

THE DEFENSE OF OUR PEOPLE

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Charged by the Brisbane City Council for damaging “significant vegetation”, in reality some bushes of grass and gum-tree saplings in my back yard, tried and convicted by a Magistrate in a potty little suburb in Brisbane, and awaiting sentencing on September 20, 2007, my mind is too confused to write a proper article on the terrible suffering of our Tamil people. However, someone has to address the dreadful things which are happening to our people, and to ask for international help. I apologise if this article is disjointed and poorly presented. It is the best I can do at this time.

In the four DVDs I have recently released to show the world the suffering of our people in the North and East, I said, “*The Sri Lankan Armed Forces having finished with the East, the North will follow, if we do nothing.*”

- We did nothing
- The North followed (shelling on 22 August 2007, bombing the next day), and now, 29 August, Mannar. The next will be the Wannai, if we continue to do nothing.

At a recent talk to expatriate Tamils, I was asked, “*What is the LTTE (Tamil Tigers) doing?*” I chose to answer the question with another, “*What are you doing?*” The answer is “*Nothing, other than hallucinating about Eelam and trying to shift the responsibility for its achievement, to the LTTE.*”

What can we do?

A great deal. Addressing the 29th AGM of Illankai Tamil Sangam, USA, in November 2006, I spelt out what we can do. This was reproduced in the Souvenir “*Turning Points. Building bridges for the Hope of our children.*” Tammy Sriharan, the dynamic (non-Sri Lankan wife of the straight-talking, no-nonsense President, Sri Haran, might still have a copy. Drop a note to Sangam at P.O.Box 46, Maryknoll, New York 10545 or log on to www.sangamevents.org, drop a cheque (or, as you call it, ‘a check’) and get a copy.

You will find two articles,

1. A comprehensive article on the history of the Tamil struggle – “*Chronology of the Tamil struggle and the turning points in the Sinhalese-Tamil relationship*” by M.Nadarajan. This is essential reading for those who need to know what they should.
2. “*Lobbying the International Community*” by me.

In this article I set out the score. “The only three ‘forces’ that could possibly block Rajapakse’s disastrous agenda to prevent a war (it is too late for that) which will be unwinnable (by either side) and unstoppable, and which will only result in a massive destruction of life and property, and economic bankruptcy are:

1. The international community – in particular the crucial aid-donors,
2. The military power of the LTTE,
3. The Sinhalese people in the Sri Lankan South, where opposition to the war is escalating – not because of any empathy towards the Tamils but because they have to pay the human and economic costs of a war.

I went on to expand on this nebulous entity, “The International Community”, and said “*This is far wider than is generally accepted and should include:-*

1. Foreign Governments and their respective Opposition politicians
2. Non-Sri Lankans living in these countries

*3 The expatriate Tamil community, now a million people.
Each group has a specific role to play and must be targetted separately."*

I then set about addressing the problem of a well-organised 'dis-information campaign' launched by the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) over the past several decades, to convince the world that the only problem is 'Tamil Tiger terrorism'. The real problem is, of course, Sinhala-Buddhist ethno-religious chauvinism.

I launched a series of DVDs (I have lost count – I think about half a dozen) - to show the world what has been happening to our Tamil people (yes, they are my people as much as they are yours).

I opened the batting in every DVD with, *"I am a Sinhalese from the majority community. I am not a member of the brutalised Tamil people. My concerns are entirely humanitarian. I quit Sri Lanka some 30 years ago and who runs that country, whether it is Mahinda Rajapakse or any one else, is of no concern to me as long as it is run without bloodshed, chaos and the extensive violation of human rights and the taking of the country to a fascist dictatorship and economic ruin, fighting an unnecessary war."*

In the updated and expanded DVDs (July 2007), I included a piece on the 'War of National Liberation of the Tamil people' and pointed out that what was going on was a War, whether the GOSL admitted this or not. If it is a 'War', Humanitarian Law applies and the participants (GOSL and LTTE) are combatants. Banning one side and calling them 'terrorists' is not only unhelpful (since you cannot negotiate with terrorists), but on Humanitarian Law, is illegal.

The DVDs vary in length (and depth), from 120min to 20min. The long one is comprehensive, covering everything from Vijaya, the grandson of a lion who founded the Sinhala race(!), to Mahinda Rajapakse, today's Dutugemunu, the Sinhalese worrier from the same area that Rajapakse comes from, who killed the just Tamil king Ellala. This DVD is too long for people in a hurry, or with a short attention-span i.e. politicians.

