based on their personal experiences.**

Shocking Video from UK Channel 4 Television

Blind folded, hands tied behind their backs, naked, on their knees, not knowing what was happening around but hearing just the sounds of Sinhala soldiers mocking and laughing, occasional gun shots. What could have gone through the minds of these young Tamil men in their final hours? They were executed in a most cruel manner just for a simple reason that they were Tamils.

Their mothers bore them in pain, gave birth to them in pain, fed them from their breasts and toiled for years to bring them up. Their children found safety and protection in their arms. These were ordinary men who had dreams about their future. Just like any of us, they also wanted to see their children growing up. They trusted the world around them to come for their rescue even at their last minutes. But their lives were cut short. They were looked down by their enemies as rotten pieces of meat that don't even need proper burial.

This is not a bedtime horror story. This is not about something



Channel 4 UK : Tamils being executed by Sri Lankan Soldiers. Thousands were slaughtered like this in the land of Terror



Fellowship of the dead, This was not an earth quake. Thousands of innocent Tamils were killed by Sri Lankan military

that happened thousands of years ago when giants and barbarians roamed the earth. This is not a Hollywood movie about man eating cannibals. What Channel 4 had shown in UK is a real story of a people group called Tamils in the horror island of Sri Lanka.

Many were shocked and felt so sick in and out after seeing the video clips of Tamils being executed as innocent lambs in broad day light. Strangely many Tamils living in the West haven't found it as shocking because they have witnessed hundreds and hundreds of such incidents in their own villages and towns. Their eyes had seen their loved ones being butchered with knives, swords, guns and bombs. They saw their houses being burned down and farms being destroyed.

They saw their sisters and mothers being abused and raped. Their fathers were shot and killed in front of weeping children and mothers. Their loved ones and friends were killed in prisons, schools, hospitals and in their own homes. Tamils in Sri Lanka no longer have a voice and they no longer have the right to turn left or right. They see their enemies marching from the North, South, East and the West. A community that once fought for equal rights is now fighting for its bare survival.

Interestingly, Sri Lankan war criminals who have been committing such deadly crimes are not all happy about the world watching what they do to the vulnerable. They have no way to defend their atrocities so they just deny the video as fake. UN investigators have confirmed that the video was authentic.

What was shown on channel 4 is just a drop in the ocean. Many eyes in Sri Lanka have witnessed crimes that were much crueller than this. **Thousands of digital pictures and video clips, many satellite images and other concrete evidences are available to prove without a shadow of doubt that Sri Lankan regime is still committing countless crimes against the Tamil community in Sri Lanka with the excuse of fighting terror.**

What was shown on the British TV is what happened to many innocent civilians who were trying to escape the war zone and decided to get into the government controlled territory. The whole world had witnessed how the Sri Lankan regime was pretending like saviours of Tamils but engaged in killing innocent Tamils in thousands. This video clip is an answer to many who questioned why Tamils were not willing to go into the government controlled area during the War in Vanni. Tamils see the Sri Lankan soldiers as killer demons and not as liberators

Story of Sri Lanka in the last sixty five years is simply the repetitions of hundreds and thousands of similar horrific events at different scales. **99% of the perpetrators**

were either Sri Lankan military or extremist Sinhala mobs and 99% of the victims were innocent Tamils.

Armageddon in Tamil land, War on the Innocents

Although Sri Lanka claimed that it was fighting a war with the Tamil rebels, guns and bombs were in fact turned against innocent Tamil civilians. Sri Lankan forces killed more than fifty thousands just within few months.

More than four hundred thousands innocent Tamil civilians including pregnant mothers, babies, young, old and sick were chased out of their own homes, bombed, shelled, starved and let to run for their lives for months. Fighter air crafts over the skies of Vanni dropped bombs on hospitals, schools and all other public places to target the civilians. Food and medicine were denied to the hungry and sick. Many were bleeding on the streets and inside bunkers and experienced painful slow death. Flesh of Tamils became food for stray dogs and wild beasts.

