

Military Zones in NorthEast (MZ)

1. Introduction

The extensive military zones in Northeast are vast areas of private, residential, farm, and business lands confiscated by the SLAFs for its own military purpose. These private lands in the Jaffna district, presently considered to be military zones make up 30% of the entire land area of Jaffna district. These military zones were referred to by a very misleading phrase, the “High Security Zone (HSZ)” by the GoSL.

The meaning of the phrase HSZ when interpreted literally has a positive connotation which conveys the meaning that these are zones to protect something very important. This term as it is applied in various parts of the world indeed is used to convey this same meaning. The HSZs declarations around the world in fact delineate very sensitive regions such as the parliament, a state’s leader’s official residence, and regions of high military secrecy that are located far away from civilian areas for obvious reasons. This interpretation is in agreement with the legal usage of this phrase in the parliamentary records of the Sri Lankan parliament. According to the information provided by the Sri Lankan parliament librarian there is only one gazette notification of HSZ declaration. This is the gazette notification for HSZ dated July 8, 2003 concerning the President’s House and its environs. In other words even the Sri Lankan parliament recognizes only one HSZ in the country whose meaning is inline with internationally accepted application of this concept.

It is easy to see, based on the above, that the so called “HSZ” in NorthEast are on shaky legal grounds. Given these we will refer to these zones in this report as Military Zones (MZ).

Area of MZ in Mullaitivu - 16800 a
No of houses in HSZ - 1004
Total area of farmland - 16711 a

Area of MZ in Mannar -1360 a
No of houses in MZ - 50
Total area of farmland - 42 a
Places of worship - 02

Area of MZ in vavuniya - 1000 a
No of houses in MZ - 1505
Total area of farmland - 106 a
Places of worship - 22

Area of MZ in Jaffna - 3800 a
No of houses in MZ - 28830
Total area of farmland - 12929a
Places of worship - 80

Area of MZ in Trinco - 200a
No of houses in MZ - 305
Total area of farmland - 50 a

Area of MZ in Batticaloa - 700 a
No of houses in MZ - 399
Total area of farmland - 86 a

Area of MZ in Amparai - 260 a
No of houses in MZ - 72
Total area of farmland - 40

Over all statistics on MZs with map

2.1. Over all statistics on MZs

	Amparai	Batticaloa	Trinco	Vavuniya	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Jaffna
Total area of MZ in acres	260	700	200	1000	16800	1360	3800
Number of homes in the MZs from which owners were evicted	72	399	305	1505	1004	50	28830
Total area of farmland (acres) made inaccessible to civilians	40	86	50	106	16711	42	12929
Total length of sea and lake fishing coastline made inaccessible (Km)	01	01	20	21	19	24	80
Number of families whose livelihoods were directly affected.	32	193	286	1103	1004	65	20969
Number of schools prevented from functioning	00	01	00	21	04	07	35
Number of places of worship inaccessible to civilians	00	00	00	22	00	02	80
Number of public places inaccessible to civilians	04	31	00	49	14	04	32

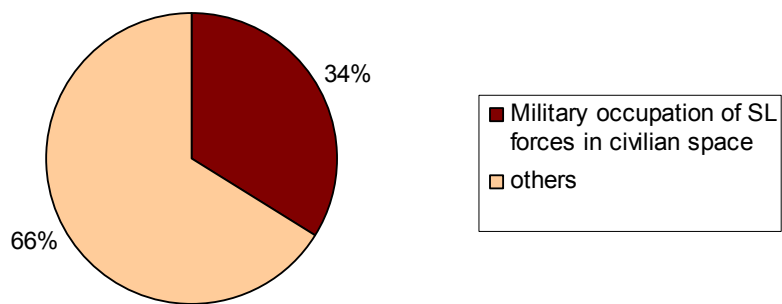
Notes:

- *All area measurements are given in acres and distance measurements in Km.*
- *These statistics are based on the data available at the time of producing this report. In all likelihoods the actual statistics will indicate that the MZs are a lot more extensive than what these data indicate.*

