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Editorial

A Year ago....

It is hard to believe that the march 2010 is almost over. As I reflect back to a year ago, when Tamil Youth Organization was being formed in Western Australia, I remember the readiness to persevere from those who cared. It was the time when things seemed to be ending for the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Suddenly the sixty years of hardship in fighting for a Tamil homeland had gone bust. Some how the opposition had gathered enough power and weapons to annihilate us totally. Within two months our hearts were to shudder with news of loved ones being lost, hurt, dead and the halt of the brave men and women we believed in. Everyone was panicking and we needed solutions now, quickly.

A year has since passed but gone are the 'everyone' and 'we'. The emotions that charged through us have now faded. There is nothing wrong with that because they all but emotions. But what should 60 years of hardship, sadness, humiliation and protest teach us? **DUTY.**

It is our duty to fight for a Tamil homeland. It is our duty to fight for justice for the sufferings of our families, friends and the Tamil race.

Duty does and should not succumb to emotions. Duty is not something you feel. It is a responsibility.

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Ban Ki Moon—A Joke of the Century

By Ram Mohan

Daily Mirror Report

When I saw the above news item and circulated it to some of my friends, I used the above title as that was the emotional response. On second thoughts, I realize that it is far more serious and it affects our very future and therefore needs some analysis. We cannot dismiss Ban like we would dismiss Keheliya Rambukwela or the joker who was Saddam's spokesman.

Ban is the 8th Secretary General in the 65 year history of the UN and no doubt all Secretary Generals never ignored the wishes of the member countries particularly the Veto Power holding Five but Ban is creating a name for himself like Saturn in the 8th house. The other Secretary Generals carefully avoided the appearance of being a stooge of any country big or small. In fact some of them had shown their "moral high grounds" to some of the less powerful countries. In particular Boutros Boutros – Ghali and Kofi Annan had expressed their anger at the GOSL treatment of Tamils when the GOSL Terrorism was at much lower level. But why is Ban stooping so low? To understand this low level we must also look at the comments in Inner city Press given below:

<http://www.innecitypress.com/lanka7unfollow032410.html>

Mr. Mathew Lee in the above comments clearly castigates Ban for asking Mr. Vijay Nambiar (the person who

advised the Tiger Leaders to surrender with white flags) and Mr. Palitha Kohona (representative of the government that ordered the army to shoot those surrendering) to suggest names of the proposed Advisory Panel. Mr. Lee aptly compares this to "2 foxes studying the hen house".

During the war, Ban avoided visiting Sri Lanka and the UN Security Council involvement was stage managed. Only unofficial meetings were held in the Basement of the UN saying that China and Russia will use the Veto if official meetings were held. A question often asked at that time was why the others are not giving an opportunity to Russia and China to exercise the Veto and thereby expose them for what they are. In particular, China is on record that it will not use its Veto and even not have a single soldier in any foreign soil. One wonders why others are even allowing China to get away with such statements. Recently after the GTF launch meeting (where the PM and FM bestowed their presence), at an online Forum in the USA the UK representative of the UN in the presence of the FM, UK, stated that they had the numbers in the Security Council to place Sri Lanka on the official agenda but did not do so. On a different occasion, the French UN representative was more open and he said that they wanted to see the end of "LTTE Terrorism". The US of course was openly playing the double game. What all these reveal is that there is an understanding in

the Security Council to allow Sri Lanka do what it wants and for some reason (to keep the Tamils silent?) Mexico was "sponsoring" our cause. Whether Ban Ki Moon is making use of this environment (or even fulfilling a role assigned to him?) to please his Indian son in law and his Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar or returning the favour to Mahinda who sacrificed Sri Lanka's candidate Jayantha in favour of Ban, cannot be known even by such UN watchers as Mathew Lee of the Inner city Press. The Source is really the collective will (or collusion game?) of the Security Council. It is to be noted that the Security Council is "finally" united even on such issues as Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine and the like. So the world Establishment is united but all the other trouble spots (except us) have contacts in all the power centres. Till independence, even East Timor had a foot in Beijing (may be it is there even now). Yet the problem reaches a solution only when International Public opinion also demands it as in East Timor, South Africa, Vietnam or as a consequence of Bipolar cold war which is no longer there. If we are satisfied to be in the pockets of India and/or the West, we can never see the light of Day.

We need to understand the geopolitics and make use of it and for the geopolitical powers to recognize us, we need to be able to muster international public opinion.
(continued on Page 8)

Australian Tamil Referendum

Referendum on Independent & Sovereign Tamil Eelam

17th and 18th April 2010

Polling Booths:



NEW SOUTH WALES

- Epping
- Homebush
- Mt Druitt
- Wentworthville

VICTORIA

- Dandenong (South)
- Delahey (West)
- Reservoir (North)
- Vermont South (East)

CANBERRA (ACT)

- Isaac

* All booths are open from 8am to 6pm on 17th and 18th April 2010.

