

RAPID CONTEXT ASSESSMENT



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The major military and political event of the month was the military defeat of the LTTE and the annihilation of the top leadership of the organisation including its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. It was a historic turning point in Sri Lanka's post independence history. President Rajapakse and his governing UPFA are enjoying unchallenged political dominance in the country. Recent election results show that the Sinhalese community in particular is largely with the government.

The government must urgently address the humanitarian crisis of the 292,000 IDPs. The visiting UN Secretary General and the foreign ministers of Britain and France expressed serious concern for the IDPs while conceding that the government was operating under severe resource constraints. They stressed the need to improve the conditions in the camps and pressed for quick resettlement of the people in their home villages. The international community is also demanding the government to allow the UN and the established INGOs and NGOs unimpeded access to the camps. A speedy solution to the IDP problem will help restore the confidence of the Tamil people in the government and also

assuage international sentiment towards Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is increasingly relying on what it considers to be the non-judgmental China for financial assistance and diplomatic support. Sri Lanka has also welcomed the assistance of India, Pakistan and several other developing countries who have backed the country in various forms in the past few months. At least for now many of the major western nations have lost credibility in the eyes of many Sri Lankans.

The month of May was bad for Sri Lanka's human rights measured in terms of killings, abductions, arrests and disappearances. However, the end of the war gives hope for improvement in the future.

The military defeat of the LTTE creates more political space for the administration to find a viable long-term political solution to the problems that in the first place led to the conflict. Mr. Rajapakse may call a presidential election which could also be a referendum for a permanent political solution that he could present to satisfy Tamil aspirations. Such a solution must move beyond the 13th amendment.

The termination of the war has major implications for Sri Lanka's economic future. Investors in the Colombo share market were bullish in May. The government is confident that it would be able to reap a huge peace dividend for the economy. However, the month's economic events were not very propitious. The rupee depreciated against the dollar in late April and early May to give relief to exporters. But in the second half of the month it appreciated for speculative reasons unrelated to economic fundamentals. S&P Ratings Services revised the outlook for Sri Lanka from stable to negative. The \$1.9b IMF Standby Loan is yet to be approved. Several major donor countries that have criticised both the government as well as the LTTE for disregarding international humanitarian law may hold back much needed donor assistance to rebuild the economy.

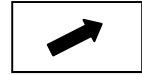
The onset of the monsoon broke the draught that will help tea and other crops. But heavy rain has also increased landslides and several resulted in fatalities. The outbreak of dengue fever has become a major public health threat and in 2009 to date 65 have died from the fever. There are important public health and environmental issues in the large IDP camps that need urgent attention.

INDICATOR REFERENCES

No change	➔	Slightly improving	➔	Slightly deteriorating	➡
Significantly improving	⬆	Significantly deteriorating	⬇		

NATIONAL ANALYSIS - 28/4/2009 TO 26/5/2009

POLITICAL CONTEXT



The United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) or popularly called "Sandanaya" led by President Mahinda Rajapakse is at its peak. They have successfully won all the Provincial Council elections (except Uva, Southern and Northern) held so far and the "War on Terrorism" here in Sri Lanka. It is certainly a good period for the President and his men however; the victories should not lull the government into a false sense of complacency.

Since the Opposition United National Party (UNP) has offered to join the UPFA government in a bid to help re-build the Nation, the UPFA could grasp this opportunity to form a National Government and work together for the greater good of the Nation. Meanwhile, the President looks set for staging the Presidential Election in November. If he is able to put forward an alternate solution for permanent peace he will be lucky

since the election can take the form of a referendum. Unlike the Parliamentary Election which is held on District basis, the President is elected by the citizens of the entire country.

The war is certainly not over or are we made to think it that way? It is not going to be an easy task for government to take care of over 292,000 Internally Displaced People (IDP). However, if the government does not take note of this crisis and try to rehabilitate these people it could probably be there down fall.

The government has also to get serious and push for a lasting political solution that will give meaning to the words: "Peace" and "freedom." The partying all night long holding the "Lion Flag" on high is not going to make life any easier for the IDPs.

Prof. Tissa Vitharana's All Party Conference proposal is a bad egg as it does not address

the needs of the minorities. The government should take the Interim Self Governing Authority (ISGA) proposals along with the Prof. G. L. Peiris alternate Constitution under President Chandrika Kumaratunga's administration and look at both documents together and frame Legislation that will give peace a chance.

The Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 that gave birth to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution which describes the formation and functions of the Provincial Council never saw the light of day. It fell short of its expectations and halted at the point of holding elections. Had this been fully implemented, we would not have seen the huge humanitarian crisis that the government is faced with today.

Therefore along with addressing the humanitarian needs a permanent solution to peace has to evolve and these are the urgent needs that cannot be postponed any longer.

GOVERNANCE



A TURNING POINT HAS BEEN REACHED

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's speech to Parliament to mark the defeat of the LTTE has come in for wide praise. The President made a noticeable effort to reach out to the Tamil people by speaking for a short while in the Tamil language. He said that a military solution was not the answer to the country's problems, and pledged a home grown political solution. The government's military victory over the LTTE, and the destruction of its command and control structures, presents a historic opportunity for political progress in Sri Lanka. For the past three decades Sri Lanka was locked between governments that were not prepared to devolve significant powers to the provinces and a Tamil militant movement that wanted nothing short of a separate country.

The government now needs to obtain international support supplement its own resources in providing for the displaced persons and victims of war and in taking the

country onto a fast track of economic development. The government will also require international cooperation in preventing sections of the Tamil diaspora who have for long supported the violent activities of the LTTE from seeking to keep the fires of hatred burning in Sri Lanka through acts of internationally sponsored terrorism. The government has been under considerable international pressure to open up the welfare camps which are under military control and to ease the restriction on access to international humanitarian organizations into them.

Restoring the confidence of the Tamil people in the government would be the major challenge in the forthcoming period. The heavy human costs in the last phase of the war have generated anxiety and uncertainty amongst the Tamil population. An immediate measure that needs to be given priority attention would be to ensure that the hundreds and thousands of displaced civilians are provided with improved relief and reha-

bilitation services, and are resettled in their home villages as soon as possible.