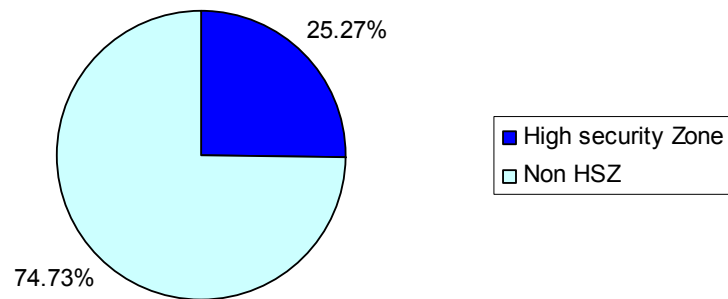
2.2. Summary statistics of MZs in Jaffna district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Neelankadu	150	150	200	1.25	5	3	3	165	4	77	4	12		
Urundi	152		98	75	25	10	1	72	4	142	1		1	
Velanai	50	61	61	0.25	17	60								
Mandaitivu	150	557	553	8.0	320	127			12	373	1			1
Mandaitivu west		472	359	2.0	671	553	1	50						
Gnanam's hostel	150	125	125	0.15										
Ariyalai east	1970	2450	2296	12.0		225	5	420	4	543	6		7	4
Thalankilappu	715	709	624	25.0	2689	516			11	291	7		1	2
Eluthumadduval		687	651	34.5	440	483			4	135	11			4
Amban	536	551	551	12.5	294	137	1	46	5	226	15	2	4	3
Pallappai	10	10	10	0.15	3	10					1	1		
Pointpedro	38	50		0.5			5	7	1	50	5	2	3	3
Valvettithuri	15	20	20	0.1					0.5	25	2	2		
Tellipalai	24549	24816	18939	49	8465	14398	18	960	30	2574	27	3	16	18
Ponnalai	300	320			8	35			2	200	1			
Total	28785	30978	24487	220.4	12937	16557	34	1720	80	4436	80	21	32	35

