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Rituals of Words without Substance

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Abduction of Children

Summary

The Sri Lankan peace process remained stalled as the power struggle between Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe and President Chandrika Kumaratunge continued. In November, Norway suspended its involvement as peace process facilitator pending resolution of the political impasse in Colombo. Meanwhile the LTTE continued its abduction and conscription of children – including those of its political rivals. The LTTE persisted in its efforts to neutralize critics -- politically in the case of its efforts to oust TULF president Anandasangari (it has already killed ten of his colleagues) -- and using more violent means with members of other Tamil political parties and their families. It also stepped up intimidation and assaults against families and schoolteachers suspected of opposing its conscription drive in Valaichenai in October.

Bulletin Number 33 from the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), “Rituals of Words Without Substance,” examines the implications of the international community’s continuing policy of appeasement of the LTTE on Sri Lankan sovereignty, and on the human rights situation faced by civilians in the North East. The report provides detailed case material of new incidents of child recruitment, as well as illustrative examples of the kinds of lists UTHR(J) regularly receives

from the field. It also highlights the LTTE's efforts to eliminate perceived political enemies and destroy their families.

0. Introduction

The LTTE's proposal for an Internal Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) was submitted at the end of October. The International Community ritually welcomed the document as a sign of progress towards renewed negotiations, but offered little critique. The significance of the proposal: a plan for transferring formal control of the North and East to the LTTE without a democratic process, and with few checks on the LTTE's behaviour, was quickly overshadowed by the political struggle between President Chandrika Kumaratunge and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe.

As the LTTE was releasing its much-awaited proposal, the President used her constitutional powers to take over three critical government ministries, the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Police (Interior) and the Ministry of Information. She did so citing serious security breaches, including unchecked military build-up by the LTTE.

In the political uproar that followed, the Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen announced that Norway would temporarily suspend its role as facilitator in the peace process due to a lack of clarity as to who controlled the Government of Sri Lanka. His message suggested that peace talks could start tomorrow, if not for President Kumaratunge's actions. The President was accused of staging a constitutional coup, which would deprive Sri Lanka of a golden opportunity to stabilise peace using the foreign aid package that was pledged in Tokyo last June.

But how realistic was this criticism? Exactly what "clarity" was Norway talking about? Evidence on the ground suggests that the LTTE's good faith participation in the peace process was far from assured long before the infighting between President Chandrika Kumaratunge and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe reached crisis in October.

From early 2002 it was clear that Sri Lanka's North-East was sliding towards a very repressive one party rule. Subjugation of civic, welfare and educational institutions to serve the LTTE's goals had become the norm. LTTE death squads were stepping up efforts to eliminate vestiges of political pluralism in the region; and child conscription was rampant.

For some time, Helgesen himself tried to dismiss reports of child conscription, claiming a lack of evidence. When the mounting evidence became impossible to ignore and Norway was forced to confront LTTE violations, the Norwegians assured Sri Lankans that Norway was among the leading advocates of human rights. Their record on the ground told another story.

Every serious analyst knew that the Norwegian approach lacked both a clear understanding of the southern political reality and of the political and ideological nature of the LTTE. The main outcome of the peace process to date has been the LTTE's further institutionalisation of internal terror, and its successful closure of the remaining political space in the Tamil community. The failure to recognise and address these developments will eventually undermine the main benefit of the ceasefire -- the semblance of physical security and social and economic normalcy it has brought the civilian population since fighting ended. Accepting the LTTE's claim to be the sole,

unquestioned authority in the North-East and ignoring their repressive behavior virtually guarantees that civilians would be trapped in another vortex of violence if LTTE hegemony were ever challenged.

From preparing the Memorandum of Understanding on the terms of the cease-fire, to delivering transmitters to the LTTE, to turning a blind eye to large-scale human rights abuses in the North-East, it is our assessment that the Norwegians have driven the process with enormous cynicism towards the ordinary people of this country.

Some observers have been more generous, saying the Norwegians have simply been naïve, but were trying in good faith to preserve the military cease-fire while attempting to drive the process towards an amicable peace settlement. Anyone who has really studied the MoU would be forced to conclude otherwise. The agreement serves the interests of the LTTE. Its references to basic principles are ritualistic and general, and they provide little power to the Monitoring Mission to defend civilian rights or interest.

Further, the Norwegians ran the peace process with a complicit UNP as though the President were merely to be humoured. Even the pro-UNP media has found it increasingly difficult to defend the peace process. Defence columnists of various hues have begun to raise alarms about the security situation. Persistent killings of Army intelligence persons, and the apparent apathy of the government regarding these attacks has caused disillusionment among the security forces. Apart from revealing its much-vaunted 'international safety net' to be a mirage, the government clearly evinced a lack of any serious strategy.

A parallel development is discernible among the peace community. They have largely remained silent about human rights violations in the North-East and the systematic oppression of Muslims to pamper extremists on one side in the name of peace. In turn they have given the extremists in the South the moral high ground in making them the butt end of their attacks. The end result is that their original cause of a just resolution to the ethnic problem lies discredited.

Before the President's takeover of the three ministries, she had been outspoken about LTTE attacks on Muslims in the East and the UNP government's failure to protect them. About eight Muslims were killed towards the end of November mainly around Kinniya in the Trincomalee District. There are strong indications that the LTTE was behind them. And yet the President's appointee as Acting IGP, Indra de Silva (*Island* 28th November), pointed the finger at an utterly mysterious 'Third Party' – the same inane obfuscation the UNP used to appease the Tigers. The SLMM too used it to exonerate the LTTE over the sinking of a Chinese fishing trawler on 20th March 2003 and killing 17 of its crew – '*SLMM cannot rule out the possibility that armed elements not recognised by the parties are operating in the Government or LTTE controlled areas*'.

The LTTE has shown no interest in protecting rights and international bodies have been ineffective in holding the LTTE to account for abuses of human rights and international law. The LTTE's promises under its new ISGA proposals, to accept international standards of human rights with facilitation by international bodies, should thus be viewed with extreme skepticism.

More likely, it is the LTTE's intention to regularise the policy of deception that has served it well for nearly two years.

Let us examine the record:

Under the Norway-brokered MoU, the LTTE vowed to refrain from any harm, or coercion of civilians. What followed was a public scandal. Extortion, child conscription and murder of opponents escalated.

The LTTE pulled out of negotiations after international human rights monitoring was proposed at the Hakone talks last March. The Tokyo donor conference last June again backed Ian Martin's proposals for international monitoring.