As pointed out by President Mahinda Rajapaksa in his address to Parliament, the military solution by itself does not suffice and needs to be followed by a political solution. The joint statement by government and UN at the conclusion of the visit of Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to Sri Lanka reiterated the need for a political solution acceptable to all communities. But until that time, the military solution itself needs to be moderated by the government providing unimpeded access to UN agencies and, at least to a few reputed international humanitarian organizations to the welfare camps, and by the government subscribing to international standards of humanitarian and human rights law. At the very least, significantly more resources need to be made available to improve the lives of those presently confined to the welfare camps.

SECURITY



Humanitarian operations started on 8th August 2006 by GoSL from Mavilaru came to an end on May 17th 2009 after the Leader of the Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam Velupillai Prabhakaran was found dead near the Mullaitivu lagoon. Although terrorist activities by the LTTE began with the killing of Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiappah in 1975 which was Prabhakaran's first political murder, the group was officially started only in

1976 on May 6th. Since then the LTTE has carried out a total of 241 suicide attacks killing thousands of civilians, including 2 state leaders.

The final military push towards LTTE - controlled area was launched after the SL Army declared the "New Safety Zone", an area between south of Karayamullaivaikkal including Vellamullivaikkal, 2 km in length

and 1.5km in width.. There had been reports that shelling was taking place even in the new safe zone, with the SLA and the LTTE trading the blame for civilian casualties. The 59 division had started out from the Southern edge while the 58 division had started out from the edge of the New Safety Zone and then linked with each other on May 15 after fierce fighting with the remaining LTTE cadres. Men of the Sri Lanka Light

Infantry of 58 division had moved towards the Vellamullivaikkal, while the Air - Mobile Brigade of 53 division was deployed on the Nanthikadal lagoon side which is south of the causeway in Vellamullivaikkal. Troops belonging to 11 Gemunu Watch 11 CLI of the 59 division captured the entire coastal belt and linked up with the 58 Division. Remaining troops of 59 Division in Wadduvakkal moved to the North to link up with 53 Division. The government troops had gone from the South, North and the East of the new Safety Zone, further reducing the LTTE- held area, finally rescuing the final batch of remaining civilians on May 17th. A soldier belonging to 4 Vijayaba Regiment of 53 Division identified a body similar to the LTTE leader with head injuries on Tuesday the 19th May. Later in the week Government troops found bodies of other LTTE leaders. On May 13 Government troops recovered parts of an aircraft of the Tiger Air Wing from Thevapuram. A surrendered LTTE cadre revealed that the LTTE had four fixed wing aircraft and one chopper.

LTTE had 18,000 cadres at the beginning of Eelam War 4 while the Sri Lanka Army had 150,000 personnel. According to Defence Secretary Gothabhaya Rajapakshe 6,261 security forces personnel had sacrificed

their lives since 2006 while nearly 30,000 were injured and more than 2500 disabled in the recent humanitarian operations. He further said that all this had been possible as a result of proper leadership, systematic planning and commitment to eliminate terrorism from Sri Lanka. Hon. Ranil Wickremesinghe - Opposition Leader while congratulating the President and the Government troops for "finishing the LTTE and terrorism" said that there are other Sri Lankan leaders who have also contributed towards defeating the Tigers such as weakening the outfit. Irony is such that the LTTE leader had only wanted 33 bullets on the LTTE flag and also he believed that Number 8 is an "unlucky number" so he had never engaged in major operations on 8, 17 or 26, but LTTE's final battle against the government forces was launched on Sunday the 17th May and decided the future of the LTTE.

According to military analyst Dr. Rohan Gunerathne, in his interview with Lanka-deepa- April 29th, he identified four major reasons for the LTTE's military defeat, the main reason being Prabhakaran's inadequate political knowledge, due to which he miscalculated the opportunities given in the past. The first opportunity was when the LTTE was asked to handover weapons soon

after the arrival of IRKF when he had only handed over poor-quality weapons and went back to his military means. The second was when President Premadasa invited the LTTE for talks, although he agreed for peace talks on the promise that the IPKF went back to India. The third was during President Kumarathunga's time when he agreed to come for Peace talks but he had used this opportunity to build - up military capacity for a future war. It was during this time that the LTTE acquired the first aircraft and the final opportunity was when he prevented Tamil citizens voting for in the 2005 Presidential election as he wanted Rajapakshe to be the President so that he could re-start the war, giving LTTE an opportunity to convince the international community and get their support for their cause, without realizing that the international community was shaken - up after the September 11 attack in the US. He further that said in order to prevent another war one needs to develop the country and make the ex- LTTE supporters understand that there was more to life outside the jungles of the Wannu.

The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous.

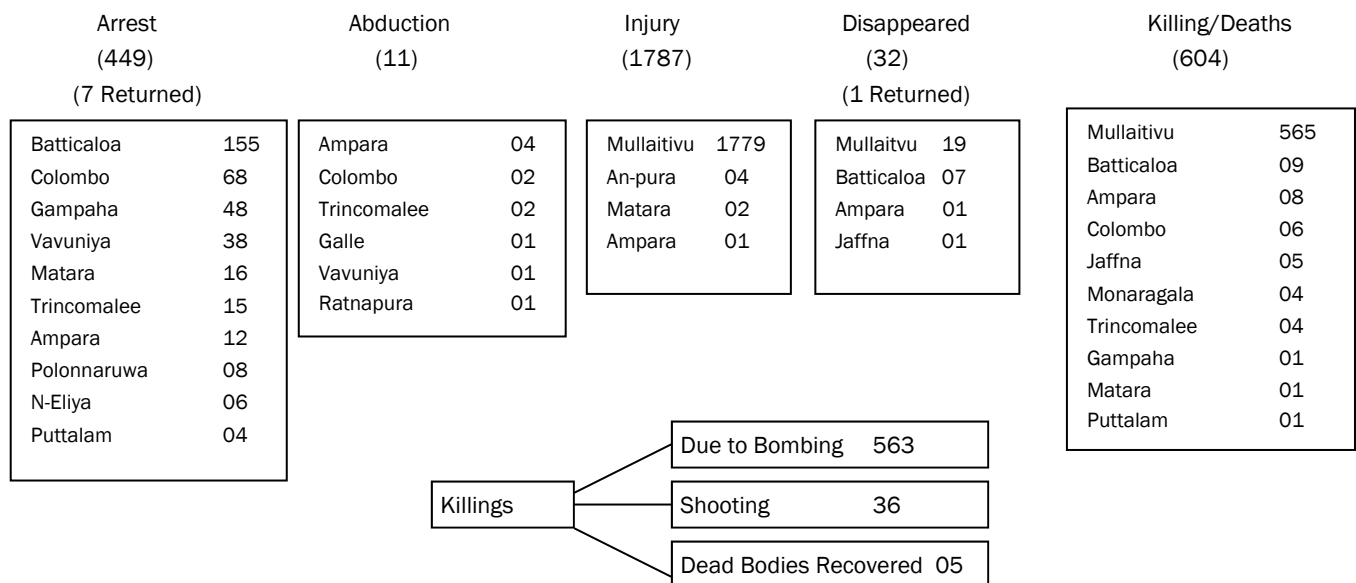
~Frederick Douglass

HUMAN RIGHTS



Human Rights analysis for month of Apr 21st to May 20th)