Despite international pressure, Sri Lankan government continued with the war. China and Pakistan were supplying unlimited weapons and ammunitions to the Sri Lankan military.

It is difficult to find words to describe the horror that happened in the last few days of the war. Thousands were forced into a tiny strip of land. Men, women and children were hiding inside the bunkers without food and water. Sri Lankan military was firing from Tanks and multi barrel rocket launchers, in all the directions. Phosphorous and cluster bombs were dropped from the skies.

As the cries of dying women and children were shaking the earth, Sri Lankan military used maximum fire power to kill several thousands Tamils every single day. While the wounded were crying for water



Left alone. Many children have lost their parents.

to wet their tongues, military tanks rolled over them. Wounded and the sick who were hiding in the bunkers were buried alive. Those who surrendered with white flags were executed in cold blood. Petrol and chemicals were poured over the tents and dead bodies.

Thick dark smoke rose to the skies. The whole world stood back and watched as the demons from hell descended over Vanni and danced in the lake of blood.

Reporters and journalists are still not allowed to the area where the Armageddon took place even after several months. Sri Lankan rulers are not prepared to show to the world what they did to the innocents with their ugly heads and cruel hands.

Battle is over but the oppression continues

Sri Lankan government claims that it has brought an end to the conflict. But the Tamils in Sri Lanka haven't yet found the freedom that they have been longing for years. **They are still like Jews that were in the hands of Hitler and Bosnian Muslims who were persecuted by Serbian extremists.**

Generations come and generations go. Life becomes better and better for many people in the world. But the Tamils, whose standard of living was better than Singaporeans and South Koreans forty years ago, are now living below the poverty line. They now wander like vagabonds as many have lost their homes.

Sri Lanka is still recruiting more people for the military and extending military bases in the North and East of the country. Tamil children are surrounded by uniformed soldiers with guns and bombs twenty four hours a day. Tamil women are daily harassed, intimidated and abused by the Sinhala soldiers.

More than eleven thousands youth that were arrested by the Sri Lankan authorities have still not been released. Even the Red Cross are not allowed to see the detainees. Many families still haven't found out where their sons and daughters are. Thousands of families have lost their entire livelihood but they are not provided with any help to re-establish their lives.

Abductions and killings of Tamils are still continuing. Few months ago, a Tamil youth was beaten to death by Sinhala police officers in the city of Colombo. This happened in broad day light, in front of spectators and television cameras.

Farm lands belonging to the



Tamil youth was beaten to death by Sinhala police in broad day light in front of TV cameras

Tamils are forcefully taken by the government and given to Sinhala settlers

Many Tamils are risking their lives by fleeing the country on damaged boats and ships. Sri Lankan rulers are not only persecuting the Tamils in Sri Lanka but also making the lives miserable for those who are fleeing to other countries.

Agents of Sri Lanka, some of them who work as pseudo terror experts and journalists in other countries are demonising the Tamils who are struggling for their survival even in the seas. **These fake experts continue to deceive the international community by identifying every Tamil child, mother and father as terrorists.**

Some Sri Lankan senior cabinet ministers are seeking access to the fleeing refugees so that they can torment the victims even outside Sri Lanka. No laws in the world would allow the persecutors to meet the their fleeing victims in foreign soil or in international waters unless these foreign countries are also having worst human rights records as Sri Lanka who have no respect for the law.

Who are the real Terrorists in Sri Lanka?

The words "Terrorism" and "Terrorists" are mostly misunderstood words in the world today. Regimes in Iran and North Korea call the Western countries as terror states. Majority of us will not agree with Iran or North Korea. Developments of destructive weapons in these two countries are not just posing danger to the neighbouring nations but to the entire world.