Helgesen claims that talks can resume tomorrow if there is clarity in Colombo. But his bias is very clear. No one in Colombo has refused to talk. Apparently, the LTTE alone can pull out of talks when it faces proposals it cannot easily say no to.

It is not at all clear what talks on the ISGA proposals would actually be about. The ISGA document is clearly proposing the formal imposition of the LTTE's structures of control on the North-East and nothing less would be accepted. Paragraph 3 on elections under an LTTE appointed body is a give away: "*...if no final settlement has been reached and implemented by the end of the said period of five years [of the ISGA]. An independent Election Commission, appointed by the ISGA, shall conduct free and fair elections in accordance with international democratic principles and standards under international observation.*"

And since the international community's modus operandi has been to push the Government to appease the LTTE whenever a problematic issue was raised, what in essence could be discussed other than the simple mechanics of the handover?

We move on to the substance.

1. Valaichenai: Abductions and After

We reported the abduction of children in Valaichenai over the weekend of 4th-5th October and the resulting public protest by parents, teachers and children on 6th October. As expected the LTTE promised to release the children to end the protest and then started individually identifying and intimidating those it deemed had played a prominent role in the protest.

UNICEF in a statement issued as soon as the protest became a public issue condemned the abductions as '*totally unacceptable*'. It added that '*the number of cases was not the issue - the abduction of even a single child was a serious violation*' and '*this type of action undermines the work and commitment of the LTTE towards making the action plan for children affected by war a success*'.

We published a list of eleven children, ages from 12 upwards, abducted by the LTTE from Valaichenai that weekend, but the actual number was according to our sources above 20. The

fact that only the parents of four children complained to the UNICEF is more indicative of the fear than of the numbers.

The LTTE had broken the protest, but it had a problem. There had been bad international publicity as the Valaichenai abductions came to light soon after it sent about 50 'discharged' children to the first newly opened transit centre in Killinochchi, jointly run by the UNICEF and the TRO - an LTTE front organisation. The aftermath showed how the LTTE has mastered the art of dealing with international agencies.

The LTTE summoned about five Tamil reporters to a press conference in Karadiyan Aru where they denied any abductions had taken place. Also present at the press conference were about 11 children, including a few from Valaichenai, who told reporters that they had come on their own.

Assault and Destruction of Property

On the night of 10th October about 8.30 PM, LTTE assailants, went to the home of Valaichenai Hindu College (VHC) principal Mr. **Murugesu Thavarajah**, abused and assaulted him. Strangely, he was regarded an LTTE man who works under a picture of the LTTE leader hung in his office. It was mainly the abductions of children from his school that triggered off the protest. His roof and windows were broken and he was threatened not to complain about what happened.

Apparently the same assailants who came on two motorcycles and a landmaster-trailer, went to the home of VHC's lady art teacher **Latha Nalliah** at 9.00 PM. She had not gone when the LTTE identified individuals and summoned them to their office for questioning. She maintained that she was answerable only to the Principal and had spoken to him. The LTTE men smashed up a Dolphin van, two motorcycles and doors at her home and fled when there was alarm that an army patrol was coming that way.

There were several incidents of the same kind that night. The Army Web Site (13 Oct.) reported that **M. Gunaratnam**, **U. Sathasivam** and **M. Selliah** had their houses subject to the same treatment because their daughters participated in the protest. A further list obtained by us named additionally the following among those whose houses were vandalised:

Mrs. Mangala Teacher, **Yesu Matheas**, **Mrs. Sujatha Teacher**, and **Mrs. Potchelvi**

In the days that followed several prominent persons in and around Valaichenai received anonymous telephone calls by persons who simply abused and terrified them. The LTTE thus betrayed in its actions the belief that the protest against the abductions had widespread public support.

Continuing Abductions, UNICEF and a PR Stunt

Even after the Valaichenai abductions hit the headlines, the LTTE did not stop abducting children. **Mylvaganam Kunasekaran** (17) of Hospital Rd., Chettipalayam, was among about 25 abducted about 3.00 AM on 7th October at the Porativu Amman Kovil *Theertham* (dip in

the water sanctified by bathing the god's image). The abductions were confined to people from that area.

We said in our last report that the LTTE was trying to get at persons in other political groups by conscripting their children. On 9th October at 3.30 PM an LTTE party of 7 under area leader **Satyaraj** went to the home of **Selvam Prabu** (mid-teens or younger) in Daniel Square, Thimilativu, in Pudur off Batticaloa. Prabu's father **Selvam** had been a member of the EPRLF, and was disabled in one hand. While going to Colombo by bus in 1992, he was taken down by the LTTE at Santhiveli and shot dead. On seeing Satyaraj and party the people at home screamed, but Prabu was forcibly taken away on a bicycle. Satyaraj is the person arrested by the Police for murder and released on bail through the High Court in Trincomalee last July in a deal the Police made with the LTTE for the return of two abducted policemen. There are about six murder complaints against him (Sp. Rep. No.17).

On 11th October the LTTE attempted to abduct the 14-year-old son of **Vishnuharan** (Jeyam), a former member of the Sri Lankan Army (Razik Group) living in Hospital Rd., Batticaloa. The LTTE ordered the boy to follow them on his bicycle. The boy escaped and hid in the neighbourhood. The abductors waited for some time and went away. The same day up to five LTTE men lay in wait outside the home of Bhaskaran, a member of the EPRLF(V), in Batticaloa town. One LTTE man was seen cycling up and down. Having noticed this, the people at home kept the son, who in his early teens, confined to the house.

On 9th October, an LTTE party under **Vengaiyan** from its Commathurai office north of Batticaloa abducted **Ganeshan Mayuran** (14 years) of Market St., Chenkalady, and **Mahendrarajah Vinodarajah** (15) of Aandankulam Rd., Chenkalady. On 12th October, the LTTE abducted a young girl **Amalatharshni** who was on her way to her *Periammah's* (mother's elder sister's) in Araiampathy at 3.30 PM.

On 14th October, the LTTE's **Nizam** had a meeting in Valaichenai Hindu that had been the centre of the protest and told the parents that come what may each family must give a child. Such meetings were conducted at regular intervals thereafter, as it were to remind the people who is boss.

The day of the PR exercise came on 16th October. The LTTE had a good reserve of conscripts to lose a few in palavering the international community. The Press and the UNICEF were summoned. According to the LTTE web site *Paadumeen.com*, the children to be released were of age ranging from 12 to 17 and were from Commathurai, Valaichenai, Karardianaru and Mahilavedduvan. The last two areas are very much under LTTE control and whether the children were borrowed for the event or conscripted is anyone's guess. In the week following the Valaichenai incident, the SLMM received 11 complaints of child abduction (*Sunday Times* 12 Oct.03). The total received by the SLMM for October exceeded 80 (*Lanka Academic*, 10 Dec.03).