The chart below focuses on violations as reported in various news sources available in print media and electronic media. (Daily mirror, The Island, Daily News, Thinakkural, Sudar oli, Virakesari and Lanka page)



May 2009 is bound to be a major watershed in Sri Lanka's human rights history. The conclusion of the war with the LTTE in itself should help improve human rights in the country for more than one reason. First,

war-related deaths - an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 died in the conflict - have come to an end and the right to life is the most basic of human rights. Second, the war resulted in the enactment of laws and regulations including the Prevention of Terrorism

Act (PTA) and the declaration of emergency that served to weaken human rights. It will be hard to justify such laws when peace returns. Third, in some quarters the war was used as a cover or the fight against terrorism was used as a convenient excuse to

undermine human rights. That will be harder to do in the future.

But the month also will be remembered for the intense violence that the concluding phase of the war generated in a narrow patch of sea coast in the north-east Sri Lanka. There is no need to recount here the details of the battles that were fought. From a human rights perspective the major issue concerned civilian casualties. The LTTE used tens of thousands of civilians as a human shield. In late April the Sri Lankan forces publicly assured the international community that it would not use heavy weapons to dislodge the remaining LTTE fighters who were holed up together with the civilians in a few sq km of land. But beyond this the facts are in dispute. The government is adamant that it kept its promise and accused the LTTE of firing heavy artillery to blame the government and to prevent the civilians escaping. But this was disputed by the LTTE. Some members of the international community have claimed that both parties continued to use heavy weapons disregarding the welfare of the civilians.

The government also denied that the last few weeks of fighting caused a large number of civilian deaths. But estimates ranging from about 7,000 to as many as 20,000 have been mentioned. What is clear is that most of the claims, denials and country-claims have partisan motives and bias. An attempt to pass a resolution in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva to conduct an official UN inquiry to establish what actually happened and to verify whether International Humanitarian Law has been observed was easily overcome by Sri Lanka that mobilized the support of a large number of non-western members of the Council.

The conditions under which about 275,000 IDPs live in camps in Vavunia have also given rise to human rights concern. The government strongly asserts that it is doing its best under difficult circumstances and with few resources. The government also justifies the strict security measures in the camps as a necessary precaution to weed out LTTE cadres who may mingle with the civilians. Several prominent international officials including the UN Secretary General who visited the camps have generally accepted the position of the government while pointing out the need for improvement of facilities and the importance of quick resettlement of the IDPs in their home villages. But critics of the government point out that the camps are in effect detention centres that deny freedom of movement to the IDPs. They also note that access to INGOs and NGOs have been restricted and the media is not allowed free access to report on the conditions in the camps. All these can be interpreted as violations of international humanitarian law and restriction on human rights.

Outside the war area human rights violations in the form of killings, abductions, disappearance and arrests that appeared to be arbitrary or politically motivated were reported in significant numbers largely from the north and east. These have become so common that they no longer command public attention. The exception during the period under review was the abduction of the prominent journalist Poddala Jayantha who was beaten up and dumped in an isolated place by his abductors. Harassment, physical torture and killing of journalists have become quite common in the past three years. The negative human rights implications of these incidents go beyond the violation of the rights of one individual to undermining media freedom in the country.

Finally, President Mahinda Rajapakse in his address opening the fourth session of the parliament asserted that *"We have removed the word minorities from our vocabulary three years ago. No longer are the Tamils, Muslims, Burghers, Malays and any others minorities. There are only two peoples in this country. One is the people that love this country. The other comprises the small groups that have no love for the land of their birth. Those who do not love the country are now a lesser group."* If the government actually follows this policy of not recognizing ethnicity it would imply a paradigm shift in the way that human rights are complied with in this country. Ethnic group rights will no longer be of any consequence. The question of ethnic quotas in employment, university admissions and ethnic representation in commissions, boards, and other official bodies will be a thing of the past. Indeed all rights will be ethnicity blind. In other words the country will have to transit to a classic liberal individual rights framework. It will be interesting to watch if this is really possible in a country where ethnic divisions run deep and have been further strengthened by a quarter century of blood-letting.

Note: CHA has developed a monthly statistical data base on human rights violations such as killings, arbitrary arrests, abductions and so on. It can be accessed at hrc1@cha.lk

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The indicator arrow is up 45degrees for the economy not because the economic numbers for the month May merit much optimism. They do not. But the government's military victory over the LTTE has given hope for the economy. Investors in the Colombo stock market expressed their confidence by pushing up share prices by as much as 18% in the last two weeks of the month. The Central Bank claimed that after the war ended in the space of five short days foreign investors purchased government bonds worth about \$100 million. The annual rate of inflation moved up marginally from 2.9% in April to 3.3% in May but this was inconsequential. President Rajapakse spoke with great optimism about reconstruction of the north and east and more generally about winning the "economic war."

The rupee that has been allowed to float depreciated in late April and early May to drop below Rs 120 against the dollar. This was a necessary adjustment. But later it moved up to around Rs 115 and the Central Bank had to intervene to keep it from appreciating further that would have been detrimental to exporters. This appreciation was not related to economic fundamentals. It was the result of speculative buying and selling of the dollar.

Most of the economic signs were not propitious. The nation's foreign reserves were down to about seven weeks worth of imports. Standard and Poor (S&P) Ratings Services revised the outlook for Sri Lanka from stable to negative. This happened after

the war ended. S&P justified its decision on the grounds that Sri Lanka's external liquidity was inadequate, the Rs 1.9b IMF loan was uncertain and the fiscal imbalance remains uncorrected. The US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton expressed some reservations in mid May about US supporting Sri Lanka's stand-by loan application to the IMF. At the time of this writing the publicly announced calendar of formal meetings of the IMF Executive Board up to June 8th 2009 does not have Sri Lanka on the agenda.