Sri Lanka has been playing the same game for many years but it has taken quite a while for many of us to understand the reality. Sri Lankan rulers have been successful in hiding their crimes against the Tamil minorities and exaggerating the Tamil resistance. Sri Lanka spends millions of dollars in propaganda to justify, hide and

deny the atrocities against the Tamil minorities

Now Sri Lanka has started to blame international aid organisations, international rights organisations, and western democracies as terror entities. **One should question if many of us have been right in taking the same view of Sri Lanka by blaming the Tamil resistance against the Sinhala Chauvinism as Terrorism.**

If we consider terrorism as a destructive act against innocent people and their properties, a simple statistics about Sri Lanka would show us who the real terrorists are and why we should believe in the fact that terrorism is still destroying the lives of people in Sri Lanka and the culprits are Sri Lankan rulers who continue to harbour racist and extremist views.

Even a primary school child with simple mathematical skills would not just be able to understand the deadly conflict in Sri Lanka but also would be able to identify who the real victims are and who the culprits are, just by looking at these simple and obvious facts.

In the last sixty years more than three hundred thousands Tamils died in Sri Lanka. They were killed by bombs, guns, swords and knives. Many Tamils went through physical abuse, torture, isolation and rape in the hands of the Sinhala soldiers before their death. Thousands of Tamil women were raped. More than fifty thousands were maimed. Many thousands have become orphans and windows. More than a million had to flee the country in order to save the lives.

Majority of the homes, schools, public libraries, churches, temples and hospitals in the North and East of the country have all been destroyed by the bombs and shells fired by the Sri Lankan military. Most of the lands where Tamils lived are now looking like giant grave yards.

Sri Lankan military has caused a great environmental disaster in Tamil lands by uprooting millions of trees and destroying the wild life.

In the middle of the last century, **More than 30% percentage of the population in Sri Lanka was Tamil speaking (Indigenous Tamils, Upcountry Tamils and Muslims). This has now been reduced to 20%.**

More than 20% of the land that was originally belonged to the Tamils were forcefully be taken away and given to the Sinhalese. Hundreds of Tamil villages and roads were turned into Sinhala villages and their names have been changed to Sinhala.

30% of the Tamil land is currently occupied by Sri Lankan Sinhala soldiers.

Tamils were once the majority in two eastern districts but they have already become minority as the successive Sri Lankan governments have been changing the demographics in Tamil districts by implementing Sinhala settlements.

These are just facts that speak for themselves. Racist Sri Lankan regimes have persecuted the Tamils for a long time and they have also been very successful in ethic cleansing in the last sixty years.

Root cause of the Conflict, Mother of All the Evils

It is a sad reality that many international think tanks haven't either still identified the root cause of the Sri Lankan conflict or they are deliberately ignoring it in order to fulfil their own hidden agendas.

Sinhala Chauvinism is the mother of all the evils that is destroying this beautiful country. It is built on ignorance, arrogance, jealousy, insecurity, anger, lies and deceptions. This is a dangerous disease that has blinded the hearts and minds of the extremists. **Sinhala Chauvinism or Sinhala Buddhist extremism can be compared to Nazism.**

Sinhala Chauvinism is nothing to do with the ordinary Sinhala people. This is not even to do with the Sri Lankan military although they have incidentally become the tools and weapons of the extremist, racist and corrupt religious and political leaders.

Many Sinhala people are peace loving and in fact there are many Sinhala intellectuals, journalists, human rights activists and people from all walks of life, are fighting for the oppressed Tamil people and some have even laid down

their lives for their fellow humans.

Buddhism in Sri Lanka has been hijacked by the extremists and what we see today in Sri Lanka is a perverted version of Buddhism. Perverted religions are most dangerous ingredients for deadly conflicts all around the world.

Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism talk about peace and harmony among the inhabitants of this earth. They preach about tolerance, peace and respect for others. Unfortunately, we have seen so many religious wars in the world and the root cause of them were not the religions in pure forms but their perverted versions.

Rise of Al Qaeda in the west, Violence by extreme Hindus in India, War between Catholics and Protestants, Sinhala Buddhists extremists destroying churches in Sri Lanka are all showing the dangerous signs of religious perversion and religious extremism.