Paadumeen quoted the children saying that they had joined the LTTE out of devotion to their motherland and were going home because top LTTEers had persuaded them to go back and study. Special Commander Ramesh who presided over the ceremony said that it was their

enemies who were making charges of forcible recruitment against them, while they remained firm that forcible recruitment was not necessary for them. Also present was Thoathiran who led the conscription in Valaichenai.

The UNICEF acknowledged the release of four children identified by them in Valaichenai and said that all child recruitment must stop and that they would continue their advocacy on behalf of 383 unresolved cases of child recruitment in Batticaloa. The UNICEF further said, *'today's release marks a welcome step under the Action Plan that will see 13 children returning to their homes.'*

No doubt everything the UNICEF said is correct or defensible. But some isolated truths uttered in the absence of the overall context could turn out to be the most effectively misleading. It is rather like saying that the doors of the house have survived intact and the house may need some minor repairs, when in fact the walls and the roof had vanished. It is largely a wasted effort to tackle the problem of child soldiers, pretending that there is a glimmer of sincerity, however faint, in the LTTE's pledges to behave well concerning children and political opponents. Indeed, the evidence is overwhelmingly to the contrary.

The inevitability of child soldiers is a legacy of the LTTE's politics, which cannot tolerate basic human freedoms. While terror is being used to quench the last embers of those freedoms and dismantle any real prospect of monitoring, the problem of child soldiers can only become worse. For the world's premier child welfare group to ignore the violence and intimidation; the considerable conscription after the Valaichenai abductions, partly for the PR event; and then to welcome the PR show with some mild reservations, amounts to whitewashing the tragedy.

Since that time people have become more frightened. Complaints declined. It is partly seasonal. The LTTE was preparing for Martyrs' Day, where it was hoping to involve children in a big way. Last year, political killings and child conscription - the twin menace - rose sharply just after Martyrs' Day (Bulletin No.31).

On 11th November a few LTTE men came to Valaichenai Hindu College and held a meeting at 3.00 PM. The speakers included Thoathiran, who abducted students on 4th October, Vairavan and Kunaruban, all from the Aandankulam political wing. The students were told that they must support the LTTE's military struggle and each family must give a child. No one, the audience was told, should complain, and even if they do they would take what they want.

The last remark is puzzling when placed alongside Commander Ramesh's comment at the PR ceremony that the LTTE has no need to conscript children. Such meetings at the school, for groups like students and teachers and students only became regular at VHC after the October protest. Nizam addressed about three meetings. The LTTE thus finally affirmed very clearly who is boss.

There was no let up in child conscription. The LTTE abducted several children in Vavuniya on 26th November. They released a few under pressure from the SLMM (see Appendix). This was the Leader's birthday, when he reassured his visitor Chris Patten that they do not conscript children, but are on the contrary recruiting people for their administration.

What About the Children Abducted from Valaichenai?

The UNICEF demanded the release of the children abducted in Valaichenai during 4th - 5th October. UNICEF received 4 complaints. Those four children have been released. The LTTE has complied. Matter closed? The issue clearly illustrates the miscarriage of monitoring when one chooses to ignore other compelling realities. The following is the list of abducted children from in Valaichenai, obtained at that time, given in our Special Report No.17 of 7th October:

Kauthan Satheeshkumar (12), Nagammal School, Paasi Kudah
V. Prathepan (13 or 14), Valaichenai Hindu College
Nallathamby Kanthan (14), Nagammal School, Paasi Kudah,
Peethamparam's son(14 or 15) of Puthukudiyiruppu, Valachenai Hindu College,
Kamalanathan Parani (15) of Union Colony, Valaichenai Hindu College,
Konalingam Satheesh(16), Puthukudiyiruppu,
Roshan Micheal (16 or 17), of Paper Co-operation quarters, VHC
Atputharasa, Prasath(17 or 18) of Pethalai, VHC
Nadarajah Gajayanthan(17) of Puthukudiyiruppu, Valachenai Hindu College
Vallimani Sivakumar (16 or 17), VHC,
Yohanathan Kamalanathan (17), VHC

The list above was compiled from three different sources on 7th October. Where two sources differed in the age of the child, we indicated the ambiguity. We applied for a more complete list subsequently, and were told that the people were afraid to talk about it after the LTTE acted against selected individuals and terrorised the populace. Nearly two months later, one source confirmed several of the cases in our list and gave the names of the following who were abducted from VHC:

Loganathan Gajan (14 years), O. Level
Roshan Michael (17), A. Level
Pradeepan (17), A.L.
Ashok Kumar, A.L.
Prashanth, A.L.

About the same time a further list of 8 names came from another source:

Soundar Satheeshkumar (13), Pasikkudah, Katkudah
Nallathamby Kanthan (14), Katkudah Rd., Mariamman Kovilady, Pasikkudah
Loganathan Gajan (16), Pechiamman Kovil St., Valaichenai
Patkunam Prabhakaran (16), Vipulananda St., Petthalai, Valaichenai
Miss. Pushparasa Suhanthini (16), Sungankerny, Valaichenai
Konalingam Satheesh (16), Kali Kovil St., Valaichenai
Ratnasingam Jeya (17), Kinniyady Pillayar Kovil St., Valaichenai
Pathinian Chandrakumar (17), Kinniady Vishnu Kovil St., Valaichenai

By comparing these lists, their differences and similarities, the reader can gauge the problems, the strengths and weaknesses of our reporting and how much we do not know, and, under the circumstances, cannot know.

A Note on Amparai District

In our Special Report No.17 we gave several cases of children in the Amparai District who were trained for a few days and released. We said that the LTTE was also assessing how far the parents would go to get them back. We averred that they were retaining those from families that were ignorant or downtrodden and were unlikely to go to international agencies.

We stated that there are a number of cases of children from the poorest areas whom the LTTE did not release. **Perinpam** (13 years) was among those abducted by the LTTE from the very poor and battered village of Inspector Ettam, just north of Pottuvil. According to a close relative of this boy, who happens to be a Christian, the family has been in mourning, as it were after a death at home, ever since Perinpam was taken in early September. This relative affirmed that several other children were likewise taken, but could not give details, as one tends to be safer not being curious about such matters.

We move on to the kind of situation into which we very rarely get an insight. The children are mainly of parents often displaced and in a bad way, and would almost never complain to any agency.