It was reported that the Central Bank had lost as much as Rs 5 billion in 2008 by trying to "diversify" its currency reserves. The Bank bet against the dollar and lost. The much talked about \$500m fifteen year loan



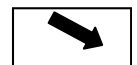
from Libya has not come as yet. The Asian Development Bank has hinted that it may be able to frontload some of its project assistance to Sri Lanka and disburse a little more funds in 2009. The Central Bank is seeking currency swaps to tide over the shortage of external liquidity. Malaysia agreed to a \$200m swap in March. This would have been partly self-serving because Malaysian companies that have substantial investments in Sri Lanka need to send back home their dividend and interest earnings. Sri Lanka expects donor assistance to reset the IDPs numbering over 250,000 and rebuild the north and east. In February the government launched the Committee for Action Plan (CHAP) under UN sponsorship with the goal of raising \$155m. This amount

includes \$48m that had been pledged before the appeal was launched. But since then only about \$1.5m had been added to the total amount pledged. India has promised about \$8.5m and Norway (\$10m), UK (\$7.5m), and Japan (\$4.5m) have also pledged to help.

The rate of unemployment was reported to have fallen to a record low of a little over 5%. But a significant share of recent jobs is in the military and private security services. Sri Lanka has to resettle the IDPs, rebuild the infrastructure deficit especially in the north and east and create more productive employment. For this the government will have to attract both donor assistance as well as foreign direct investment. It is also

essential to protect the markets in the west such as the GSP+ facility in EU. China has emerged as a major source of loan assistance for the country. However, the major markets for the country's products are in the west. Just now relations between Sri Lanka and some major western countries that have been critical of the war conduct on the part of both the LTTE as well as the Sri Lankan military remain strained

ENVIRONMENT



The south-west monsoon's arrival has been confirmed by the Meteorological Department, bringing rains to the island and effectively breaking the hot, humid weather that characterized most of May. The arrival of the rains has resulted in an increased risk of landslides in the central hills. In the Uva province several schools were closed from May 25th due to the landslide risk caused by prevailing rains. Two schools in Welimada and three in Bibila were closed until further notice. In addition to the rains, Bibile was hard hit by gale force winds on the 25th of May, damaging 30 homes. On the 19th of May several people were killed at Norton Bridge near Hatton when their home was engulfed by a landslide.

An outbreak of dengue fever resulted in the closure of several schools in southern Sri Lanka in early May, predominantly in the Tangalle area. It also led to the Dengue Breeding Act which was put before parliament on May 5 and will be implemented from June 2009. The purpose of the Act is to increase the maximum fines for allowing mosquito breeding areas from 50 Rs to 2500 Rs. So far 65 dengue-related deaths have been confirmed and over 4000 illnesses reported across the island with Colombo and Gampaha the most affected areas. This is in comparison to only 27 deaths in 2008.

The influx of internally displaced peoples from the north and east who are temporarily settling in camps in and around Vavuniya

are creating a waste disposal issue. At Menik farm alone, the largest of the camps, there is a need for ~10 000 toilet facilities. At present waste is being disposed in a variety of ways including gulley suckers and dumping in open pits. The environmental implications of this sudden increase in waste are uncertain but need to be addressed.

In early May a Ukrainian university professor and a Sri Lankan guide were arrested in Minneriya National Park with a large collection (>200) of butterflies and dragonflies. The collection of specimens is illegal in Sri Lanka under the Flora and Fauna Protection Ordinance (1938).

CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA SPACE



Commenting on Media space and civil society in the month of May is no easy task. It was a month of cataclysmic events resulting in nearly 292,000 of our citizens being rendered homeless in their own homeland, ending a civil war that ravaged this island nation for three decades, the incineration of the remains of a Terrorist leader who was the living embodiment of evil in all its manifestations. It was also a month of unparalleled display of patriotic fervor. The electronic and print media had all the space they needed for they shared the nation's euphoria. Justifiably so.

History has been described as the only laboratory we have where we could test the consequences of our thoughts. It is in stark contrast to the Churchillian observation that history is written by victors. It would be useful if one delved in to some sample editorial comments of the halcyon days of the Cease

Fire Agreement of 2002 and the editorial comments made in May 2009 where one editorial called for the "Ensuring of a Decisive end." For reasons of space only the concluding or introductory observations of the editorials referred to are reproduced.

The Island 24th February 2002 - "Peace Process ...tread warily" "...Similarly, the government will be mistaken if it thinks everything is hunky-dory and will go exactly the way it wants. While treading the path to peace, the government must be mindful of the dangers involved. It should draw lessons from what we have learnt in the past in talking peace with the LTTE as well as from the experience of leaders like Colombian President Andres Pastrana, who had staked his presidency on solving Colombia's problem only to be let down badly by the FARC after three years of talking.

It behoves the government to make the peace process transparent, avoid falling into

traps and above all, be prepared for the worst.

"The Island 10th March 2002- "Naked among the tigers" On the other hand, doubts have already been expressed by many about the impartiality of observers from the Scandinavian countries, given their alleged partiality towards the LTTE, which finds a safe haven in that part of the world. While these doubts and suspicions should be allayed, the participation of many others must be sought to monitor the LTTE activities. The press can be made use of for this purpose. Journalists both local and foreign must be encouraged and given all facilities to visit the Heart of Darkness under LTTE control. The LTTE must be asked to allow them to operate from areas under its control without let or hindrance.

The Island 17th May 2009 - "Ensuring a decisive end" The Lankan state has done very well to provide the leadership to crush

the LTTE military machine but it needs to remember that neutralizing the Tigers militarily is only the first step to peace. Hopefully, the government would carry through with its promise to address minority grievances and go full steam ahead on the path of national development. Remembering military victories and glorying over them may be in order to a degree but these reminiscences alone would not take Sri Lanka into the bright future which is promised and put on the tables of the poor their essential needs.

The Island 24th May 2009- "Give till it hurts" We have in these columns warned repeatedly about the dangers of triumphalism. It is not the Tamils who have been defeated but the LTTE. The majority community, praised most recently by Japan's special envoy Yasushi Akashi for "heartwarming" concern for the IDPs, must never forget that. We make bold to once more advocate what we have said before - that a special tax be imposed on all the people of this country to pay for the care and resettlement of the displaced. While voluntary efforts and individual generosity already manifest must be warmly acclaimed, much more needs to be done and all of us must bear that cost. Remember that these are also our people who, as much as the soldiers who fought to overcome one of the world's most feared terrorist groups, have borne the brunt of the war over the years. They deserve the best we can give them even if we give till it hurts.

