

NEWS

SLA massacred civilians in bunkers - medical worker



Eyewitnesses say the Sri Lankan military fired into civilian areas in the last weeks of the war

TamilNet

THE advancing Sri Lanka Army massacred civilians by paving their bunkers with tanks, by throwing explosives inside the bunkers and by shooting the injured, says a medical worker who came out of Mullivaykkal during the last days of the war, became incarcerated in a camp and now escaped the island.

"Around a hundred thousand captured civilians herded to Mullaitheevu were kept in rows within barbed wires, most of the time without water or food under the hot sun, and were bullied and ill treated with arrogance," he writes in a lengthy note that reached TamilNet.

The note in Tamil was provided by the Norwegian Tamils Health Organisation (NTHO), urging TamilNet not to reveal the identity of the health worker for reasons of his security.

The medical worker was injured in a fire-bomb attack of the SLA on May 12th.

On alleged earlier firing on civilians, who in desperation tried to get into SLA controlled area, and on violence in recruitment during the last days that especially affected the families of LTTE heroes and fighters, the medical worker attributed responsibility to some elements long infiltrated into the LTTE, to work on behalf of Colombo. LTTE senior ranks were shaken by such treachery, he writes.

Further personal observations culled out from his notes follow:

Colombo particularly targeted hospitals and makeshift hospitals. When people moved away from Kilinochchi, its hospital started functioning in the school building at Udaiyaarkaddu. More than two thousand shells were fired on this building by the SLA.

Kilinochchi to Tharmapuram, Vaddakkachchi, Visuvamadu, Udaiyaarkaddu, Puthukkudiyiruppu - until reaching Mullivaaykkaal, at an average 50 civilians were killed every day in Sri Lankan attacks. 8000 were already killed before herded into Mullivaaykkaal.

Medical work decimated and workers were shaken at the death of patients, nurses and workers.

When there were more than 300,000 people, Colombo sent food for only 30,000.

Important medicines such as anaesthetic drugs were not sent.

Life-saving surgery without anaesthesia was a cursing ordeal for the patients as well as doctors.

Mothers and children standing in queue to receive infant milk food were targeted in the SL shell attacks.

Without seeing no one could visualize the sorrow of the child that lost the mother and the mother who lost the child.

SLA shell attacks, guided by spy craft were targeted on queues for gruel also. Despite casualties the queue would form again.

While even gruel was scarce to people, lands they cultivated were harvested by the SLA.

At one stage, the LTTE leadership ordered food meant for combatants to be shared with civilians. The fighters fought only with gruel food and to the last LTTE served gruel to people.

Around 1000 waterholes were dug and several hundreds of toilets were made for civilians at the initiative of the LTTE. Water often mixed with sand was collected in shell-halves and was filtered by cloth.

There were no epidemics.

Pregnant mothers and infants bearing shell fragments came to makeshift hospitals.

These hospitals functioned 24 hours and wailing was always heard around them.

Many dead bodies couldn't be buried in certain situations of SL attacks and hungry dogs dragged them.

Every time moving patients to ICRC vessel there will be targeted shelling from the SLA. A few hundreds taken for ICRC treatment died. How that happened was not known and whom to ask.

Even in emaciated conditions people donated blood for treatment and some of them later died of their own injuries.

More than a thousand people were killed on the day when the SLA entered into Maaththa'lan and Pokka'nai (20th April).

On May 15th and 16th the SLA entered and rampaged the pocket of land crowded with nearly a hundred thousand people.

I had to pass through at least around 300 bodies when I came out. Some were alive but couldn't walk. I helped a few who could walk. Some held my feet when I tried to go away. What could I do?

There is a long list of people who were eliminated and disap-

peared after capture by the SLA. The army-controlled area was a place where murders took place in front of one's eyes.

In Mullaitheevu, a hundred thousand people made to stand in rows would all of a sudden be ordered to squat by the SL army. The soldiers would make sadistic laugh at seeing the melee of people falling on each other in the exercise.

Long poles were used to beat the people and to threaten them.

Old and young stood under hot sun for a long time, immensely suffering from thirst.

Mullaitheevu to Vavuniyaa was scenery of disaster.

There were 20 to 25 people in a tent in the internment camp at

Cheddiku'lam. Food was sometimes thrown from a vehicle.

Everyday in the internment camp around 30 people died.

It was a place of epidemics.

Thousands suffered of Chicken Pox, hundreds had brain fever, many elders died and some committed suicide.

The bribe to SL army for a person to come out was several hundred thousands of rupees.

In the last days of the war over 18,000 killed, more than 5,000 lost limbs, more than 7,000 seriously injured and several thousands suffered minor injuries. Several thousands suffer mental illnesses. More than a hundred medical workers- doctors, nurses and volunteers perished.

Knowledge and exercise of precaution reduced casualty. No one died of any epidemic under LTTE control.

Several thousands of Sinhala youth of the SLA, from poor families, regrettably laid down their life in the war.

The sadistic lust of Mahinda Rajapaksa is very astonishing - inflicting pain on ordinary civilians in every possible way, and then projecting that as forms of his soothing operation to the outside world.

The world may forget, but Tamils will never forget the true face of the civilisation of 21st century, the world has shown to them, writes the medical worker in his notes.

Le Monde calls for Sri Lanka to 'stop'

TamilNet

"AFTER winning the war, the Sri Lankan regime is in the process of losing the peace. Following the historic, but bloody and distasteful victory, against the armed struggle of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa could be magnanimous and reach out to the Tamil minority and open the way for national reconciliation. But Rajapaksa has chosen another path, the path of domination...Under the tents of the refugee camps tomorrow's Tigers may already be rising to mount a future rebellion," warned France's popular daily, Le Monde in an editorial last Thursday.

Excerpts from the translated editorial follows:

More than three months after the end of the war, some 280 000 Tamil refugees are kept as prisoners behind of barbed wire, unhealthy and overcrowded camps.

Official reasons for the delay are that the Government is screening the civilians to identify combatants and to protect the village refugees from the mines planted by the LTTE.

These excuses are fanciful. The truth is, the Sri Lankan government seeks to control this population [Tamil refugees] and to silence the refugees who were witnesses to the horror of the last weeks of the conflict.

International assistance to camps will be forthcoming only if the Sri Lankan regime shows urgency in weeding out the suspects and release. For proof, Sri Lanka did not hesitate to remove and torture two local staff of the United Nations.

NGOs and UN must confront an existential question: did they help a population in distress or are they complicit in a large-scale incarceration? This question has become increasingly complex as the rainy season approaches, which could sow chaos inside the camps. Already in the month of August, rain has washed away the

tents of thousands of refugees, and hundreds of families are inconvenienced and agitating inside the camps.

Instead of making peace, President Rajapaksa and his brother Gotabhaya, Secretary of Defense, are exhibiting vengeance: they have declared the war against the civil society.

In recent weeks, a renowned Tamil journalist was sentenced to twenty years in prison; a human rights activist has received death threats; a video seemingly showing Sri Lankan soldiers executing naked men convinced the UN to consider investigation.

The Sri Lankan Government is in a position of strength. It has developed dependent friendships with the least recommendable regimes on the planet and has had to deal with minor retaliatory measures on the part of the Western powers.

The LTTE and its local supporters are destroyed. But, under the tents of the refugee camps, tomorrow's Tigers may already be rising to mount a future rebellion.