2. The Dark Secrets of Kurangupanja

Kurangupanja (Where the Monkey Jumped) came into the news when the LTTE established a camp during the middle of the year. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) declared it to be an area under government control under the terms of the MoU. The LTTE refused to move. The area lies a little to the south of the predominantly Muslim town of Kinniya, south of Trincomalee. The local Muslims complained that the LTTE established a camp dominating an area where they along with some Tamils had their paddy (rice) fields, where the LTTE presence prevented them from cultivating. It appears that this was one of the reasons why the LTTE camped there.

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) took a group of journalists to Kurangupanja On 8th October along with Tilak, leader of the LTTE's political wing in Trincomalee, and his assistant Bimal. It was a PR exercise that went awry for the LTTE. Tilak denied that the area was one where Muslims had ever lived. An old ruined building, which Tilak claimed to be their kitchen, turned out to be very definitely the remains of a mosque. The journalists had found this out from a young LTTE boy who had innocently answered a query truthfully. Despite being obliterated by bullets, the name on the ruin of a school 150 yards away was clearly read as Bharkat Nagar Muslim Vidyalayam. The Muslims had been displaced in 1990.

The LTTE clearly wanted civilians, especially Muslims, out of the area. The reason as we discovered later was the existence of training camps in the area, some of them at least having very young children. A camp for girls was nearer Alankerni, a Tamil village close to Kinniya with at least 30 girls. The majority was very young, but there were also big girls as old as 19 or 20.

Most of the girls were abducted and brought in their school uniforms, which were promptly and symbolically burnt. First it was continuous propaganda. The bolder children made their escape attempts early. Many others were afraid and kept putting it off.

Some of the girls there a few months ago were **Isaivani** (11 years) of Bharathipuram, Trincomalee, **Senthoora** (12) of Mutur, **Kathampari** (17) of Linganagar, Trincomalee who had been there one and a half years, and **Kirthana** of Mutur and **Praba** of Nilaveli, both of them 19. Isaivani was released, it is believed, on the payment of money by the parents. It is also possible that the parents, being in Trincomalee, complained to an agency and the LTTE thought it wiser to negotiate a price.

The fact that many girls attained age in the camp left a strong impression on the inmates, which underlined the raw childishness of many of the inmates. The military training of the inmates was conducted in a larger camp in the area, in a place called Thiyanavanam (Forest for Meditation) near the river Uppaar. During training the boys and girls were together. Couples found having love affairs were severely punished.

In one instance a girl became pregnant, and upon realising it committed suicide by shooting herself. The LTTE informed her parents to collect the body, but they declined. This was the picture in the area quite recently.

Occasionally some made their escape across Uppaar to Kinniya and thence to Trincomalee. Given the sensitivity of these goings on, the LTTE moved to obstruct the normal movement and economic activity of Muslims in the area. We pointed out in our recent Sp.Rep.17 that exacerbating cleavages between Tamils and Muslims and provoking Muslims into violence is the LTTE's principal modus operandi for dealing with the Muslims. Any violence by the Muslims is used as a pretext for massive and crippling reprisals. This is the context behind the recent violence aimed principally against Muslims in Kinniya. We will deal with it in Bulletin No.34 that will appear shortly.

We have all along argued that child conscription is inseparable from destroying the society politically and killing all opposition.

3. The LTTE's New Democracy: Peace Dividends?

The TULF: Dead Fin ally?

Another drama in which the words flowed excruciatingly for six hours, but had no connection to the hidden menace lurking below, was the TULF central committee meeting on 30th November. Its main purpose was to remove the president Mr. Anandasangari. A similar attempt last July failed miserably and Anandasangari's position seemed unshakable. Anandasangari earned popularity and respect among the people as the one Tamil leader who stood up to the LTTE. He accepted their role in negotiating a political settlement, but maintained that no one had the right to the claim of being the sole representatives of the people.

The LTTE redoubled their efforts to remove him. Other party members were regularly summoned to the LTTE HQ in Killinochchi and browbeaten with veiled threats to get rid of

Anadasangari. So the CC members came to the meeting and let fly with words, some of Anadasangari's staunchest allies having turned his bitterest critics. Anadasangari was accused of improprieties and deemed unfit to be the party leader. The MPs should know if their electoral practices had anything to do with propriety or their conduct with honour.

The affair was a matter of walking corpses who hobbled in to place the formal seal of death on their party. In a final act of suicide, these corpses showed infinitely more feeling and anger against their lately esteemed leader, than they showed for the killers of their murdered friends and colleagues. The LTTE began the physical destruction of the TULF by killing nearly 10 of its senior leaders. The majority of the survivors were ready to grovel. Their rancorous public utterances came to lack any feeling or content. The moment a colleague was killed by the LTTE, the more rancorous they became in attacking the 'Sinhalese government'. Privately they told their friends that they did not know what grim fate awaited them the next day.

The party's new leader designate, Mr. Sampanthan, was a known supporter of President Kumaratunge's constitutional draft proposals of 2000. At the end of that year the LTTE murdered TULF's new MP Nimalan Soundaranayagam. Sampanthan flipped. When the MPs answered the LTTE leader's invitation to meet him in April 2002, Sampanthan, according to persons present, abased himself by standing up for the LTTE leader's entrance and refused to sit down after he sat. Individual stories of other party men are hardly different. Other international efforts too are underway to make Tiger rule look a five star democracy.

The *Daily News* of 11th and 12th November published '*Listening to Voices of Jaffna: results of a social survey*' organized by Dr. Yoshiko Ashiwa, Professor of Anthropology, Hitotsubashi University in Japan, with the collaboration of Dr. N. Shanmugalingam, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Political Science, University of Jaffna and Dr. Jehan Perera, Director of Media and Research, National Peace Council of Sri Lanka.

Under survey topic f) Vote of Confidence, it said: For a society to hold together it needs to have confidence in persons and institutions. The response to this question, which takes real choice for granted, gave the LTTE leader the best ranking, with 78 percent saying that they had a lot of confidence in him. The organisers' confidence in their findings was expressed in the words, '*we believe that the responses indicate the views and mood of the residents of Jaffna town*'.

We do not propose to go over old ground. But almost none of the scholars and peace activists who give their name to such exercises take actual account of the ambience of terror and the absence of freedom. The press has been strangled, political opponents of the 78% man are being hunted and killed all the time, and the society's choice for credible leaders has been nullified by a campaign of extermination. What are the motives of foreign agencies that pump money into polls that are in effect a PR exercise to whitewash the crimes against a people?