Postal voting is the only method of voting for QLD, SA, WA, NT and TAS

World is listening...what do you want to say?
Please register as soon as possible...

A public meeting will be held at Homebush Boys High School
 on Monday, 5th of April featuring several prominent Tamil speakers

Please call 1300 464 402 or email at info@vkr1976.com.au for more information

www.vkr1976.com.au

- All voters have to provide photo identification to identify themselves to the election officials
- Proof of identity documents could be your Drivers License or Passport
- If you do not provide necessary identification then you may not be able to vote.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

The electoral body conducting the election for any reason WILL NOT disclose voter registration details to any third party. All voter details collected during the election process WILL NOT be shared with any other individuals or groups.

South Australian Chapter Report

Book release

ATC members participated and supported the "Book release function - Melbourne Tamil Author S Sriskantharajah" held on 6th March 2010, under the sponsorship of Ceylon Tamil Associations. Visitors from Melbourne were very much impressed by the enthusiasm and support.

Remembrance Day 22 May 2010

ATC members have started inviting special guests for Remembrance Day 22 May 2010. Active planning and organizing of the event is taking place. This will be jointly organized by Ceylon Tamil Association

GTF press release

Global Tamil Forum press release was sent to all members of parliament and senators from South Australia with an accompanying letter from SA Vice president. Soon we will make an effort to meet, a selected few federal parliamentarians to discuss some of the political matters.

VKR Referendum

ATC SA is actively supporting the referendum to be held on April 17 & 18, 2010 on Vaddukoddai Resolution. We have decided a postal vote be the best way to conduct the referendum in SA. Presently, we are actively engaged in preparing the voters list.

Western Australian Chapter Report

Assisting Refugees

A lot of the new refugees settled in other states have been moving to Western Australia because of the wealth of job opportunities. ATC WA members provide their best support to these new comers

to settle in WA. The members also visit the newly arrived boys in the Perth Airport Detention Centre quite regularly.

VKR Referendum

Our chapter members heavily involved in promoting VKR voting among the community and provided financial support. We acknowledge the importance of this voting and encourage every single tamil person to get involved.

Networking

On March 18th, our chapter representative made an introduction speech at a public forum organized by the Refugee Rights Action

Queensland Chapter Report

Refugees Need Assessment and Aid

ATC-Qld Chapter through its ATC members volunteering their time and service is currently active in assessing and assisting the needs of the Brisbane based Tamil refugees. Priority area is securing job and apprenticeship opportunities. Ongoing assistance includes supply of computer, street maps, assistance with transportation to place of worship, providing Tamil movies/other entertainment. A "Meet the Community" project is underway which will enable the new arrivals to meet with the rest of the community, thereby further enhancing the interaction between the groups.

For anyone who wishes to contribute their time, service or donations, please contact 1300 660 629

VKR Resolution

ATC members assisted the Qld VKR coordinator with

gathering voter's list data.

Lobbying Activities

15th of March: ATC-Qld Chapter political coordinator and a few members visited Amnesty Qld accompanying two eye witnesses (of the Sri Lankan government's genocidal war against the Tamils) and two Tamil refugees who had recently arrived in Brisbane from Christmas Island. Their eye witness accounts of the atrocities committed by Sri Lankan government and the hardship they have undergone during their stay in the last phase of war were discussed in the meeting. They also met ex-Senator Andrew Bartlett and explained the issues of concern to the Tamils. Mr Bartlett stressed the importance of the Tamils living in Australia lobbying their parliamentary representatives to make effective and meaningful policy changes in the government's approaches in dealing the issue. NGO work was also discussed and Mr Bartlett showed a lot of interest.

Global Tamil Forum

24 February: ATC-Qld Chapter was represented at the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) inauguration at the House of Commons on 24 February 2010 and the 4 days convention, including the gala night which concluded the convention on Friday, 26 February 2010. Subsequent to this meeting the ATC-Qld political lobby team sent the GTF report and media releases to key Qld MPs and Senators requesting them to support the UK initiative and openly speak out and take similar collective actions on Sri Lanka.

Service Appreciation

ATC-Qld Chapter wishes to record our sincere appreciation of Mr Appiah Raveenthiran for the enormous service rendered both at Chapter and National levels in the production of the ATC Tamil newsletter and in other areas of ATC activities. He is taking temporary leave from his volunteer work. We wish him all the best and a good rest and hope to see him back in his role very soon.