The shortest, *International Appeal to stop bloodshed in the Tamil Areas* is for the 'tell-me-about-it-in-a-few-words' people.

I begged of people to have a copy of this DVD on the desk of every politician and decision-maker in every country. Was it done? No. Why not? Because the expatriate community cannot see the importance of the absolute need to show the world the ground situation in the North and East. So, the GOSL gets away with mass murder, bordering on Genocide.

In June 2007, I was in Geneva for the UN Human Rights Council meeting, where I addressed some 15,000 people who protested outside the UN building, in pouring rain (there's dedication for you). I would go again for the September meeting if I could have afforded the fare. I cannot, thanks to the trumped-up charge by the Brisbane City Council which I have referred to.

The day after the massive protest (the largest Geneva has ever seen), I was in the UN lobbying the diplomats and others, from a number of countries. Almost every one of the 30 people I saw, asked me for the DVDs which they had heard about, but not seen. Did I give them a copy? No, I did not. Why not? Because none was available. There's poor organisation for you.

Opposing us was the sleek Sri Lankan Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva, promoting the GOSL and its murderous Armed Forces, ironically called 'Security Forces. He was backed up by the Sri Lankan Attorney General, Solicitor General, an array of Rajapakse's Ministers, spewing out disinformation by the bucket load, and handing out glossy brochures which had even more lies.

It is this stark difference in approach by the two sides, which makes the Tamil struggle remain a struggle, and why a brutal, indeed bestial, regime survives.

The window of opportunity

There is a fast-closing 'window of opportunity' for the Tamils. Despite Rajapakse's grandiosity, the GOSL is on the financial rocks (evidence- the recent desperate attempt to raise \$500 million at any rate of interest), and in the human rights dog-house. If anything is going to sway the IC in favour of the Tamils, it has to be the escalating violation of human rights, by the ruthless, brutal Sinhala regime, led by a murderous bunch in uniform, in yellow-robos, and 'national dress', with or without a red shawl.

Some of them wave multi-barrel rocket launchers, and cheer the Kfir bombers as they drop their deadly load on schools, hospitals, refugee camps, homes, or just Tamil civilians. If it is Tamil, it is fair game. Others wave red flags claiming they are Marxists, which must make Marx turn in his grave. Others wave copies of the Mahavamsa, that textbook of anti-Tamil ethno-religious chauvinism, masquerading as a historical document.

We could have had these extremists and political opportunists on the mat if we had played our cards well. We could have shown the world that in the face of such brutality, bestiality and sub-human behaviour by the GOSL, there is no alternative to a separate Tamil State. Eelam. But we have failed, the window of opportunity is closing, and the Tamils in the North and East are gradually disappearing.

As I have said in the DVDs, Eelam is not the creation of the Tamil Tigers or the Tamil people. It is the creation of Sinhala-Buddhist ethno-religious chauvinism, political opportunism and the exclusion of the Tamils from the decision-making process for at least the past half century, which has sabotaged the building of a Sri Lankan nation. If Sri Lanka is to be a Sinhala-Buddhist nation, then there is no alternative to a separate Tamil State, Eelam. It is as simple as that. This is the message we have failed to deliver internationally, and why so many thousand Tamil lives are being lost.

And now?

The bombing and shelling of Jaffna has started. On 21 August 2007, the GOSL shelled the Poonakari-Vadamaraachi East area in the Jaffna Peninsula. from 8am to 4 pm.

The following day, Mullaitivu was bombed. 16 bombs were dropped in an area where GCE (A level) students were about to sit for their examination.

On 29 August 2007, there was an artillery attack on areas controlled by the Tamil Tigers in the Mannar district.

And then? The rest of the Wannu will be bombed, as surely as day follows night

I am not sure how many Tamils are left in the North and East, I suspect there are less than a million. The question is whether the Sinhala regime in Colombo, their murderous Armed Forces, the yellow-robed not-so-cleanly-shaved supposed followers of Buddha, and the Sinhala 'patriots' of this Sinhala-Buddhist nation, want to shed every drop of Tamil blood. If they do, it is Genocide.

Genocide

As I have repeatedly said in all the DVDs, Genocide is defined in the [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#), as an act committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide has nothing to do with

numbers killed, it is the intention and the act(s) to achieve this intention that are important in defining Genocide.