Or was the survey another birthday present for the Leader like Chris Patten's visit? The use made of the poll is an insult to the people of Jaffna. Unfortunately, these tendentious exercises by those who abuse their credentials have their effect. They make people and commentators comfortable with the idea that the LTTE are the sole representatives of the Tamil people. That is

one of the reasons why Anandasangari who openly said otherwise had to go. We now deal with other tragic realities, which show how battered and traumatized the Tamil community is.

The cases below illustrate how insidiously repression has continued even as the LTTE was preparing and presenting its ISGA proposals promising human rights and democracy. These cases also illustrate how families had been decimated on account of one member being in a group opposed to the LTTE. It is a part of Tamil history that will never be written. We have said since the early 1990s that the number of LTTE's victims among the ordinary people runs into several thousands. The fact of youths attaching themselves to one militant group or the other was once, it must be remembered, a mass phenomenon.

4. Living Tragedies, Forgotten and Unmourned

Sinthathurai Parameswaramoorthy (47), now living precariously in Hospital Rd., Batticaloa was from a well-to-do family from Munaikkadu, Kokkadichcholai, now in the LTTE controlled area. During the mid-1980s he and several of his brothers, like many from the area, joined the EPRLF. In the vicissitudes of the coming years, a large number of them - about 60 from the Munaikkadu area - were killed. Not so much by the Sri Lankan forces against whom they fought and in whose prisons they were tortured, but by the LTTE and in LTTE prison camps. Two younger brothers of Parameswaramoorthy (Moorthy), who were also in the EPRLF, were killed by the LTTE in the late 1980s, one of whom was Sinthathurai Lingeswaralingam. Another escaped abroad. Moorthy was himself injured in 1989.

Moorthy became a member of the North-East Provincial Council in 1988 and has since then contested for parliament as an EPRLF candidate. Since most of his EPRLF colleagues had either been killed or had left the place, he alone was left to organise the party in the area. Since terror prevented the party from recruiting members and collecting dues, the party got into hard times. The LTTE too tried to get rid of him one way or the other to make the party non-functional in his area.

Moorthy's wife Lausali, had borne him three children. She had to travel periodically to her native village of Mahiladitivu, Kokkadichcholai, in the LTTE controlled area to collect her *Samurdhi* rations and payments. On at least two or three occasions she was searched and warned by the LTTE near Mahiladitivu. On 7th July 2002, Sinnavan and Kannan from the LTTE in Mahiladitivu, attempted to abduct Moorthy from near Siruthevi Ashram in Kallady, which is under government control. Moorthy ran and escaped from them.

In the meantime Suresh Premachandran, the EPRLF general secretary, walked out into the LTTE camp with the bulk of the party's funds, leaving the party, now the EPRLF(V), in dire financial straits. Moorthy then joined the EPDP. There had also been threats of a different kind against Moorthy.

On 5th June 2002, Moorthy's 7 year old daughter Sarangi was abducted from near Anaipanthy Pillaiyar Temple near Batticaloa while returning from a tuition class in the afternoon. There was little reason for it as the parents had no money, nor did the girl have any jewellery. About 9.00 PM the same day the girl was released in Munthrikaikkadu, Mylambaveli, north of Batticaloa Town and east of Sathurukondan, towards the sea. Left in a lonely open space, the girl made

her way towards a distant light. The people of the house came out to look when the dog barked. Sarangi told them that two 'uncles' brought her and left her. She was then returned to her parents.

Moorthy by then could not live at home. On 4th October 2003 after it was dark, around 7.00 PM, Moorthy's wife Lausali was at home with her children. The LTTE came and knocked on her door. Being afraid she hid with her children in a corner. The LTTE men went away. That is the tortured life of a family.

Mamangapillai Theivanayagam (56), was a resident of Kanjirankuda Thuraiady, Munaikkadu. Since most of his EPRLF mates had disappeared from the area, Moorthy had to make up electoral lists from friends and supporters. Among them was Theivanayagam, who had been placed on the EPDP's electoral list for the Pattipalai Local Council covering his native village, for the elections scheduled last year.

Theivanayagam, who had been estranged from his wife, had left Munaikkadu and was living alone in a hut in the Kokkuvil refugee colony. On 22nd October he was found dead and a message was sent to his wife. She went and found a rope around the victim's neck connected to the roof of the hut, making out as though he had committed suicide by hanging himself. She concluded that Theivanayagam had been throttled to death and the scene was set to make it appear suicide. According to sources close to her, the hut was a short and flimsy structure and there was no way he could have hung himself, and he was not known to be suicidal. The body was taken to the hospital and later interred.

Proof of the actual cause of Theivanayagam's death may be lacking in the absence of proper forensic investigations. But those who understand the climate of terror form their hunches. And anyone putting his name down on any, but an LTTE sponsored, electoral list would be regarded as mad or suicidal. However, the case of **Thillaiampalam Tharmapalan** (59) shows that the possibility that the LTTE strangled Theivanayagam is one that merits serious consideration.

Tharmapalan had retired as store Keeper in the Sugar Corporation. He was living as a caretaker in the Sugar Corporation quarters next to the store, near Arasady Junction in Batticaloa. Tharmapalan had three sons, a doctor, an engineer and the other a shop assistant. He was not a man in any kind of want, but was rather leading a relaxed existence in the evening of his life. Following the LTTE being given free access to Batticaloa Town from April 2002, they showed an interest in getting the quarters for supposedly some rehabilitation project. When they persistently canvassed the local administration to hand it over to them, they were told that none had the authority to do so.

The LTTE then approached Tharmapalan and asked him to leave. He refused. In mid-November 2002, the LTTE brought some people and got them to clean the premises. Tharmapalan stayed on even though the LTTE made its intentions clear. On 18th December 2002, Tharmapalan was found dead with a rope around his neck, ostensibly suicide by hanging. This death came in the wake of the LTTE's abduction and murder of several political opponents, which started soon after its pledge on democratic federalism at the Oslo talks. Tharmapalan's death passed off as another curiosity to be dismissed as a sign of the times.

Such mysterious deaths have been reported from several parts of the North-East after the February 2002 MoU. It is easy to conclude that some unknown diabolical elements are at work. But the natives know better and know almost for certain. Here is another: The *Island* of 26th October 2002 reported the killing of a youth in Batticaloa about 9.30 PM on 24th October, who was found with a slash on his neck. The report said, “*There was also a thread around the victim’s neck...The hands of the victim had been tied to the back of his body...and a piece of rope was found around his neck.*”

Govinthan Jeyamohan (38), a former member of the EPRLF from Ward-10, Trincomalee, had long since left the organisation, married, become a father of four, and was a fisherman by profession. At the 2001 parliamentary elections he was a candidate on the Trincomalee list for the EPRLF(V). At 4.30 in the evening of 29th October, his wife sent him to a shop just before he put out to sea. He was not seen again and is believed to have been abducted by the LTTE.