New South Wales Chapter Report

Vaddukoddai Resolution Referendum

ATC NSW committee members have been working with TRCA very closely and providing our support. ATC members have been actively collating the list of voters for the VKR referendum and will continue to provide our support to make this a success.

TRCA organised a radio promotion to collect voters' details on Inpathamil Oli radio on Sunday 21 March 2010. ATC volunteers assisted with administrative tasks on the day.

ATC speakers encouraged participation by the listeners in the referendum and explained how the results of the referendum can be used for lobbying activities.

Public meeting on VKR 1976 Referendum:

A public meeting will be held on VKR 1976 Referendum. This will feature several prominent Tamil Speakers who will talk and discuss about VKR in detail.

Time: Monday, 5th of April at 6PM

Venue: Homebush Boys High School



Dinner with the Hon. Laurie Ferguson and Deputy Prime Minister Hon. Julia Gillard

ATC representatives attended a fundraising dinner hosted by Hon. Laurie Ferguson, Parliamentary Secretary for Multi-cultural Affairs and Settlement Services. Deputy Prime Minister Hon Julia Gillard was the guest speaker at the event. ATC representatives had the opportunity to meet and discuss issues concerning Tamils with the Deputy Prime Minister and seek appointment to meet the ATC representatives.

Working with refugees

ATC representatives are continuing to keep dialogue with some Tamils in Villawood detention centre and provid-

ing assistance in many ways. We are also working with other refugee groups from other communities and churches to get further assistance.

We have raised the issues raised by them to several key politicians and written letters seeking assistance from other agencies in relation to issues faced by them.

International Women's day Celebrations in NSW

Women for Justice is a group of Tamil women in Sydney who network and work in solidarity with other organisations. Several ATC members are in this group. It is an organisation predominantly run by Tamil women but we have quite a few non Tamil friends

who are part of it. It is a group that advocates and creates awareness of the plight of Tamils amongst the general public in the wider community. On 6th March 2010, to mark International Women's day, Women for Justice had a dance to portray the Tamil struggle. Women for justice have found that through dance we can create understanding of our plight in a very different way. The responses received for the performances have been quite amazing.

www.tamiljustice.com
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/44166732@N02/sets/72157622980169087/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/44166732@N02/sets/72157622979184647/>

Meeting with officials of Department of Immigration and Citizenship

ATC representatives met with senior officials from DIAC and some lawyers representing Tamil refugees to discuss concerns of the Tamils in Christmas Island and Villawood. As ATC representatives are in regular contact with Tamils detained in Christmas Island and Villawood, they were able to raise several issues of importance with the department officials face to face. The outcome of the meeting was very positive resulting in some restrictions being lifted for the amils Tamils in Christmas Island.

National Political Activities—March

Three key activities carried out by the National Political Team during the last month are briefly presented in this report

Global Tamil Forum Inauguration

The Inaugural General Meeting (IGM) of the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) was very successfully organised by the British Tamil Forum (BTF) at the Parliament House in London on the 24th of February 2010. Seven representatives from the ATC participated in the event. The event was addressed by Foreign Affairs spokespersons

from all three parties in UK, including the Foreign Secretary Hon. David Milliband. A few Government Ministers, MPs from all three parties, and several aspiring politicians addressed the event. The delegates from GTF also got a chance to talk to the British Prime Minister, Hon. Gordon Brown.

The success of this event is a clear testimony to the success of BTF as a UK-based Tamil Diaspora organisation. Some factors that possibly contributed to the success of the BTF are:

1. Highly established political culture in UK and the historic links British had with Sri Lanka;
2. Tamil population of around

200000 with established roots and financial muscle;

3. Clever organisational activities and simple hard work.

Although the conditions in Australia are significantly different to those exist in the UK, ATC can still learn valuable lessons from the BTF experience. . There are several other factors in play for the extra-ordinary endorsement received by the GTF, and some of these possibly are:

1. Genuine interest among UK and other Western countries to resolve the long-standing Tamil issue once and for all.
2. A general view among the policy makers in the West that the current initiatives by the Tami Diaspora should be encouraged and supported; and
3. Possibly, the Western governments might use their closer interactions with the Tamil Diaspora as a means of applying pressure on Sri Lanka to reform itself (Note: there is general disappointment among the Western governments regarding the progress made

by the Sri Lankan government on the political and reconciliation fronts).

Irrespective of the reasons that contributed to such high level interactions, the key point is this opportunity, that may allow us to work constructively towards achieving justice and peace for Tamils in Sri Lanka, should not be missed.

