



TAMIL WRITERS GUILD

Response to Mr. Dayan Jayatilleka Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Dayan Jayatilleka, in his article (SL Daily News 28.04.09) has done it again to whip up support for his dreadful Sri Lankan regime which is suffering from a catastrophic meltdown of trust. He ought to know that he is on a sticky wicket now. Some months ago, he set out the do's and don'ts for his government to implement a step by step method to end the war. But the turn of events in the battle front has taken everyone by surprise and has entered uncharted territory. The indiscriminate mass killing of innocent Tamils who were trapped in the 'No Fire' safety zone and the biggest blunder of acting on the basis that the innocent Internally Displaced People (IDP) were combatants has weakened his argument on humanitarian grounds. Bombing and shelling inside the 'No Fire' zone has been proved by satellite images, even though the SL government barred the international and local media.

The Sri Lankan government's handling of the IDPs and the innocent civilians trapped in Vanni shows extreme callousness. It continues to exclude the media and denies access to those who could assist the IDPs. It is punishing those who have ended up there on their long journeys, driven from pillar to post. Yet its claim that civilians in the 'No Fire' zone were never attacked has been proved to the contrary by evidence. Even the British Foreign Secretary has gone on record to say that there were creditable reports of attacks by the government forces in the 'No Fire' zone.

Behind the wall of censorship, horrendous battles and humanitarian abuses are taking place while other countries just watch or turn a blind eye. By continuing the war with heavy weapons, Colombo demonstrates its determination to resist international pressure and continue its ferocious onslaught into the 'No Fire' zone. But, for how long?

Whether the LTTE is preventing civilians leaving from Vanni is true or not, the main reason for the flight of civilians is the horrific conditions in the 'No Fire' zone. The government has blocked aid supplies, leaving thousands of civilians with wholly inadequate food, shelter and medicine. The ICRC director of operations Pierre Krahenbuhl described the present situation as 'nothing short of catastrophic'. He continued: 'Essentially, none of the civilians' basic needs are met at present, and fear of epidemics, malnutrition and increased deaths due to the lack of treatment is growing by the day. Over to Mr Jayatilleka who wants humanitarian paws off the island.

On 28 February 2009, the government agent for Mullaitivu published a report confirming that there were 330,00 IDPs from 81,000 families and begged for food and medicine.

At that time, the SL government maintained that only 70,000 were there but now says they have to feed 200,000 IDPs who crossed over to the governments camps. Lies, more lies and contradicting statistics At least there should be around 150,000 IDP still left in Mullaitivu. LTTE invited the international observers to come and check it for themselves. But the government won't allow anyone to witness the tragedy of people who are starving and suffering without food and medicine. Is this what the humanitarian issue Mr Jayatilleka is afraid of? The President said his government would not use heavy weapons recently but a few days later, evidence has emerged that heavy weapons were used to kill more innocent victims.

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A Cogent and Effective Response from a Tamil Perspective



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The World Food Organisation's ship was not allowed to go to feed the starving in Vanni and was stopped in Trincomalee. Where will this fit in the Buddhist Dharma?

This proxy war which is orchestrated by India, China, Pakistan and carried out by Sri Lanka is a war to crush the freedom and birth rights of the Tamils who are the indigenous people of the land. In the north, Tamils are outnumbered by the army and live in an open prison. In Vanni, Tamils are being starved to death and live in fear of bombing and shelling. The IDPs who managed to come out or were driven out of Vanni are kept in government controlled Concentration Camps! The Tamils in Colombo are registered in order to control their whereabouts. Does Mr Jayatilleka envisage a day when Tamils will have to carry a card around their neck with the word 'T'?

The Foreign Secretaries of the United Kingdom and France recently met their Sri Lankan counterpart in Colombo and requested a cease fire on humanitarian grounds to assist the IDPs in Vanni. Colombo sent them back empty handed. To add insult to injury, Colombo said it didn't want any lectures from the west on humanitarian issues. This encounter and the disappointing outcome will tick another box in the decision making process as to what else has to be done to punish Sri Lanka for violating international Law. Sheer arrogance and total disregard for basic humanitarian needs have been exposed. Britain and France would remember this debacle when Sri Lanka comes cap in hand for aid etc.

Mr Jayatilleka has to be thanked for quoting two excellent writings from Anita Pratab (The Week, May3, 2009) and Shyam Tekwani (Don't Write the Tigers Obit Yet, Hindustan Times, April25,2009). These two quotations backfired on Mr Jayatilleka because they establish beyond doubt how steadfast and resolute the LLTE has been in achieving their goal i.e. to fight for the fundamental freedom.

Many pictures are flashing across the globe of civilians including children being kept behind barbed wire in Concentration Camps. What for? What have they done to deserve this humiliating treatment? Being the descendants of the indigenous Tamils has cost them very dearly. The root cause of all this is the denial of their fundamental basic human and birth rights. If an 'educated' ambassador like Mr Dayan Jayatilleka can't understand this simple principle, there is a 'cat-in-hell' chance for an ordinary Sinhalese to recognise this fact.

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