As opposed to many people think, Sri Lanka hasn't got a genuine democracy. Sri Lanka is in reality, indirectly ruled by a violent religious Buddhist cult that preaches and practices hatred against the Tamils. Ordinary Sinhala Buddhist people are brainwashed by Buddhist clergies. Political parties that support such extreme racist policies are selected by the majority Sinhala people as the rulers. Rulers of Sri Lanka come up with discriminatory policies to stay in power and to satisfy the hunger of those who want to see the land free of Tamils.

Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka have both been living there for more than two thousands years. The sad reality is that the Sinhala Buddhists want to make Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist country which means they want the Tamils out or continue to treat Tamils as second class citizens.

Psychology behind Racism

Racists are the most foolish people on this earth because they either perceive that they are superior to others or they imagine that their survival, quality of life and social status are threatened by another race. They wouldn't be able to digest, when someone with another colour, religion or race prosper in front of their eyes.

Ignorance, insecurity, jealousy, pride, selfishness, greed and all the evils come together and make people to hate those who are not like them. Mugabe chasing out White farmers in Zimbabwe, Extremist Serbians killing the Bosnian Muslims,



Tamil men, women and children fleeing in ships with fear of persecution

Hitler massacring the Jews and Sinhalese killing the Tamils are all telling us the same story.

Current unrest in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the middle of the last century when Tamils were comparatively doing well in education and business. Sinhala extremists in Sri Lanka couldn't digest the fact that Tamils still being a minority, dominating education and business. Since 1950, almost every ten years, Tamils were killed in thousands and their properties were burned to ashes. These attacks were always masterminded by the Sinhala rulers who were in power.

In the last thirty years, with the excuse of War on Terror, Sri Lanka has managed to destroy most of the homes, Schools, libraries, hospitals, factories and farms in the Tamil areas. **Sri Lankan Tamils who were once, one of the most literate and prosperous people groups in the South East Asia is now fighting for their bare survival.**

How is the world responding?

As usual, the geopolitical interest of other countries in Sri Lanka is one of the main reasons why this conflict has been dragging on for years. Corrupt Sri Lankan leaders easily become puppets of the foreign governments. Sri Lanka is located on strategically important sea route that is vital for the security of many countries.

It has now gone beyond an acceptable level that human rights abuses are sending shock waves across the world. Even the ones that were once supporting this country are now at least pretending to be neutral to save their own skins.

Sri Lanka is ranked as South Asia's No.1 human rights vio-

lator. Sri Lanka scored the highest negative points for the right to life, the rights of the child, attacks on human rights defenders and violations of the rights of the minorities. On press freedom, Sri Lanka was ranked second worse only after Bhutan — which has no independent press. Sri Lanka was ranked number 97 in an index compiled by Transparency International, an anti corruption watchdog, in 2009.

Dublin war-crimes tribunal, conducted by Permanent Peoples' Tribunal (PPT) based in Milan, which held hearings on 14th and 15th of January 2010 has found that Sri Lanka Government is "guilty of War-Crimes" and "guilty of Crimes Against Humanity." Eye witnesses included several escapees from the final week of Sri Lanka offensive in the Mullaitivu "No Fire Zone" where more than thousands of innocent Tamil civilians were allegedly slaughtered by Sri Lanka Army with heavy weapons.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of War Crimes has recently released its investigation into the final stage of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

It was based on a wide range of sources, including Amnesty International's own reporting, and uses both traditional and innovative evidence such as satellite imagery and aerial photographs. **This report provides a disturbing overview of what happened in the so-called "No-Fire Zone".**

The European Commission has decided to suspend Sri Lanka's preferential trade status following a probe criticising the island's human rights record. The suspension follows a year-long European Commission

probe that concluded that the Sri Lankan government was in breach of commitments on human rights and good governance that come with the preferential trade status.

Commonwealth has decided not to host the next summit in Sri Lanka. If the situation doesn't improve, suspension of this country from Commonwealth is another possibility.