While we are satisfied with the extra-ordinary endorsement conferred on GTF, this should not lead us into false expectations. The Tamil issue is still not a major issue in International politics, and there are no clear views among the Western governments regarding the acceptable solution to the Tamil problem. Several politicians who addressed the IGM endorsed 'self-determination' as the way forward. One senior Labour Party politician supported the idea of a "two-state solution". However, several MPs over informal discussions suggested the need for "devolution of power". Obviously a range of views exist.

In terms of influencing the policies of the Western gov-



ernments, we have a long way to go. The UK has officially stated the need for significant reforms to the Sri Lankan constitution. In Australia, our Foreign Minister Mr. Stephen Smith has mentioned words like 'power sharing' and 'semi-autonomy' during press-interviews; however, none of this has entered into the policies of the government or the major political parties. Our aim in this regard should be to ensure our political representatives reach the same level of understanding as the UK politicians .

2. ATC Meeting with Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

ATC representatives met with a senior advisor to Mr. Chris Evans, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on March 1, 2010. The meeting was cordial and effective, and lasted more than an hour. The main issues discussed were:

- 1.The possibility of having a quota for Tamil women under the women at risk category;
- 2.Long delays in getting security clearances for Tamils, which is causing frustrations amongst refugees in both Christmas Island and Villawood;
- 3.The serious community concerns regarding the conditions in the Merak boat, and our offer to work with the government to bring this issue to a closure; and
- 4.Political solution and economic empowerment of the Tamils in the North-East of Sri Lanka,

and the implications of this on reducing the number of people fleeing their homeland.

The important outcomes of this meeting could be summarised as follows:

- 1.The advisor acknowledged his satisfaction with ATC's approach of offering solutions and its willingness to work with the government;
- 2.Offered to get appointments with Mr. Chris Evans (the Minister) and the Management of the Christmas Island Detention Centre;
- 3.Offered to organise meetings with Senior Immigration Officials who handle women at risk and other refugee category visas;
- 4.Took the details of the two identified families at the Villawood Detention Centre and promised to look into the possibilities to help;
- 5.Encouraged the concept of ATC forming its own NGO to carry out humanitarian work.

The additional meetings with Senior Immigration Officials are being planned now.

3. UNHCR Review of Sri Lanka and ATC's Actions

UNHCR is presently reviewing its Sri Lanka guidelines, and there is a possibility that one outcome could be UNHCR declaring parts of Sri Lanka safe for Tamils. There are also concerns that any such outcomes will be eagerly welcome by the Australian government as it is facing a tough election where the

refugee issue could play a significant role. Any adverse outcome from the UNHCR review, and the consequent actions by our government, could have serious implications to the future of Tamil refugees in Australia as well as in several other countries.

ATC takes this issue very seriously and presently in the process of preparing documents that would be used to present our case to the UNHCR, and to the Australian government and the Parliamentarians. Our case will highlight the present deplorable conditions in Sri Lanka, and will argue that normalcy has not returned to Tamils in Sri Lanka and it is pre-mature for any such considerations.

More details on our actions and outcomes will be presented in the next newsletter.

The seminar titled 'Human Rights and War Crimes in Sri Lanka' was chaired by distinguished Australian barrister Stephen Keim SC, [link](#) most famously known for his passionate and successful defence of Dr Mohamed Haneef [Link](#)

ATC Media team

ATC's Spokesperson Dr Sam Pari was invited to address a gathering of Queensland's lawyers and judges, at a seminar accompanying the Annual General Meeting of the International Commission of Jurists, Queensland Branch on Monday 22 March. Queensland President of Amnesty

International Ms Maree Klemm also addressed the audience.

ATC Media team conducted a media training workshop in Melbourne. It was well attended by media teams from Melbourne and Adelaide. More such events are planned through out the year. If you interested in helping the media team, please contact Dr Sam Pari via

me-dia@australiantamilcongress.com

From the hard work of ATC media team (Victorian chapter) and a friend of the Tamils (David Feith) the article appeared in The Age and the Sydney Morning Herald. It also publicises two events in Sydney and Melbourne.

Tamil asylum seekers still need protection:

[The Age SMH](#)

Dear member,

Message to Members

Around the globe we have seen boycott campaigns of Sri Lankan products pick up momentum. Come learn, discuss and participate in a forum that looks into the moral responsibilities and challenges encountered in sporting activism : [link](#) [wordpress](#)



Rumanian Box

Roy Ratnavel (Canada)

Some people like to collect coins, first edition stamps, retro comic books or sports memorabilia. I collect spoken words. I hunt and gather these words when I overhear on the street, while watching movies, in my own living room via television. These words-of-mouth include cultural sayings, turns of phrase, proverbs, quips, and impromptu bon mots have uttered over the years.