The Sunday Times 24th Feb 2002 - "The peace frenzy" 'In a climactic accelerated dash, the government and the LTTE have signed on the dotted line to beat the February 24th deadline. What was the magic of this deadline? It is hoped that this is not the classic case of the shotgun marriage - of signing in haste and repenting at leisure. It is understandable that the Norwegians want a feather in their cap. But, this mad

last minute dash, arouses suspicion among the public which has been promised right along by the government that it will be kept informed in advance of any decision taken by the government - and any document signed. The government also understandably wants to display its bona fide intent to the international community, but what are the signals given out in the process?'

The Sunday Times 22nd September 2002 - "Ominous silence from the Wann" 'Everything looked taped out - the package parceled, and now only to be ribboned. The peace talks in Thailand looked anything but between a sovereign Government and one of the world's deadliest terrorist organizations. Now de-banned, and made respectable, the LTTE negotiators seemed to have better cut suits as well.

There is natural euphoria in this country - pumped up no doubt by sections of the mass media - that Anton Balasingham, the LTTE's chief negotiator has announced that the LTTE has abandoned its demand for a separate state.

Plainly, that is not the case - and one does not have to feel too disappointed about it, because one would not expect the LTTE to do so, as early as on day one, or round one of the talks'.

Sunday Times 17th May 2009 - "Friendly Lanka good for India" 'Tamil Nadu politicians have found the 'Sri Lanka Tamil' issue a handy smokescreen for their inability to stem the chronic power-cuts, unemployment and poverty in that state. 'Eelam' has been a favorite hobby-horse to flog when the chips are down. Yesterday's results however will be an eye-opener that in Tamil Nadu, the fate of the LTTE was not the only factor. The fact that Ms. Jayalalitha tried to outmaneuver her opponents with her scandalous statement a fortnight before the polls shows how desperate these politicians can get.

Fortunately for Sri Lanka, President Mahinda Rajapaksa has arguably as many fans as he has detractors in India for crushing the LTTE with a heavy hand. It is incumbent on the part of the Government in Colombo to reach out, without paying 'pooja' to the next crop, or generation of Indian and Tamil Nadu political leaders - Rahul Gandhi's Congress, Narendra Modi's BJP, 82-year-old Mr. Karunanidhi's daughter's (DMK).

They are the future power-brokers of India and they need to be convinced not only that the 'war against terror' in Sri Lanka is not a racist pogrom but that India's best security in her southern borders is a stable and friendly Sri Lanka.'

Sunday Times 24th May 2009 - "The war ends, the battle for peace begins" 'The mantra of a 'political solution' will be bandied about by the same know-alls who spoke of the 'genuine grievances' of the Tamils in the weeks and months ahead. The best answers would surely come from the people who have suffered. Do they want their lives re-built or is the 13th Amendment the cure for all ailments?

The Government needs to ask them what they want; and having now savoured the moment, get down to converting 'Freedom Regained' to 'Paradise Regained, in the months ahead. In the words of the poet,

"He who did well in war just earns the right, To begin doing well in peace".

The extracts from the editorial comments quoted from a period when peace was a dream and the present when the commentators have the benefit of retrospective wisdom, give us a remarkable insight in to the fourth estate of our land.

HUMANITARIAN & DEVELOPMENT SPACE



The government of Switzerland donated a 2nd consignment of urgently required antibiotics and other essential drugs to be distributed to health facilities treating IDPs in Vavuniya trincomalee and Mullaitivu through the Ministry of health reported earlier April that the IDP camps in Vavuniya which previously under the Management of the Army was now under the Ministry of Resettlement. The consignment worth Rs 7.6 M was handed over to the MOH on 28th April. The ICRC shipped 30 MT of food to the conflict zone on 27th April. due to the further influx the CA announced the clearing of land in Zone 4 has begun to accommodate further IDPs in late April.

British foreign secretary and French foreign minister visited Sri Lanka and held discus-

sion with government and highlevel officials and visited Vavuniya. They called for end to the conflict by the government and allowing humanitarian aid to the conflict area. The French Government opened a 60 bed field hospital for IDPs ICRC in statements of 12th May ,15 th May and 19 May reported that due to heavy fighting they could not access the combat zone since 9 th May to evacuate by sea, the sick and wounded and deliver 25 MT of food for thousands of civilians stranded there. ICRC also reported that a staff member and his mother was killed by shrapnel inside the conflict zone in Mullivaikal on 13th May. This brings the total of 3 ICRC staff being killed just over 2 months in the conflict zone. A Caritas Australia staff member was killed in a shell attack in the conflict zone on 8th May.

The MOD gave clearance for 12 UN national staff to leave the IDPs camps in Vavuniya on 6th May. The decision is pending as to whether their dependents and other Humanitarian Staff would also be allowed to leave the camps.

The military announced the ending of the war on 16 the May after rescuing the civilians in the safe zone and killing the senior leadership of the LTTE. A formal announcement was made by the President on Tuesday 19 May from the Parliament.

The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon visited Sri Lanka on 22-23 May and met the President and key government officials and visited the IDPs in Vavuniya and saw the conflict zone by air. In joint press statement

issued both the President and SG agreed that addressing the aspirations and grievances of all communities and working towards a lasting political solution was fundamental to protect the long term socio economic development of Sri Lanka

During the period of 27 October to 22 May 2009 286,721 persons have crossed from the conflict areas. Around 284,404 persons are accommodated in temporary camps in the north, This includes 266,536 persons in Vavuniya 140 in Mannar , 11,086 persons in Jaffna and 6,642 in Trincomalee . In addition 2,317 IDPs both injured and care givers are in hospitals in various districts as of 18 May.

General

On 27th April Indian Ministry of External affairs announced that the PM has approved

a grant of Rs 1 Billion for Humanitarian relief assistance for civilians who have been evacuated from the conflict zone.