Methods of achieving Genocide.

There are several *ways* to achieve genocide. One can murder them in large or *small* numbers, murder them at once, or gradually, starve them - by blocking the A9 Highway, the only land access to the Jaffna Peninsula with some 600,000 civilians, 150,000 of them children, block survival-activities of the population by bombing fishing villages and boats, banning fishing, and imposing serious constraints on agriculture by declaring some of the most fertile areas of Jaffna as 'High Security Zones', block the supply of fertilizer and agricultural equipment and impose endless curfews which prevent the population from leaving their homes. One could bomb and shell markets, businesses, homes and hospitals, and prevent essential medicines from reaching the people. The GOSL has done all of these (and much more) to make sure that the Tamil people in the North and East do not survive. Once the intention is there to commit genocide, the methods that can be adopted to achieve the desired goal are endless

Different types of genocide.

In addition to 'conventional Genocide', one must recognise 'Educational genocide', 'Cultural genocide', and 'Economic genocide'. These I define as '*the intention, backed by the act, of "destroying in whole or in part the education, culture or economy of a national, ethnic, racial or geographic group"*'. The GOSL is guilty of all of these

Can we stop this?

Yes we can, but time is running out. As I have said over and over again, the most powerful force the Tamils have is a million expatriate Tamils living and working in the richest countries on earth. This is very different from other theatres of conflict eg East Timor, Sudan, Upper Burma, and many other places.

The Sri Lankan situation is unique in at least two important ways.

1. The massive number of highly trained and skilled people in the expatriate Tamil community
2. The Tamil Tigers, with a well-organised and trained army, a navy, and even a (rudimentary) air force, capable of creating panic in the adversary. No other guerrilla force in the world has these facets.

Will the Tamil Tigers be crushed? I do not think they will be. Janaka Perera, of 'Chemmani-fame' (or ill-fame) in an interview just a few days ago says that he has never had any doubts that they can be crushed. Gotabaya Rajapakse, another genius from the Sri Lankan military and the current Defence Secretary, says he will do so, just give him 3 years.

People with little understanding cannot see that the Tamil Tigers are not the problem, it is Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism that is the problem. As such, crushing the Tigers will not produce a 'solution'. What has to be crushed is Sinhala ethno-religious chauvinism, and this they will not do, being the leading proponents of this doctrine.

The only solution they have is the Kfir bomber, multi-barrel rocket launcher, the mass murder of Tamil civilians, and destruction of their property. Their 'vision' for Sri Lanka is a blood-drenched country wrapped in a Lion flag with a Sinhala-Buddhist label as an emblem. A better Sri Lanka, divided if necessary, is possible.

Of one thing I am certain – the GOSL can crush anything, but will not be able to crush the *will* of the Tamil people for freedom from the racist and murderous Sinhala regime. The only way to

crush this is by genocide using whatever military hardware is necessary. We do not have the power to stop this slaughter, but protest we must and will; resist we must, and will.

There are three groups of people in this world - those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who don't know what happened. The vast majority of expatriate Tamils are in the latter two groups. Our problem is to move them to the first group. If we succeed, there will be not just a 'solution', but a *just* solution.

All the brutality currently being unleashed on our people can delay, but not alter, the final result. In fact, it will make it the only possible result.

The most important need is to develop the necessary 'mind-set'. The Sinhala mind-set for centuries has been the 'Mahavamsa mind-set'. It is the Tamil mind-set which is the problem. This is still in the pre-Independence era. It has to change, to accommodate the ground reality. The Tamil mind-set has to be a Separate Tamil State, Eelam. There simply is no alternative. This is not an attempt to divide and destroy the country, but to divide and enable all parts of Sri Lanka to develop. Essentially, it is an attempt to reverse the Colebrook-Cameron 'Reforms' of the British (1833), which has had such a disastrous effect on Sri Lanka, in particular, the prevention of development of the Tamil North and East.

Once the necessary mind-set is in place, there has to be positive action. This has to be an involvement in the struggle. One of the most serious problems with Ceylon, as it then was, was that Independence from Britain was obtained without a struggle. This is in sharp contrast to what happened in India. In Ceylon, there was no involvement or participation of the population. Hence the failure to build a nation. History must not be allowed to repeat itself in the evolution of Tamil Eelam. This is why I have, in numerous addresses across the world, urged people to 'get involved'.