A friend who worked in law enforcement – more importantly in the ‘financial fraud squad’ asked me recently if I ever heard of “Rumanian Box.” Not for 40 years, I replied. He looked shocked and then said you must remember where you came from. I do, I said. He piped up again and said “The rate among Sri Lankan politicians to create their own Rumanian Box is 100 per cent.” So I looked it up.

The legendary Depression-era con man Victor Lustig who wrote the famous “Ten Commandments for Con Men” used to sell a ‘money making machine’ called the “Rumanian Box.” This was a little machine that a mark would put a blank piece of paper into, only to see real currency come out the other side.

The brilliant Lustig sold this Rumanian Box over and over again for vast sums – but he’s been outdone by the modern rulers of Sri Lanka, who managed to manufacture a Rumanian Box. Sri Lankans at large seems to be the unsuspecting buyers of it. At least recent examples show, the Sri Lankan genius for this catchy epigram, the memorable phrase, especially in Sri Lankan politics, is inexhaustible.

The criminal minded Sri Lankan president, Mahinda, is a radical Buddhist and as incandescently uxorious family man who has succumbed

to the temptations of Rajapakse rascality of Miloševićism but not the purgations of public repentance. When he addressed the lemmings of Lanka early this year during the sham election campaign, he was competing with the heavy artillery of pyrotechnics of racist presidents of the past and seasoned grumbler-rouser such as J.R. Jayawardene.

Visiting Sri Lanka some years ago, I was lucky to have a fairly genial “minder” whom I’ll call Mr. Silva. He guided me patiently around the militarized, ruined and war ravaged country, explaining things away by means of a sort of denial mechanism and never seeming to lose interest in the gargantuan cover-ups to one of world’s most racist and operatic leader-cult. Seems Mr. Silva was also buyer of the Rumanian Box. In fact pretty much every Sinhalese was given free shots of cool-aid.

When General Genocidal Fonseka was remanded in custody by the crime boss of Colombo, Fonseka’s daughter was outraged at the injustice brought upon her family – and it is understandable; but the fact is that many Tamils were and still are subjected to similar or worse treatment by those same thugs. Beyond a few such bleats of outrage and melees, however, the huge payouts are always enjoyed, by and large, with a collective group of corrupt Rajapakse family of thug politicians. Now, the president’s son has hopped on board the gravy train. Because beneath Sri Lanka’s nationalist veneer, on a more subtle strata of the national psyche, there remains a strong temptation to not really give a damn. The corrupters, after all, have always made way too much money; what’s the difference if some fat cat in the government pockets \$20 million instead of \$10 million?

The only reason such apathy exists, however, is because there’s still a widespread mis-

understanding among Sinhalese population as to how “badly” their fellow citizens of the country – the Tamils, are treated, with emphasis on the quotation marks around “badly.” The question every Sinhalese should be asking, as one politician after another, sucks money from the system – is this: In an economy as horrible as Sri Lanka’s – which ironically looks like those hollowed-out ghost ships we see on History Channel documentaries like Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes, where in the hell did country’s leaders eye-popping wealth come from, exactly? The answer to that question is basically twofold: They raped the country, and they raped their people.

The bottom line is that Sri Lanka has learned absolutely nothing from its trouble past. In fact, the same politicians who drove the country into the ditch are back conniving and playing the country for a fool in force – only this time with the full support. In the process, they’re rapidly re-creating the conditions for another crisis, with the same actors once again playing the same crazy games of political chicken with the same toxic outcomes as before.

Con artists have a word for the inability of their victims to accept that they’ve been scammed. They call it the “True Believer Syndrome.” That’s sort of where the Sri Lankans are, in a state of nagging disbelief about the real problem in Sri Lanka. It isn’t so much that Sri Lanka has inadequate rules or incompetent corrupt leaders, although both of these things are certainly true. The real problem is that it doesn’t matter what rules and regulations are in place if the people running the country are rip-off artists and the citizenry suffers from a pre-existing condition called ‘racial bias.’

The democratic political system assumes a certain minimum level of ethical behaviour and civic instinct over and above what is spelled out by the constitution. If those ethics are absent – well, democracy isn’t going to work, no matter what. Sure, mugging the blind is against the law, but it’s also easy. To prevent it, a civil society depends, for the most part, not on cops but on people making the conscious decision not to do it.

Race arrogance and nationalist hysteria are powerful cements for the most odious systems, as Europeans and Americans have good reason to remember. Despite this, in Sri Lanka there are those who feel the Rajapakse regime, under which they themselves could not live for a single day, to be somehow more “authentically” Sri Lanka. Every Sinhalese instead regard the ‘Rajapakse’ system as a phenomenon of the very extreme and dangerous system for all Sri Lankans. It is based on totalitarian “military first” mobilization, is maintained by blind faith by its citizens which instils an ideology of the most unapologetic racism, juvenile jingoism and extreme xenophobia carried out with help of ‘pedophile brigade’ – the Sri Lankan army.