Tharmaratnam Illamaran (Ravi): A Family’s Sacrifice of Root and Branches for Liberation

Ravi (37), a native of 5th Division Eravur, Batticaloa Dist., had joined the TELO in 1985, when it led the Tamil groups in prestige for military prowess. The LTTE was then a relatively marginal group in Batticaloa. It is notable that often boys from the same family joined different groups. Ravi’s brother Vanarajah, about 11 years Ravi’s junior, joined the LTTE after leaving the PLOTE in the 1990s, by when the LTTE had virtually eliminated the others.

Ravi’s family paid a high price for its contribution to the Tamil struggle. As with many in the region they saw all groups as part of the same struggle. On 24th March 1989, during the Indian Army’s presence, Ravi’s mother Omanathan Mohanalatchmi was abducted by the LTTE and shot dead.

Ravi’s family had paddy fields in Kitul, Karadian Aru, along the Badulla Road. Ravi’s elder brother, Tharmaratnam Vinayagamoorthy, who had no militant affiliation, was cultivating those fields. In 1990 when the LTTE returned to war with the Sri Lankan Army, TELO remnants were posted with the latter. On 3rd January 1991 the LTTE shot dead Vinayagamoorthy in Karadian Aru.

On 5th April 1993, the LTTE shot dead Ravi’s Sitthi (mother’s younger sister), Omanathan Komalathevi, and left her body on the railway tracks in Chenkalady. The charge against her was that she had talked to Ravi. Ravi’s Sitthappa (Sitthi’s husband) Puthisamani (38) was also killed by the LTTE, in 1998.

In 1993 Ravi joined the EPRLF, which had returned to the East as a political party. Ravi in time became the Chenkalady organiser for the party. The LTTE’s efforts to kill him continued even through the current ceasefire. Ravi was injured in 1996. Again in 1998 he received an injury in his neck and hand. A bullet penetrated his body in 1999, which needs to be removed by surgery that is yet to be performed. In 1999 again the LTTE set a time bomb for him that was discovered before it exploded.

With the ceasefire, the LTTE set up an office in Chenkalady for political work - meaning in LTTE-speak conscription, extortion and murder. What can be better than to have an office to target disarmed and helpless opponents at close range, when absolutely no one can touch you under the prevailing fiction of peace?

Ravi had at his home **Chandrasekar Vijey**, a boy in his mid-teens, whose father had died and mother employed in the Middle-East. About April 2003 Vijey was sent to a nearby laundry in Chenkalady. The LTTE abducted him and took him into the interior for their Army.

In June this year (2003), Ravi's younger brother Vanarajah (27), married and a father of two children, left the LTTE and surrendered to the Army. Vanarajah had earlier been a member of the PLOTE. In 2000, he is said to have run away with his weapon to Karadian Aru, where he had relatives, and surrendered to the LTTE, apparently on an arrangement already made. He was then 3 years in the LTTE before he ran away about June 2003 and surrendered to the Army. Whether he actually ran away or was sent is in question.

On Ravi's recommendation, Vanarajah was allowed to stay in a house close to the EPRLF (V) Chenkalady office. In the meantime the LTTE contacted him through their local office and gave him explosive devices with instructions to kill his elder brother. Through innate inhibition, Vanarajah did nothing with the devices for four days. Then he confided in a friend of his elder brother's that the LTTE had given him the devices to carry out a mission against Ravi. The friend informed Ravi. Ravi got the Army to surprise Vanarajah, take him into custody and recover the devices.

Vanarajah was to be produced in court about 30th August. The LTTE feared that he might tell the court what he had already told the Police, about the LTTE's role in the plot against Ravi. This worried the LTTE, since they got on fine with what they did; as long as the Norwegians and other peacemakers could carry on saying that allegations against the LTTE are not backed by evidence.

At this time two LTTEers who had injured themselves in Valaichenai through the explosion of a grenade they were not supposed to have, were in prison with Vanarajah. On 29th August 2003, Nanthakumar of LTTE intelligence visited the LTTE prisoners taking food - one of the privileges of the MoU. At 8.00 PM the same night, Vanarajah, was suddenly taken ill and admitted to Batticaloa Hospital. Vanarajah who had no previous symptoms is suspected to have died of poisoning. Others looking after Vanarajah's interests are convinced that Nanthakumar had given poison or poisoned food to the other two LTTEers in prison with orders to see that Vanarajah consumes the poison. Nanthakumar's visit and the food are the only known links to the sudden death.

Owing to the suspicion surrounding the death, Vanarajah's body was sent to JMO Colombo for postmortem with a letter from the court registrar on 1st September, and was brought to Chenkalady for the last rites the following day. We learn that Vanarajah ate meat and manioc on the fatal night and the contents of his stomach were sent for tests. We also learnt that the conclusions of the tests have not so far been sent to Batticaloa and the case is still open.

The preparation of the LTTE's ISGA proposals and their delivery were hitting the headlines during October and November. Meanwhile statements about the LTTE's good faith were being made from around the world by the innocent and not so innocent. On the ground, in Chenkalady, the LTTE intensified its efforts to kill Ravi.

Ravi's wife and children live a short distance from the EPRLF(V) camp, close to the police and army camps, but Ravi has been unable to call on his wife and family in many years. During October the LTTE abducted the wife's younger brother Thuraijarah Thushyanthan and took him to their area to the west (interior). During November Thushyanthan escaped to Chenkalady and was hidden in a home of relatives by two sisters, Latha and Vasanthi. The LTTE located him and took him back to their area along with the two ladies. The ladies were warned and released about 6th December, but nothing is known of Thushyanthan.

The LTTE also detained Ravi's sister, husband and husband's elder brother, held them from 5th-8th November and released them. They had been questioned about Ravi, his wife and their family details. Ravi's family had rented out their fields in Kitul, Karadian Aru, owing to their inability to function there. The property is in the name of Ravi's mother Omanathan Mohanalatchumi, and her sister Komalathevi, both of whom the LTTE had killed. In early December 2003, Thanikasalam, an LTTE functionary, told the party who rented out the fields that the fields are now LTTE property.