This calls for some degree of self-sacrifice, generosity, risk, sweat, and commitment. The 'reward' will be a Nation which will be a pride to all of us who participated in its production.

The alternative is to watch the Genocide of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, for that is surely the agenda of this brutal, fascist, irresponsible and murderous regime in Colombo, the most dangerous that has ever taken power in that county.

The immediate problem is the survival of the Tamil people. The only three factors that can prevent the wiping out of the Tamils is, as I have said,

1. International public opinion (which is why I made the DVDs),
2. The military power of the LTTE,
3. The political power of my people, the Sinhalese, in the South.

These have to be our priorities, whatever the difficulties and the risks, if our people in the North and East are to survive.

The strategy of the GOSL, well-planned, well-financed and well conducted, with whatever it takes by way of expense, bribery, or intimidation. This is what has to be beaten. What the Tamil need is not better military equipment or even an air force (neither of which are possible), but a strong, well organised and run, international pressure campaign to show the bad faith of the GOSL where a just and equitable result is concerned. It must be pointed out that negotiating with this regime is an exercise in futility, something that had been documented over the past 50 years. There simply is no intention or the will, for the Sinhala Government, present or past, to settle this problem in a just and equitable way. There is no reason to believe that it will change. If that is reality, and it is, what is the purpose of further negotiations?

The Tamil National Armed Force opposing the brutal Sinhala Force has to be supported. If it is weakened, the Tamils will be back to square one, sitting under the conference table, rather than at it, picking up the crumbs which fall from the Sinhala masters at the table. This is what the Tamils did for three decades before their youths picked up arms to force the Sinhala regime to look at the Tamil problem seriously. Until then, the Tamils and their problems were a joke.

Blind Freddy can see the GOSL strategy to cope with this reality. Block LTTE fund-collection abroad, criminalise those who support them, arrest, charge and imprison those who even collect funds for humanitarian purposes, and have the LTTE banned in every country (interestingly, they are not banned in Sri Lanka itself!)

What has never been explained to me is how it is legal to supply funds and military equipment for a Government to bomb its citizens (believe it or not, the Tamils are citizens of Sri Lanka), but it is illegal to supply funds or military equipment for the Tamils to mount a defence. It is something that must be challenged openly and firmly, with a demand for answers from the international community.

In my recent travels across the world, the overwhelming impression I got is that the expatriate Tamil community is simply afraid. It has now become a fearful thing to be a Tamil. The GOSL has managed to get foreign governments to criminalise an entire community, the expatriate Tamil community. It is totally unacceptable and if we cave in, the GOSL would have won, at least abroad. We simply cannot afford to let this happen.

It is worth remembering that if we stand as one, they cannot arrest us all. The problem is that we do not stand as one but are crouched in fear with our heads below the parapet wall, afraid to even admit to being Tamil, let alone being a supporter of the Tamil struggle for justice. Those who dare to raise their heads above the wall, or do the right thing i.e. to support those in the North and East who, in the eyes of their Government, are non-people, find themselves locked up.

This is happening all over the world, Melbourne, Sydney, New York, Toronto, London and probably many other places which I am not aware of. This must be challenged, as we are doing in Melbourne, at whatever the cost.

Three young Tamil boys, one of them a close friend of mine, were arrested, two in Melbourne, one in Sydney, and detained on an absurd charge. An application for bail was refused by a potty little Magistrate. However, when one of them had his bail application taken up in the Supreme Court, it was granted. The Magistrate got the message and granted bail to the other two.

In the bail application, I submitted the reasons why it was inappropriate, indeed illegal, to charge them. If any one wants a copy of my Submission, I would be glad to send it to them. There are compelling reasons why what is happening to our Tamil boys in several counties, can be challenged on Humanitarian Law.

I will not deal with the third (and very important) problem of lobbying the Sinhalese in the Sinhala South. I plan on releasing a DVD targeting the Sinhalese. There are several Sinhalese groups in the South, almost all of them from the Left, who are addressing, or trying to address, this crucial problem. They must be supported.

There is not the slightest doubt as to the final result. The history of liberation struggles of an oppressed people over the past 100 years, has been liberation. Sri Lanka cannot be the exception. In front of the UN in Geneva is a string of flags from all the UN countries. At one end are empty places. One of them is for the flag of Tamil Eelam.