The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs committed US \$ 3.15 Million in Humanitarian assistance for Sri Lanka. Canada International Cooperation Minister pledged US\$ 3 M in humanitarian aid to Sri Lanka . The Chinese Government pledged US \$ 1 M in support of humanitarian operations in Sri Lanka . The Japanese government pledged US \$ 4 M for relief support on early May. The Italian government has released 400,000 Euros in support of Food related activities implemented through the WFP. USAID has donated US \$ 6 M for short term non Food assistance for IDPs in Northern Sri Lanka and US \$ 15 M to WFP for Food Aid interventions. On 12th May the Government of the republic of Korea announced a grant of US \$ 500,000 through

WFP to meet the immediate needs of the IDPs in conflict areas in North and East Sri Lanka

On 5th May 5 members of the British Parliament visited Menik Farm Vavuniya to see the humanitarian response for IDPs.

UN and GOSL made an urgent appeal for US \$ 50 to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the civilians fleeing the conflict in the north on 5th May. The renewed appeal addresses the urgent humanitarian needs of approx 250,000 persons .It addresses projects for Food, Water sanitation, protection, nutrition, health and education.

EXTERNAL ACTORS

The country had ablaze of publicity with the dying embers of militancy. Much has been already reported. What remains is to ask why much international opinion could not settle the war earlier. Additionally, how did SL ride through much of the concerns and criticisms.

In a fine of writing by Anita Pratap, she puts forward this thesis. "The first and foremost lesson is that Sri Lanka's victory symbolizes the crystallization of a New World Order. This is a paradigm shift. We have moved from a unipolar world of American domi-

nance to a bipolar world where China has emerged as the rival pole, independent, non-judgmental and unconcerned about the universal values that the US and Europe stood for—democracy, freedom and human rights. The west is neither credible nor seen as an honest broker. George W. Bush ensured that. Undemocratic tactics, human rights violations and civilian casualties have marked western interventions in Africa, Latin America and Asia, but most vividly in recent invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan. So it is highly hypocritical for the west to lecture Sri Lanka. China couldn't care less for lib-

eral values. It interferes without moral posturing".

Many donors, the UN and INGO's need to reflect anew in terms of future engagement with SL. We have many sobering truths to uncover and reconcile. Its suffice to say, external actors counted for little in the month other than those supportive of the Government

DISTRICT ANALYSIS

(PERIOD OF REVIEW- 28TH APRIL 2009 TO 26TH MAY 2009)

AMPARA

STRUCTURES

The overall situation in the district is satisfactory with reports of paramilitary activities such as abductions and robberies having reduced. Relations within communities and between different political parties are progressing satisfactorily, and the internal conflict within the TMVP has also been brought under control.

The reported arrest of two fishermen allegedly providing food for the LTTE from a border village between Ampara and Batticaloa demonstrates that there is still a need for vigilance in the district, in view of the fact that isolated cells of LTTE cadres could still be operative.

The kidnapping and killing of schoolgirl S. Danushika in Batticaloa, and the subsequent identification of the suspects as belonging to the TMVP has resulted in re-

newed demands that TMVP cadres be disarmed immediately, instead of being allowed to move around freely with weapons.

Following the end of the war, a number of NGOs have either scaled down their projects or begun leaving the district, at a time when humanitarian and relief aid is needed most urgently.

ACTORS

The Chief Minister of Eastern Province, MP V.Muralidaran, Government authorities, NGOs and political parties active in the district are the main actors.

DYNAMICS

The end of Eelaam War 4 is the main dynamic affecting the district at the current time. Communities can now start building relations, paving the way for effective interaction and co-existence. The proposed elec-

tions are also bound to have a great impact on the dynamics of the district.

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

Government authorities, NGOs and the Security Forces will have to work together to restore total law and order and rebuild the district, with special emphasis being placed on the reconciliation of the communities in the district. This can only be achieved by long term means such as development plans and psychological counselling for those who have lived with trauma and fear for decades. The need of the hour is peace building and reconciliation

BATTICALOA

STRUCTURES

The situation in Batticaloa has been improving gradually. While security in the district has been strengthened, there is more mobility of civilians especially in the evenings. The number of reports of paramilitary activity such as murders, abductions, robberies and shootouts has also reduced. All relevant parties are working towards building cordial relations between the communities in the district, and political parties have begun working together to rebuild the district following the end of the war.

The arrest of two fishermen in a border village, who were allegedly supplying food for the LTTE has shown however that there is a continued need for vigilance in view of the fact that isolated cells of LTTE cadres and LTTE supporters could still be operative in the district.

The people seem to expect the creation of a more stable political environment with MP Muralidaran accepting the post of Vice President of the SLFP. It seems that the TMVP, SLFP and the SLMC will be the most

active political parties in the district.

ACTORS

The Chief Minister of the Eastern Province, MP V.Muralidaran, political parties and NGOs are the main actors in the district.

DYNAMICS

The dynamic changes taking place in the political history in the country, the situation in the Batticaloa also considerably changing. People develop confidence and rebuilding their lives. The political steps taken by Muralidharan MP and join the SLFP made vast changes in the political arena. The future of the TNA the so-called one and only representative of the Tamil community is under question, while a large number of Tamil speaking populations started supporting the SLFP under the leadership of Muralitharan MP.

In the meantime the Muslim politicians also changing strategies according to the dynamic political changes taking place in the country. The changes should motivate the politicians both the local and central government for a collective action towards the

total development of our country.

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

Government authorities, political parties, NGOs and the different ethnic communities now need to work together to bring about reconciliation and development in the district. War victims need to be cared for and the entire district now needs to be given the opportunity to mend itself and develop in a country free of war and terror.

COLOMBO

STRUCTURES

The month of May was a landmark month in Sri Lankan history as it marked the end of the 33 year old separatist war. As news that the final LTTE strongholds had fallen to Government troops was reported, jubilant crowds in Colombo erupted in celebration, lighting fireworks and flying the Sri Lankan flag from vehicles, houses and establishments. Celebrations and religious events were organized to felicitate the troops and the President, while on May 22, an estimated crowd of 150,000 people converged on the Parliament grounds to participate in a mass victory celebration. However the Government repeatedly reminded the public to continue to be vigilant in order to ensure the district's protection.

In response to the end of the war, the Colombo Stock Market has been recording encouraging gains, a promising sign for the business community.

The spread of dengue fever in the Colombo district is posing a major concern for health authorities, especially with the onset of rains. A total of 104 dengue patients were admitted to Colombo hospitals during the month of May.

A number of community organizations, religious groups, institutes etc. have been collecting food and essential commodities for the IDPs in Vavuniya and Jaffna.

ACTORS

The Government and the Security Forces as well as the general public were the main actors during the month under consideration.