International community should continue to take tough measures like economic embargoes and war crime inquiries to make sure that this coun-

try won't slip further into darkness and the culprits are brought to justice. These steps are necessary to convince the people of Sri Lanka that they will be isolated from the world if they continue elect leaders who chose the path of extremism and violence instead of path of peace.

How does Sri Lanka defend its atrocities?

Non-compliance, denials, refusals, justifications, blackmailing and other techniques are used by countries like Sri Lanka to escape justice.

Sri Lanka is simply a rock state that no longer has any respect for human rights. Leaders of this country are only interested in fulfilling their racist agendas and to satisfy their own greed.

Sri Lankan government regularly appoint individuals with doctorates and other higher degrees as cabinet ministers and propaganda activists to lobby in the UN and in foreign countries. Many of them speak in fluent English and having citizenships in other western countries and their main role is to justify the atrocities that are committed by the Sri Lankan government. These individuals are experts in blaming the victims and protecting the criminals.

Sri Lankan government also has their own pseudo terror experts working in foreign soils and their main role is to defend the Sri Lankan government and to identify anyone that opposes the Sri Lankan government as terrorist. Sri Lanka spends millions on propaganda and to pay for consultants and propaganda firms that are working round the clock to hide or justify the atrocities committed by the rulers of Sri Lanka.

Can the new King of Sri Lanka bring deliverance to the Tamils?

In the last sixty years three hundred thousands were slaughtered, several thousands were raped, tortured, imprisoned and disappeared in Sri Lanka. More than a million have fled the country with the fear of persecution. **99% of the victims were Tamils and 99% of the perpetrators were Sri Lankan military personal or members of Buddhist Sinhala extremist groups.** One doesn't need to be a rocket scientist to understand what is going on in this country.

Freedom is a God given right to every living human on this earth. **Tamils in Sri Lanka, Muslims in Bosnia, Jews in Jerusalem, Hindus in Pakistan, Christians in North Korea, Blacks in France, Whites in Zimbabwe and Aboriginals in Australia** should all be enjoying the same rights as any other people groups on this planet.

Nazism, Sinhala Chauvinism, Racism, Fascism, you can name them how you like, but these are all manifestations of a social evil, that destroy lives.

The madness that is going on this country can only be stopped by destroying the demon of ignorance from the hearts and minds of those who rejoice in hatred and violence against their fellow citizens. This is not a battle against flesh and blood but against the forces of darkness clouding over this nation

Unless the civilised world stand against the perpetrators of human rights abuses, war criminals and corrupt politicians in Sri Lanka, unless we stop dancing to the tunes played by Sri Lankan rulers, unless we confront the agents of Sri Lanka who have been deceiving the international community through lies and deceptions, unless we stop doing business with Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka will continue to persecute its minorities with the blessing of those who are determined to be on the wrong side just to satisfy their own greed.

Governments come and go but there is no end to the suffering of Tamils in this Island. No matter who comes to power, the root cause of the conflict will again be ignored by the rulers of Sri Lanka deliberately to keep the majority happy. **Unless the root cause of the ethnic problem is dealt with, Sri Lanka will face another wave of violence that could even be detrimental to the peace and stability in the whole South East Asia.**

Voting Mahinda or Fonseka is submission to Colombo-centric system



TamilNet, Sunday, 24 January 2010, 18:10 GMT

Eezham Tamils need not bother much about the outcome of the presidential elections. Whether Mahinda or Fonseka matters the same, says a senior journalist in Jaffna. Only the war criminals, their international abettors and the geopolitical competitors have to worry about the elections and it is their problem. Tamils have to concentrate in organizing their own polity and in demonstrating it. But if they abstain from voting there are people waiting to stuff the boxes. If Tamils want to register opinion and see neither of the main candidates get 50 percent they should cast the first vote to a third person and of all the candidates the moral obligation of Tamils is to vote for Dr. Vikramabahu Karunaratne. Looking upon the Colombo-centric system is the curse of Tamils for ages and instead of destabilising it, any par-

ticipatory politics amounts to only submission to the system, he further said.