Percentage of military occupation of land in Jaffna



Percentage of HSZ in Jaffna



Source: Statistical information – 2005
District Secretariat
Jaffna

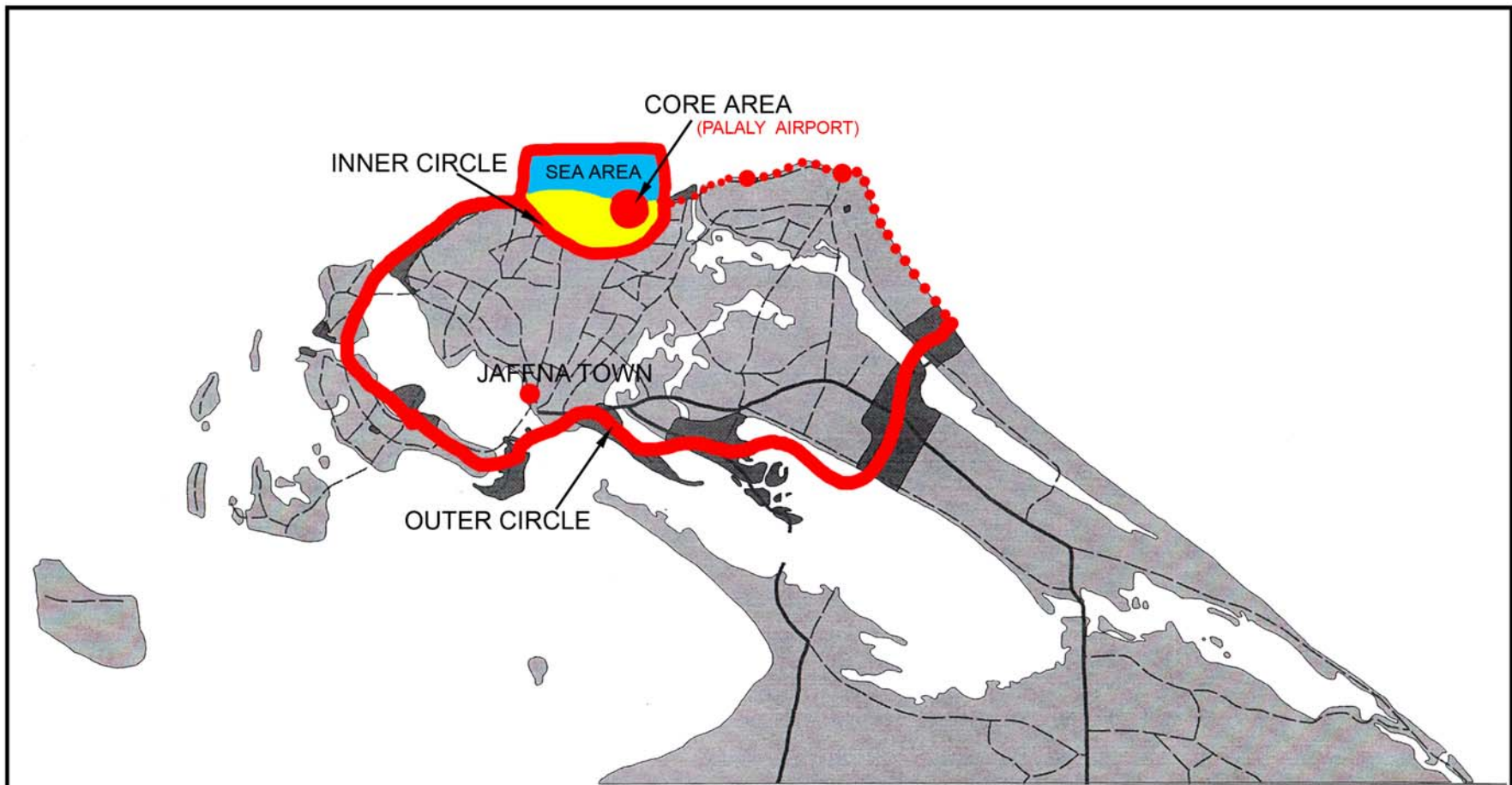
- **Affected education zones in Jaffna district**

Affected education zones in Jaffna district	Jaffna	Vadamaradchi	Valikamam	Thenmaradchi	Jaffna islands	Total
Closed schools by High security zones	-	01	18	03	26	48
Functioning as temporary schools by military occupation	02	01	12	02	-	17
Functioning schools inside the military camps	-	02	02	02	04	10
Schools near/ in front of military camps	22	03	04	05	05	39

Military occupation out of MZs in Jaffna district

Areas	Occupied houses	Occupied shop	Families were displaced
Thenmaradchi	664	37	705
Velanai	122	13	147
Kopai	50	12	61
Karainakar	23	04	38
Sandilipai	309	17	444
Karaveddi	15	07	19
Point Pedro	33	10	89
Kytes	32	10	38
Nallur	41	19	72
Uduvil	25	24	62
Neduntheivu	02	01	06
Sankanai	14	08	15
Maruthankeni	11	04	21
Jaffna	18	250	552
TOTAL	1359	416	2269

**Source: Statistical information – 2005
District Secretariat,
Jaffna.**



**Military noose around Jaffna
using the MZs and other military camps .**

2.3 Summary statistics of MZs in Batticaloa district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Mankeni	08	10		06										
Valaichenai														
Peththalai - V		18	20	09									03	
Kalkuda - V	66	65		15	14	17			1km	56				
Kumpurumunai (Kiran)		100		75				01					01	
Santhiveli														
Eravur	15	10	10	04									08	
Sathirakondan	10		15	30		20								
Batticalo														
Thiruperumthurai	17	20	15	10										
Anaipanthi	20		20	35									15	
Valaiyiravu				30	20	15								
Ampilanthurai				10	10	12								
Kaluvanchikudi	10		15	15									04	
Total	146	223	95	239	44	64		01	01km	56			31	