DYNAMICS

The public in Colombo are looking forward to living relatively stress free lives and being able to travel without fear of bombs in public places and transportation hubs. Several members of the public have also begun expressing a desire to travel to the North and East, heretofore off limit provinces, due to the raging war.

Hopes that the Government would now seek to build the concept of citizenship as opposed to ethnicity were strengthened by President Rajapakse's statement that there were no longer minorities in the country, and that he and the country would work towards ensuring that all communities could live equally and happily under one nation's flag.

The Health Ministry has been criticized by several political parties and the public for not taking strong action to stem the rise in dengue patients. The number of dengue patients in the district has risen dramatically, and with the incidence of fatality from the fever in other districts in the country, Health authorities need to take firmer and

more concrete action to prevent the spread of the disease.

The general public and the business community in particular are nurturing hopes that more foreign investment will flow into the country and boost business conditions in the district. There are also hopes being voiced that those who left the country due to the safety fears over the war would return eventually, while at the same time stemming the number of people seeking to migrate from the country.

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

The focus now has to be on nation and community building and the necessity to avoid any form of racial undermining of any community.

A national level program should be introduced by the Government to eradicate dengue fever from the country. An effective waste management program is also necessary in order to keep city areas clean and free from dengue breeding grounds.

There is a need to continually stress the necessity for public vigilance in order to continue to safeguard and protect the district.

JAFFNA

STRUCTURES

The overall situation in the district remains stable without any major security incidents during the reporting period. Government troops however continue a range of security operations, including intermittent checking, cordon and search operations, road blocks and random vehicle checks.

The death of the LTTE leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran was met with disbelief by the majority of the district, and few groups openly celebrated his demise in the streets, in marked contrast to jubilant celebrations in other districts of the country.

Meanwhile, the Government announcement that the A9 road would be ready for public travel from June 2009 was met with enthusiasm as the people would be able to travel freely to other parts of the country.

The Government is planning to hold Local Government Elections in the district. TULF leader V. Anandasangaree that the current atmosphere in the district was not conducive for elections generated much discus-

sion among the public in the district. The Government has signalled it's willingness to recruit Tamil youth for the military cadre in the North, an announcement that was met with mixed reactions. Meanwhile, communication systems such as HF, VHF, Land line and cellular communications are not functioning properly.

ACTORS

Government authorities, the Security Forces can be considered the main actors during the reporting month.

DYNAMICS

The people of Jaffna seem to be looking forward to living a life free from the terrors of war. It remains to be seen how the proposed elections affects the dynamics of the district, but for the most part, the people seem eager to play a part in the district's future through a democratic process.

The opening of the A9 road is also bound to have an impact on the district, as people in the North who were up to now confined to the North will be able to travel to other areas of the country, while several people are

also bound to visit Jaffna, a district they have not been granted free access until now. It is also hoped that the resultant exchange in goods and services between the North and other parts of the country will help towards developing the district.

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

It is essential that one of the primary aims of the Government be on peace building and reconciliation. The lifting of some restrictions on NGOs could also be considered, in order to enable them to function at their maximum efficiency and adequately address the needs of the people.

The process of resettlement also needs to begin in earnest, with the concurrent introduction of livelihood support programmes, in order to enable the people of the district to get back on their feet as soon as possible.

A political solution should be expedited by the Government to show their support of a long term solution for the thirty year old civil conflict.

MANNAR

STRUCTURES

Over 3000 patients from the Vanni have been admitted to the Mannar hospital, and 1357 IDP patients are also currently in the wards. A total of 15 patients have died and another 16 elderly and orphan patients were released to their relatives by a court order.

A total of 207 discharged patients are currently benefiting from post hospital care at Education Department buildings, where local NGOs are providing humanitarian services and tending to them.

Following a proposal by the Bishop of Mannar that religious institutions take over the elderly and orphans, a total of 80 elders are currently in elders' homes in Mannar, while more parishes are planning to take over another 100 elders.

Due to much needed repairs being carried out on the Giant tanks bunds, Yala cultivation has not been possible this season, and only a few farmers who have access to tube wells have been carrying out limited paddy cultivation.

Meanwhile, due to strong winds, electricity supply to the Mannar island is frequently interrupted, and many offices are adversely affected.

Fishermen in Mannar North are not allowed to fish on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as army sea convoys travel on these days from Thailaimannar to Jaffna. This restriction has

affected over 3000 fishing families, as they are unable to earn a daily income on these days. The Fishermen's Federation has requested that these days be changed to Fridays and Sundays, as less fishermen are involved in fishing on these days.

With construction underway on the major Mannar-Thallady causeway, several members of the public in the district have been able to secure employment with this project.

ACTORS

Government authorities, the Security Forces, the Bishop of Mannar and the IDPs can be considered the main actors in the current context.

DYNAMICS

The Murunkan hospital is in urgent need of items such as cooking utensils, medicines, blood plasma for operations, as well as medical staff, as the hospital caters to more than 1500 patients from several IDP camps.

There are more than five university students currently languishing in IDP camps who wish to continue with their education. These youth must be provided with support and opportunity to continue their education, if disgruntlement among them and other students pursuing their education is to be avoided, as well as to encourage more students to continue with their studies and be able to secure future employment for themselves

The interruption to paddy cultivation caused by repairs to tank bunds has resulted in much of the cultivable land not being cultivated, and will result in a great loss of income to a large number of farmers in the district. Mannar is 65% paddy area. If not cultivated, farmers won't get any income. Irrigation Dept should have a system to do repairs without interrupting the cultivation calendar.

The restrictions on fishing have also resulted in a reduction in incomes for the fisher folk and general disgruntlement.

STRATEGIES & OPTIONS

The Government and health authorities need to plan and provide for extensions of hospitals in the district, as many Wannu IDPs are likely to remain in camps for at least two years, and those seeking medical care in these camps will be directed to Mannar.

A framework needs to be developed to begin tracing missing people, as a large number of families have lost contact with family members and are unsure of their fate. Aid agencies could assist farmers to sow alternate crops in the face of their inability to cultivate paddy.

The Government needs to ensure that university students in the camps are sent to other campuses in order to pursue their hard-gained education.

TRINCOMALEE

STRUCTURES

The Government declaration of victory in the three decade long separatist war was met with jubilation in the district, with people lighting fireworks on the roads and singing the national anthem, and vehicles flying the national flag.