Further comments from the journalist translated from Tamil:

The two main candidates of the Colombo-centric State and the international stakeholders of the State in Colombo try through various ways, ranging from the release of Tamil hostages to the lure of reconciliation, ultimately to see Tamils submit to the very system that enslaves them.

Some stakeholders advising full participation of people in the elections for a democratically 'united Sri Lanka,' managed to orchestrate timely shows of interest in war crimes to influence Tamil voters on one hand and legal actions against Tamils to balance with Sinhala voters on the other, in insinuating the choice.

Talk of the genocide that took place and is taking place is a taboo for the stakeholders because any recognition of

genocide will automatically justify the need to destabilize Colombo-centric State.

Media orchestrated in the island and in the diaspora bombard our ears with talks of elections as though it is the salvation point. While according to some of them honey and milk now flow in the island, others harp on 'regime change.'

A main problem with a section of the Eezham Tamil nation is its fancy about Colombo. Right from 1920s, of the times of William Manning's Constitutional Reforms and Ramanathan brothers' demand for a seat for Tamils in Colombo, many pre-militancy Tamil leaders bungled the national question, because of this fancy for the Colombo-centric system.

The Tamil national question is not going to be resolved as long as Colombo's system dominates the island.

But, an influential section of Tamils, including their middle class, have accumulated even their meagre capital in Colombo. In addition, a section of diaspora hawks secretly harbour the desire to use the

situation for associating itself with the Colombo-based flow of capital. Naturally the pulse of these sections will go contrary to the pulse of long-struggling nationalism in the North and East.

Stakeholders will not take care of destabilising the system but will always work for buttressing it and shaping it to suit their interests. Concerned people only have to take care of it

Countering Colombo-centric system is not only for the liberation of Tamils but also for the liberation of the Sinhalese.

If the point is realised, then both Tamils and Sinhalese have to identify the right candidate who comes near to the point and is consistent to it, to register their opinion, coming out of the din of the main contenders for the throne of Colombo.

Whatever small it could be today, only the strength of this registered opinion will help in future the true reconciliation of the nations of Tamils and Sinhalese, whether they become two nation states or not.



“Talk of the genocide that took place and is taking place is a taboo for the stakeholders because any recognition of genocide will automatically justify the need to destabilize Colombo-centric State”

Australian Tamil Congress

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In the past, only a fraction of Tamils have participated in politically active groups. Today the need is for a united and concerted action. We need to draw the silent majority and fresh blood into political awareness to convey the collective view of our community effectively.

We have some major projects and we cannot succeed without membership numbers and the funds that can generate! We are aware that a strong membership base is paramount to have a viable platform to make an impact. We earnestly request your help at this critical time to join our efforts. Being member of ATC, you will be entitled to participate in various ATC working groups and influence the direction.

You can contribute in various ways to our long-, medium- and short-term activities in humanitarian, legal, political, community, and communication fronts.

Please join us in our crusade for peace and justice by having your family and friends join ATC!

Articles to the National Newsletter

Please send us your views and creations to be included in our Newsletters to

newsletter@australiantamilcongress.com

Australian Tamil Congress: On a Crusade for Peace and Justice

Vision

“Australian Tamil Congress is formed in order to create a congress of our people, for our people and by our people based on the principles of justice and peace amongst ourselves, and to provide for a common voice in promoting our general welfare, prosperity, independence, equality, security and peace”

Mission

“The Australian Tamil Congress encourages the positive participation of Tamils in Australian society, highlights issues of importance to Tamils, upholds core Australian values and engages other communities, governments and organisations in addressing the socio-cultural and political concerns of Tamils.”

Objective

“As part of an international Tamil human rights and political organization dedicated to generating change through ‘Collective Global Tamil’ action to institute and educate people on Tamils’ right to survival and self-determination, and to promote the safety, welfare, economic development of Tamils worldwide; and to teach the lessons of the Tamil Genocide in Sri Lanka for future generations.”