2.4. Summary statistics of MZ in Mullaitivu district

Affected families (were displaced)	-	1004
Houses	-	1004
MZ Area	-	16800
Area of farmland within MZs	-	16711
Coastline made inaccessible	-	19 km
affected fishing families	-	139
affected Farming families	-	865
Schools	-	05
worship places	-	14

2.5. Summary statistics of MZ in Vavuniya district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Omanthai	1410	1437	3216	17500	9250	958	01	388			15		31	11
Kallikulam	35	121		18	7	41					04		06	01
Bampaimadu	50	85	150	405	250	85		70			01			
Munrymuripu		19	47	35	30	19	02	55			01		06	
Secaddipilavu		210		202									04	
Kathar sinnakulam	10	10	10	25	04						01		02	
Total	1505	1882	3423	18185	9541	1103	03	513			22		49	12

2.6. Summary statistics of MZ in Amparai district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ acre	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Karaitivu	06	10	20	25										
Kanchiramkuda	16	50	55	4		50							01	01
Thandiyadi	30	50	100	14	03	05							01	
Urani high	20	30	50	08	05	20				10			01	
Arugam bay	10	10	20	05	03	04				15			01	
Total	82	150	245	56	11	79				25			04	01

2.7. Summary statistics of MZ in Mannar district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Thalladi	520	500		1550		150		500	06	350	01			03
Thalaimannar pier	150	200		600				150	06	145	01		01	
Iranai Iluppaikkulam	465	450		2000									03	
Total	1135	1150		4150		150		650	12	495	02		04	03

2.8. Summary statistics of MZ in Trincomalee district

Name of MZ	No of Houses	No of families initially affected	Total number of families waiting to resettle	Total area of MZ (acres)	Area of farmland within in acres	Farming families affected	No of factories inside	No of factory workers affected	Coastline made inaccessible (Km)	Fishing families affected	No of places of worship	No of villages partly or fully within the MZ	No of public buildings	No of schools
Thennamaravaadi	305	205		2200	2200			19	20	81				

Other MZs in Trincomalee district are: (Vellerikkulam, Vilankulam, Panmathavachchi)

No. of affected families including Thennamaravaadi - 650

3. Human Rights and Military Zones

A much ignored sociological phenomenon in the NorthEast is the flow on effects of the Military Zones.

United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) in one of its publication on “Forced Eviction” says,

“Forced removals and forced evictions of people from their homes is considered to do grave and disastrous harm to the basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of large numbers of people, both to individual persons and collectivities” (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/8, para. 21).

In another UNHRC publication on Forced Eviction (Fact Sheet 25) it says,

“Various United Nations human rights bodies have declared forced evictions to be “gross violations of human rights” and particular Governments have been asked to eradicate them to the maximum possible extent”.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has asserted,

“instances of forced eviction are prima facie incompatible with the requirements of the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] and can only be justified in the most exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with the relevant principles of international law” (General Comment No. 4 (1991) para. 18).

In a report by the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women he says,

“resettlement and evictions should be avoided, since they particularly increase the vulnerability of women and children and because women bear the brunt of traumatized and dislocated communities.” (E/CN.6/1994/3, para. 5).

The MZ phenomenon in the NorthEast started in the early 1980’s and has gradually expanded and evolved into what it is today. This document provides statistics on MZ in the NorthEast of the island. Not many people today will be aware that even as late as the 1970’s, Palaly airport, the only airport in the northern Sri Lanka that was a civilian international airport, was providing flights to Colombo and to India. Today, it is one of the most militarized areas in the island situated within one of the largest MZ in the island. The largest number of MZ instigated displacement of civilians is from

this Palaly MZ. The plight of the displaced languishing in refugee camps for more than 15 years resulting in the deterioration of their culture is a story that still remains to be told.

The displacement of civilians in the Trincomalee district started even earlier in the 1980s. Many of these civilians have been living in the Mullaitivu district in refugee camps for more than 20 years.