Sadly Sri Lanka is a country that is wrapped in cover-up and deep fried in paranoid conspiracy about Tamils. This combination is basically a license to print money by the corrupt leaders – no different than attaching an ATM to the side of the country. The country now has become one giant dope house, where a few major players like Rajapakses extract the valuables from addicted people of the country the way junkies share needles.

More to the point, the fact that no one has done much of anything to change the rules and behaviour of people of Sri Lanka shows that they still don’t get it. Instituting racial dominance and vehement denials of Tamil oppression regardless of the nasty past is like the

Rumanian Box (Continued)

addict coming back to the con man to get his lost money back. Sinhalese must ask themselves how well that ever works out, and then get ready for the reload.

Every negative proves a positive, and the presence of denial in Sri Lanka just proves how bad things are. It only proves that once again Sri Lanka is populated by the likes of those who have a genuine hate for Tamils, sitting inside fluorescent-lit cubicle size houses gnawing their fingernails down to bloody nubs while counting large numbers of dead Tamil bodies.

In one of the greatest feats of con artistry of all history, the Rajapaskes, persuaded the Sinhalese to expel the Tamils from the North, and then persuaded the Sinhalese to provide the margin of victory in bankrupting the country itself. This precocious manipulation by a con family of Rumanian Box makers showed astounding finesse and precocity, made more piquant and ironic. All countries swaddle themselves in myths, and the Sri Lankans are just as self-indulgent as others, but this country houses vast number of demagogues and many lunatics with the gift for endless hyperbole and hucksterism. And they are certainly more persuasive and sophisticated than the legendary Depression-era con man Victor Lustig.

To appreciate how all of these – sometimes brilliant schemes work, is to understand the difference between an informed individual and a group of lemmings off the cliff. To realize that unlike an informed individual who follows his or her own nose, the lemmings when they jump off the cliff, their nose follows rear-end of another lemming. Many Sri Lankans instinctively understand this to be true – but, much like knowing it and actually watching the whole

scene from start to finish are two very different things. In that spirit, a brief history of Rajapakse years is the best Rumanian Box scam the country has ever seen.

The reality is that the post-war Sri Lankan era in which this close-knit political family has turned out to be a chaotic frenzy of high-stakes con artistry, in which the country is bilked out of billions using a dizzying array of old-school hustles and hijinx – but if isn't for the ponderous complexity, it would have fit well in snugly in a slick Rumanian Box designed by Victor Lustig.

Sri Lankan citizenry's uninhibited fermentation of ignorance is largely uninspiring, and it is also often garish, forever fatuous and certainly corrupting. You may care to imagine how much surplus value has been wrung out of such lemmings and for how long, in order to feed and sustain the militarized crime family that completely gouged both the country and its people. This is a cerebral reminder every day; it is a source of poignant pain and nightmare of a life for Diaspora Tamils. But it is also a comfort, as I choose to see it as a sign somehow, as the saying goes "That people get the government they deserve."

Fans of the movie Goodfellas will recall Henry Hill – played by Ray Liotta and Tommy DeVito – played by Joe Pesci, taking the same approach to the Bamboo Lounge nightclub they'd been gouging for years. Roll the Ray Liotta narration: "Finally, when there's nothing left, when you can't borrow another buck . . . you bust the joint out. You light a match."

It is a brilliant move by the Rajapaskes. And why not? After all Sri Lanka is just another basket case with an inferiority complex.

Rumanian Box: It is now part of my collection of bons mots.

roy_ratnavel@hotmail.com

THIRD CHOICE**Ram Mohan**

Democracy has been confined to two choices almost universally. In the US the choice is between Republicans and Democrats. In the UK it is between Labour and Conservatives. Labour and Liberals in Australia; Liberal and conservative in Canada; Labour Party and National Party in New Zealand; UNP and SLFP in Sri Lanka; Congress and BJP in India; and so the list goes on. If you look at the essential features, all these parties are pro Establishment Parties and the differences between the two parties in any pair are marginal. In reality they are not alternatives Some call the choice as between the Devil and the Deep Sea; others call it between the rock and a hard surface. Someone joked it as a choice between a horse and a donkey.

[full article](#)

News Around the Globe**Terrorist members can claim asylum in Britain.**

Telegraph.co.uk

By Duncan Gardham, Security Correspondent

The court ruled that being a member of the Tamil Tigers, which has been designated as a terrorist organization by the government, should not prevent an individual claiming asylum. Their ruling was made in the case of "R" who joined the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1992, at the age of 10...