The LTTE attempted to shoot Ravi on 4th and 9th November. On both occasions a sniper was hidden in the vicinity, once in a haystack and then in a house opposite. Both times the attempt was discovered and the location was searched by the Police and the Army who noted the tell-tale signs. An LTTE sniper killed EPRLF(V)'s Subathiran in Jaffna last June. Snipers are part of the furniture of LTTE political offices.

Even as the ISGA proposals were being advanced as a sign of hope, graced by the smiles and conviviality of Chris Patten shaking hands with Prabhakaran, the LTTE's repressive apparatus was working even harder beneath the surface. In some respects things appeared to be better than normal and the SLMM was getting fewer complaints. The one thing that troubled the surface of calm was the sudden upsurge in the killing of Muslims in late November. Once more, the 'third party' explanation was generally preferred.

The alternative was hard to contemplate. Would Prabhakaran be so foolish as to kill Muslims when Chris Patten, an EU minister, was here to wrap up a coup with his charismatic touch? No one should blame Prabhakaran if he is misunderstood. Why did Prabhakaran, after weeks of reconnaissance, launch a massacre of unarmed and unsuspecting members of other groups in the East on 13th September 1987? Why did he thus end the early optimistic phase of the Indo-Lanka Accord and precipitate the countdown to war? One often hears the Europeans saying almost, "*Those were the Indians silly, we are different.*"

The LTTE machine never sleeps and silently grinds on the same as ever. In preparing the ground for its brand of democracy the LTTE worked systematically, targeting those who could provide democratic leadership. Three senior EPDP members were abducted in Batticaloa in early December 2002, a few days later Alahathurai of the EPRLF(V) was murdered in Mandur. In

April it was Marimutthu Rasalingam of the EPDP in Akkaraipattu, and in June it was Subathiran of the EPRLF(V) in Jaffna. Now they are working hard against Ravi in Chenkalady. Each time it was a calculated move to cripple an opposition party in a particular area.

Repression, pervasive terror, child conscription, and predictable deception by the lords of peace, is the only clarity in this peace process. Can anyone honestly say that the prospects for democracy and human rights are brighter after nearly two years of this MoU? What does the LTTE's present deceitful and murderous approach to the Muslim issue presage? And we are asked to swallow more and more of this and to believe that golden times lie ahead only if we bury our self respect, our sovereignty and our judgment and do as we are told from the West.

5. Sovereignty Based on Values - The Need of the Hour

The international community's active encouragement of the game of words currently being played out between the major political actors in Sri Lanka over the fate of the Sri Lankan peace process is a form of oppression. Beneath the *pro forma* flattery and expressions of concern for Sri Lanka and its people lies a troubling message from the West: *'Accept our version of reality or face the consequences; where the LTTE is concerned, suspend judgment.'*

Referring to President Kumaratunge's takeover of three ministries, the European Union in a unanimous resolution expressing deep concern about the move said that it *'threatened'* the internationally supported peace process. The resolution further regretted the President's comments about the validity of the cease-fire agreement to which she was not party, but had agreed to honour.

Norwegian Deputy Foreign Minister Vidar Helgesen's remarks on Norway's temporary withdrawal are clearly reflected in the EU resolution. Take what Chris Patten said in Colombo on 26th November, after meeting Prabhakaran earlier in the day, on his birthday (*Island*, 27 11.03): *"We can't expect any fudging between political ends achieved by violence and political ends achieved by the ballot box."* This is exactly what is going on and if Patten meant what he said, it should be most welcome. But Patten also told Prabhakaran: *"...if the international community have any evidence that those accusations [regarding the issues of child recruitment, target assassinations of political opponents...] are justified, they would clearly call into question the good faith of the LTTE."*

This too closely follows Vidar Helgesen's response to charges of child conscription by the LTTE in March last year. He told the *Daily Mirror* (28.3.03) that the LTTE has denied it, while the Norwegians had been unable to verify it. Evidently, Patten was no wiser than Helgesen was 20 months earlier. He could simply have got the picture from Amnesty International in his own country or from the SLMM or UNICEF in Colombo. What we can discern is that none of Helgesen, Patten or the EU is looking for the evidence or wants to see it if given.

While the LTTE leader gets off very lightly, when the President acts according to the constitution on a matter of informed concern, or makes an observation about the MoU that many scholars and commentators have long made, *she* is given the rap. No strictures are made against the Norwegians, several of whose actions have been questionable. We are being told, *"you obey*

or we will withhold the gold.” Meanwhile Prabhakaran can commit the most heinous crimes through his agents even as he smiles and shakes hands with eager foreign dignitaries who have chosen to be blind.

The message is not in Patten’s words of little substance in Colombo, but in the unofficial birthday visit by a European minister.

If we are puzzled about what all this means, the following passage from *A Disputed Legacy*, by Johann Hari in the *Times Literary Supplement* (28th March 2003) gives food for thought:

Robert Cooper, a former leading foreign policy adviser to [Prime Minister Tony] Blair, has explained that *‘the challenge of the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards’*. Among themselves, the Europeans may *‘operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security’*. But when dealing with the world outside Europe, *‘we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era - force preemptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary’*. This is Cooper’s principle for safeguarding society: *‘Among ourselves, we keep the law, but when operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle’*.

Make no mistake; the advocates of globalization love the Bin Ladens and Prabhakarans of this world, at a safe distance. Such characters, while inflicting enormous misery and ruin on their own people, do a good job of breaking up nations and opening up markets.

The Anglo-American sponsorship of Islamic extremism to break up the Soviet Union brought ruin to the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It made the problem in Kashmir more difficult to resolve. It furthered the legitimacy of the destructive forces in India that broke up the historic Babri Masjid and unleashed violence in Gujarat. Now they would like to see India broken up into mini states ruled by such obliging despots as Haider Aliyev of Azerbaijan. What could they have against Prabhakaran?

We have become playthings. Sri Lankan sovereignty is being taken very lightly, even as Western nations reinforce their own sovereignty against the Third World. The irony is that we are largely to blame for our own loss of control. The South Asian notion of sovereignty -- that outsiders cannot question what a sovereign nation does to its own citizens -- ultimately degrades and fractures that very sovereignty.

President Kumaratunge’s 2000 constitutional proposals were a laudable attempt to reassert Sri Lanka’s sovereignty in the positive sense by establishing democratic safeguards and sustainable institutions that at the same time addressed Tamil grievances. Having undermined that attempt in the course of its political campaign, once the UNP took power it tried to take a shortcut to peace and prosperity in Sri Lanka, disregarding its obligation to the nation’s Tamil citizens.