However, due to groups of Sinhala youths going around demanding money for Tamil owned shops in order to fund victory celebrations and entertainment, some Tamil shops were closed for a few days.

Some murders and a few incidents of abduction were reported in the district during the month of May.

Resettlement activity has begun taking place in some villages in the Seruwila DS while families displaced from Sampoor, Kunithivu and Navaragnapuram in the Mutur DS are to be accommodated in welfare centres until resettlement activity can take place in those villages.

Some Government departments have been actively involved in collecting essential food items and other essential items for the IDPs in the district. Aid agencies are providing assistance to the IDPs in welfare centres, including providing cooked meals. Access to drinking water and water for sanitation purposes is poor in the camps, and NGOs and UN agencies are providing water and

containers to store drinking water in. Other items urgently needed are milk powder for children, soap, nutritious food and necessities for pregnant mothers. However the issue of psychological counselling for the IDPs, especially the children, is an urgent need that is yet to be addressed.

While the IDPs are being catered to as best as possible, in the absence of a needs assessment, relief and humanitarian agencies are facing difficulties in assessing the needs of the agencies, and are thus unable to provide the optimum possible aid.

ACTORS

Government authorities, NGOs and the Security Forces can be considered the main actors in the current context.

DYNAMICS

As NGOs and other humanitarian agencies are currently involved in providing urgent relief to the IDPs, IDP resettlement activity has had to take a back seat for the moment.

The announcement of the Government victory and the subsequent street celebrations lent an underlying atmosphere of tension to the district, especially within the Tamil community, which is still apparent in the district to some degree. This is largely due to fear created by the reported abusive treatment

of Tamils at the hands of Sinhalese during these victory celebrations, and the fact that these incidents are taking place in front of police and security forces, with no intervention.

The Tamils who can afford it have made or are making plans to migrate out of country amid renewed fears for their safety.

STRATEGIES AND OPTIONS

A needs assessment needs to be carried out in the IDP camps in the district, and NGOs and other humanitarian agencies need to be given freer access in order to carry out their work unhindered and efficiently. Psychological counselling for these IDPs who have been traumatised by the decades long war is an urgent need, as is the need for their rehabilitation through psychosocial and community activities, in order to provide them with some mental relief.

The Government and Security Forces now need to ensure the protection and security of Tamils in the district, especially the youth, in view of possible attacks against them following the war victory.

VAVUNIYA

The Government and NGOs operating in the area are finding it increasingly difficult to provide for the IDP population, given the sudden rise in their numbers which occurred towards the end of the war. In the days immediately following the end of the war, many foreign delegates and UN officials, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon visited the IDP camps.

With regard to conditions in the IDP camps, overcrowding due to a lack of facilities has made living conditions difficult for the IDPs, with extremely high temperatures and flash torrential rains contributing to their discomfort. Particularly difficult is the flooding of their shelters when it rains as there is no proper drainage system.

A majority of children are reportedly malnourished and a large number of adults also look skeletal. The IDPs have reportedly no access to basic grooming facilities, for example, 80% of the men have not been able to shave or have a haircut for the last three months. In a bid to ease conditions, the

Government has taken steps to allow elderly IDPs to seek shelter with their relatives outside the camps, and so far around 1500 of 20,000 elderly inmates have moved out of the camps.

Aid agencies operating in the district have alleged that they are being deliberately impeded in their efforts to provide aid, and that children are being separated from their parents who are at times confined behind barbed wire.

As of 23rd of May, it was reported that 225,000 IDP are currently residing in four relocated villages and 20 IDP camps. The villages of Anantha kumarasami, Ramathan, Arunasalam, and Kathirgamar have been provided with minimum facilities such as a bathing areas, kitchens, play grounds, schools, post offices, MPCS, banks, religious places, etc. The rest of the 20 camps however have yet to be updated in terms of shelter, sanitation, water, food, clothes etc. Meanwhile, a total of 17 medical centers have been opened in the camps and a total

of 75 Doctors and 200 nurses are employed on a shift basis.

Following the final battle between 15 - 18 May, more than 63,000 civilians and thousands of the injured people have been rescued.

The Government is currently making arrangements to issue temporary ID cards to all IDPs. From May 20 onwards, the IDPs have reportedly been requested to cook their own meals inside the camps. The WFP and local NGOs currently give a week's worth of dry rations and supplementary food at a time, for cooking. New arrivals will reportedly be given cooked meals for three days followed by dry rations

ACTORS

Government authorities, NGOs, Security Forces and the IDPs are the main actors in the current context.

DYNAMICS

This overcrowding makes it difficult for humanitarian agencies to efficiently execute urgent relief work. The camps are in urgent need of water, sanitation and shelter upgrades, if the spread of epidemic diseases such as the recent outbreak of chicken pox in one of the camps, are to be prevented.

The IDPs have reportedly expressed a wish to limit the presence of security forces within the camps and replace them with more civil and police officers to manage the security of the IDPs.

STRATEGIES & OPTIONS

Agencies such as the Red Cross could undertake to trace missing people, as a large

number of IDPs are currently undergoing mental trauma over the fate of their loved ones.

The Government could also begin to register persons within the camps, and confirm and report the number of civilians from each district, those injured, dead and missing, with names provided whenever possible. This could be helpful to aid agencies wishing to provide humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka.

The Government could also consider relaxing the reported restrictions on media personnel, Opposition MPs and NGOs on visiting these camps. This could aid in dispelling reports that the actual situation within the camps is not being accurately represented, and allow the UN and other interna-

tional and humanitarian aid agencies to provide necessary and adequate aid.

Rehabilitating and rebuilding the lives of the IDPs who have lived traumatic lives for so many years is one of the primary tasks faces by authorities.

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The Rapid Context Assessment (RCA) aims to provide useful information for humanitarian and development agencies to plan and implement more effective interventions addressing various humanitarian and development needs based on a profound understanding of local dynamics.

At the same time, the RCA aims to enhance prospects that interventions are sensitive to the peace and conflict dynamics in the districts and that agencies at a minimum avoid creating or exacerbating conflict (Do No Harm) at a maximum contribute to conflict mitigation/transformation and peace building (Do Some Good).

Risk assessments aim to enhance agencies' efforts to stay operational while increasing safety of staff and people in implementing areas.

At an external level (general public, international community) RCA will serve advocacy purposes in providing comprehensive and balanced information about the situation in Sri Lankan districts.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on the contents of this report. Please mail us at feedback@cha.lk

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