[More](#)

Tamil refugees face deportation**Green left Weekly**

Jay Fletcher

21 March 2010

In the Christmas Island detention centre's Alpha Compound — a maximum secu-

rity-style section holding refugees from Afghanistan and Sri Lanka — Tamil refugees are desperately appealing to the Australian government not to send them back to Sri Lanka.

Dr Sam Pari from the Australian Tamil Congress told Green Left Weekly Sri Lanka was still a dangerous place and the situation was still very bad for Tamils across the whole country [Greenleft](#)

Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Stephen Smith, MP
On 17 March 2010

I wish to update the House on the situation in Sri Lanka since my last report to the House on 14 September 2009.

In particular, I want to update the House on the ongoing political and humanitarian challenges facing Sri Lanka and Australia's strengthened financial and diplomatic support for the people of Sri Lanka to help Sri Lanka meet these challenges.

[Full statement](#)

Asian Human Rights Commission - Statement

SRI LANKA: Cry of three women and water canon in the streets

Basil Fernando

Sri Lanka today is a land of forced disappearances, large scale extrajudicial killings, endemic torture and every kind of violence. In all acts of violence it is the women who are the direct or indirect victims. What is worse is that there is no one to hear their cry. Added to the lawlessness that creates violence is the collapsed system of justice which fails to investigate or to provide redress for the cruelties, injustices and endless crimes. More: [Statement](#)

News from Our Home Land

Legal Limbo: The Uncertain Fate of Detained LTTE Suspects in Sri Lanka (A Human Rights Watch Report)

This 30-page report is based on interviews with the detainees' relatives, humanitarian workers, and human rights advocates, among others. The Sri Lankan government has routinely violated the fundamental rights of the detainees, Human Rights Watch found. The government contends that the 11,000 detainees are former fighters or supporters of the defeated Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

[Full report](#)



More than 100,000 Tamil Children traumatized: Norwegian aid worker

Redd Barna (Save the Children) aid worker from Norway, Vidar Strøm, has said that there are over one hundred thousand Tamil Children who have been traumatised, to a greater or lesser degree, after being exposed to the War and then for the internment camps in the North. Redd Barna has gained access to the camps only after December 01 and is working to create child-friendly environment within the camps.

"The goal is to make a very abnormal situation as normal as possible," Mr. Strøm told the official website of the organisation. Save the Children is working intensively to put in place school, kindergarten or similar structures for children who are exposed to war, Mr. Strøm told the website. This is his fifth mission in Sri Lanka.

[More](#)

Post-Mullivaikal Secret detention centres in Sri Lanka – a request from NESoHR

Several thousand LTTE members and supporters have been imprisoned following the last phase of the war in Mullivaikal in May 2009. In the coming May it will be the one year anniversary of their imprisonment.

Except for the inconsistent statistics given by the Sri Lankan government, there are no other available data about the total number being held in detention - post-Mullivaikal. Initially ICRC was permitted to visit those held in the detention centres but this was stopped in July 2009. According to an ICRC statement, issued when it was permitted to meet those in some detention centres, it has met 6700 of those being held.

Thus one can assume that ICRC has their names ([ICRC](#)).

Requested data:
Full name of the disappeared:
Date of Birth:

Are there any eye witnesses to the arrest by the Sri Lankan military?

Name of the person giving information:

Relationship to the disappeared:

Email address to send the data::

nesohrsrilanka@gmail.com

[More..](#)

Tamil forum calls for boycott of Sri Lanka

By: Suren Surendiran
Global Tamil Forum Spokesperson

It is hoped that all donors including China, Japan and India will follow precedence set by Britain and the U.S. in persuading Sri Lanka to address its human rights record. It is against this backdrop and as part of its campaign to create worldwide awareness of the real human rights situation in Sri Lanka, the Global Tamil

Forum has called for a worldwide boycott of Sri Lankan products and services – www.boycottsrilanka.com [More...](#)

[More on boycott](#)

Please do not help contribute towards the genocide and human rights abuse of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Watch the link :

Watch [youtube](#)

A Year ago.... (Editorial cont..)

It is our responsibility to protest on behalf of our brethren in our homeland. It is our duty to honour those who have sacrificed their lives for us. You and I have been saved to fulfill our duty to fight against prejudice, inequality and injustice.

As 19th of May approaches, I hope we as Tamils remember our duties to pay respects to those who lost their lives on the final days of the battle. With surging emotions I say it was a battle because the war is not over. A dutiful heart knows that there are still many battles to be fought. We must brace ourselves and be rooted in our duty towards Eelam, not be uprooted by our daily emotion.