This opened the floodgates to mischief and meddling. Prime Minister Wickremasinghe has been reduced to taking refuge behind the dubious merit of US President Bush’s and the European Union’s confidence in him.

Finding a way out is going to be difficult. But the lesson of experience is surely that it has to begin with an assertion of values and an honest attempt to come to terms with the past. It would make a big difference once the people of the North-East are convinced that the Government will give them a fair deal, treat them equitably taking into account what they have suffered; and protect their rights, whoever tries to do them harm.

Appendix

Abduction of Children

On 06.10.2003, LTTE member Chandran abducted Sivanesan Sudharsan (age 17) an 11th year student of Kannaki Maha Vidyalayam of Putukudiyiruppu, Batticaloa. The incident took place at 8.00 PM when the boy was on his way to a kiosk nearby.

Mylvaganam Kunasekaran (17) of Hospital Rd., Chettipalayam, was among about 25 abducted about 3.00 AM on 7th October at the Porativu Amman Kovil *Theertham*

On 9th October at 3.30 PM an LTTE party of 7 under area leader Satyaraj went to the home of Selvam Prabu (mid-teens or younger) in Daniel Square, Thimilativu, in Pudur off Batticaloa and abducted him. Prabu's father Selvam had been a member of the EPRLF, and was disabled in one hand. While going to Colombo by bus in 1992, he was taken down by the LTTE at Santhiveli and shot dead.

On 9th October, an LTTE party under Vengaiyan from its Commathurai office north of Batticaloa abducted Ganeshan Mayuran (14 years) of Market St., Chenkalady, and Mahendrarajah Vinodarajah (15) of Aandankulam Rd., Chenkalady.

On 20th October, Paramanathan Kasthuri (date of birth 25.12.1988) of Meesalai, Kodikamam was abducted by the LTTE and taken to Vanni. The parents of the girl who came to know of it rushed to the LTTE's office in Killinochchi and inquired about their child. The parents were told by the LTTE that the girl had attained 18 years and that she had joined the LTTE on her own wish. The LTTE even chased the parents out of their office. The helpless parents returned home, disillusioned (EPDP News).

On Saturday 15th November, security forces personnel who were deployed on duty at the Black Bridge at Chenkaladi in the Batticaloa District rescued a child abducted by LTTE cadres. The boy, Thiyagarajah Kumar (age 10) was being forcibly taken in a three-wheeler to the LTTE's Karadiyanaru camp when security forces personnel stopped the vehicle. The driver of the three-wheeler and two others were apprehended and identified as members of the political wing of the LTTE based in the Vantharamoolai office of the LTTE. Shamindra Ferdinando quoting police sources said that the boy had been assaulted at the LTTE office, and the LTTE

had apparently explained their action as having to do with inquiring into a theft of jewellery (*Island* 17 Nov.03).

On 17th November, LTTE women abducted G.Vedana (age 16) and V.Thusintha (age 18), both of Urimpirai East. They were abducted when they had gone to school (EPDP News).

Udayakumar Dharsika (age 15) and Jeganathan Jenithan (age 16), both of Makkoni in Karavetty Division in the Jaffna Peninsula were abducted by the LTTE on 7th and 14th November respectively (EPDP News).

On 15th November, Manoharan Anushmitha (age 17) of Aathisoody Road, Jaffna and Soosaiyappu Arulappu Imelda (age 17) of Colombogami were abducted by the LTTE. About the same day, Selvam (age 10) of Poovakarai in Thambatty, Visakhan Jeevithan (age 22) and Kalaichelvi (age 18), both of Rasagramam, Karavetty were abducted by the LTTE (EPDP News).

EPDP News reported that around 25th November, in Kalmunai, a 13-year old girl was abducted by the LTTE, and her mother S. Felestina had complained to the Kalmunai Police and the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission.

On making inquiries, we received information of possibly a different case. Jesila, a young girl of 15 or less from Kurunthaiady, Ward 1 Kalmunai was in love with 18 year old Sivanath, a man with LTTE links, from the same area. On 25th November 2003, Sivanath ran away with Jesila to his maternal grandmother's in Kurumanveli, near Kaluvanchikudy, Batticaloa District. Sivanath in the meantime attached himself to the LTTE's Kurumanveli office. On hearing about this, Jesila's mother Sarojini set off to Kurumanveli. Sivanath then shifted the girl to the LTTE's Kiran office. Sarojini later returned to Kalmunai without her daughter. What she gathered was that from Kiran, had been taken to the LTTE's training camps in the interior.

EPDP News (1 Dec.03) reported that on 29.11.2003, the LTTE abducted 13-year old Selvamathy Subadra from her home at No.65, 8th Lane, Nelukulam, Vavuniya. She is a student of Vavuniya Vipulananda Maha Vidyalayam, and is the daughter of Pushparajah and Saraswathy. (The reference appeared to be to two girls Selvamathy and Subadra.)

Upon making inquiries about this case, we learnt from another source that LTTE women went to Pandarikulam Vipulananda Girls' School in Vavuniya on the Leader's birthday, 26th November, and abducted several girls from Grade 8. The mothers of the girls then went to the LTTE women's camp at Kurumankadu and demanded their children. The LTTE women denied having conscripted the girls. The mothers then talked to Elilan, the political wing head in Vavuniya, who too denied the LTTE having anything to do with it. They subsequently went to the SLMM, after whose forceful intervention Puvaneswaran Selvamathy (14) and Rajanayagam Niruja (14) were released. According to sources in the area at least 13 children were taken that day from various schools and the actual position may not be known until the schools reopen in January.

Arumugam Bhavani (24) of East St., Thurainilavanai 7 south of Batticaloa was abducted by LTTE women on 15th November. She was taken to Kiran in connection with the Leader's birthday and Martyrs' Day celebration and made her escape on 26th November.

** The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) (UTHR(J)) was formed in 1988 at the University of Jaffna, as part of the national organisation University Teachers for Human Rights. Its public activities as a constituent part of university life came to a standstill following the murder of **Dr. Rajani Thiranagama**, a key founding member, on 21st September 1989. During the course of 1990 the others who identified openly with the UTHR(J) were forced to leave Jaffna. It continues to function as an organisation upholding the founding spirit of the UTHR(J) with its original aims: **to challenge the external and internal terror engulfing the Tamil community as a whole through making the perpetrators accountable, and to create space for humanising the social & political spheres relating to the life of our community**. The UTHR(J) is not at present functioning in the University of Jaffna in the manner it did in its early life for reasons well understood.*