Tamils aren't voting for change

Suren Surendira-15 March 2010

The [Tamil National Alliance's](#) current manifesto [prefers a federal structure in Sri Lanka to a separate state](#). It claims shared sovereignty, and that the north and east provinces are the historical habitations of Tamil-speaking people. It further states that the Tamil people are a distinct nationality and are entitled to the right of self-determination. Power-sharing arrangements must be established in a unit of merged Northern and Eastern provinces based on a federal structure, in a manner also acceptable to the Tamil-

speaking Muslim people. Devolution of power should be in the areas of land, law and order, socioeconomic development including health and education, resources and fiscal powers.

[full article.](#)

Christmas Island is a ‘Pressure Cooker’

Antony Loewenstein

Christmas Island is a "pressure cooker", according to one recently returned refugee advocate. And the situation will blow up completely if the federal government is allowed to deport asylum seekers back to strife-torn Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

[More..](#)

Ban Ki Moon....(cont.)

International public opinion can be mobilized only in solidarity with other oppressed peoples. It is a difficult task but it is the duty of the Diaspora to work towards it as the only useful and necessary assistance to the suffering Tamils in Eelam. There is not going to be a political solution and the people will rise up again and at that time it will succeed only if there is matching international support. Otherwise it will be a failure as in May 2009.

Some of us may not see any time frame for the future but we have to realize that history has no time frame but only cause and effect frame and all what we can do is to direct our efforts towards the desired outcome in an effective manner. Even a Prairie Fire needs only a spark if the environment is appropriate. At all times we have to remember that we are not merely suffering under globalised capital but living in an irreversible globalised world from which none can escape.

By Ram Mohan

Vaddukkodai Resolution 1976 (VKR1976) Gathering Momentum

Postal Voting:

- You should register before **30th of March 2010** to ensure that you receive postal voting cards via post
- The postal voting will be sent to all registered voters, but you can vote in person in the polling booths if you wish
- Postal votes should be received by the electoral body on or before 16th of April to be eligible
- Postal vote and election information kit are expected to be sent to the registered voters by 26th of March
- Information kit will include all the information necessary regarding the election process (how to vote, etc)
- If you are traveling overseas or unable to cast the vote on the day you can do proxy voting

for more information on proxy voting please contact 1300 464 402

The Sri Lanka Human Rights Project
(Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, The University of Sydney) presents
'SRI LANKA, SPORTS & HUMAN RIGHTS'

"No normal sport in an abnormal society..." - was a phrase coined by Hassan Howa, President of the South African Council On Sport (SACOS) from 1977 – 1981. Encapsulating the motives of the sporting wing of the country's anti-apartheid movement, the subsequent deracialisation of sport illustrated the influential voice 'boycotting' gave to individuals when official diplomacy failed.

In 2005, inspired by initiatives in South Africa, a coalition of Palestinian civil society groups called for people all over the world to engage in a nonviolent campaign to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel until it complies with international law.

With sporting boycotts providing individuals with a medium for political activism and the Sri Lankan cricket team proposing an Australian tour in October 2010, the question of whether the gross human rights abuses committed during the country's civil war should be met with similar restriction, is subsequently raised.

Joined by a prominent activist during the anti-apartheid South Africa Movement in Australia, **Karel Solomon, Associate Professor Jake Lynch** (Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies) and **Antony Loewenstein** (independent freelance journalist and vocal critic of the Israel/Palestine conflict), we will consider the implications of boycotting in the context of Sri Lanka's tour of Australia.

We invite you to a Q&A panel as we, together with your opinions, analyse the moral responsibilities and challenges encountered in sporting activism.

When - 6:15pm Monday 29th of March, 2010
Where - Rm 107, Mackie Building, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, The University of Sydney

For more information please contact
Gobie Rajalingam - gobie.rajalingam@gmail.com
Brami Jegan - brami.jegan@usyd.edu.au
www.srilankaproject.com.au/
www.srilankaproject.wordpress.com



Dear members

In an attempt to make our correspondence with you more interactive, please have your internet access switched on whilst reading ATC letters and newsletters. You may click on hyperlinks (words coloured in blue and underlined) and this will open the website of relevance on your computer.

We like to thank the members who sent their feedback last month. We have taken the suggestions to improve our newsletter.

Please send us your feedback and creations to

newsletter@austriantamilcongress.com

Australian Tamil Congress

Postal Address:

P.O. BOX 22 COMO WA 6952 AUSTRALIA

Tel: 1300 660 629

Web: <http://www.australiantamilcongress.com>



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.”