The issue of Forced Eviction is analysed against many United Nations human rights instruments in the UN Human Rights Commission publication, Fact Sheet 25. It says,

“Evicted people not only lose their homes and neighbourhoods, in which they have often invested a considerable proportion of their incomes over the years, but are also often forced to relinquish their personal possession.... Evictees also lose the often complex reciprocal relationships which provide a safety net or survival network of protection against the costs of ill health, income decline or the loss of a job, and which allow many tasks to be shared. They often lose one or more sources of livelihood as they are forced to move away from the area where they had jobs or sources of income”.

For all the MZ refugees in NorthEast, the loss of their land has far reaching implications. The material content involved in the loss of one’s home itself is a devastating matter. For most people their life’s earnings is deposited into building their home. Many people have lost it due the MZ. The loss of land and the community for people amounts to the destruction of a way of life and culture that is irreplaceable. The land is the source of livelihood for most people and they have lost this land. The statistics below gives some idea of the agricultural land lost. Besides this most people have coconut trees, fruit trees, and other trees that sustain the nutritional needs of the people. Living in refugee camps all of this is lost. The denial of fishing rights and barb wiring more than 100 Km of coastline from the fishermen is yet another dimension to this MZ implication to the people.

In Section on “Life in Refugee Camp” in the document on “Women’s Status: Rising from Fire”, many case histories of the life of women displaced by the MZ who are still languishing in refugee camps can be found.

Fact Sheet 25 on “Forced Evictions” points out the violation of child rights in this phenomenon as follows,

“When children are unable to attend school due to a forced eviction, the right to education is sacrificed. When people lose their source of employment, the right to work is breached. When psychological and physical health are damaged by the constant threat of eviction, issues of the right to health are raised. When families and communities are torn apart by eviction, the right to family life is infringed. When uninvited eviction squads forcibly enter one's home, the rights to privacy and to security of the home are violated. Emerging human rights such as the right to remain in one's home or land and the right to return to one's home can equally be lost in the event of a forced eviction”.

The violation of children’s rights caused by the MZ displacement is yet another dimension that has not been addressed. As the statistics show at least 68 schools have been denied their buildings by the MZ.

The case of two leading schools in Jaffna that are inside the MZ and the extreme hardships faced by this school population is described in Section 4.

The child rights violated by MZ instigated refugee children is also described in the Section on, “Refuge Children” in the document that describes child rights in Northeast.

4. MZ after February 2006 Geneva Talks

That the SLAFs has persistently refused to vacate people's homes, lands, farms and other locations of livelihood has been discussed extensively in Tamil owned media and also in other media. Even as recently as 28 March 2006 the Jaffna mlitray commander Major General Chandrasri said that they would not give up the homes that are inside the High Security Zone.

What has not been reported widely is the amount of homes and business premises outside the MZ that are occupied by the SLAFs. In a report sent in January 2003 to Colombo, the Government Agent for Jaffna states that 3500 houses outside the MZ are occupied by SLAFs adding to the internally displaced refugee population in Jaffna. The GA's report also said that about 52 business premises outside the high security zone have been occupied by SLAFs.

Even less known is that fact that SLAFs has been encroaching onto private lands even after the Geneva talks in February 2006.

1. The SLA camp in Perunkulam in Chavakachcheri was expanded. Many of the useful trees that are in Tamil civilian's land were cut down to enable this expansion.
2. SLN extended its barbed wire fences further into lands belonging civilians in Ponnalai and Moolai areas in Jaffna. People in proximity also accused the Navy of behaving in a threatening manner towards them. The Navy also blocked entrances to paddy fields preventing cows from grazing in the fields.
3. Residents of villages located close to the Point Pedro harbor MZ also were fearing displacement due to increasing harassment by the SLA, which may have been carried out to evict the people and encroach on their land.
4. 1572 fishermen lost their livelihood because SLN expanded MZ along the coast from Senthankulam towards west up to Samilthurai and from Thondamanaru towards east up to Vavettithurai after Geneva talks in February.

Under pressure to release people's land Major Gen Chandrasri met with the Civilian Based Organizations in Jaffna. To the dismay of the CBOs Chandrasri went onto list the position of SLAFs that had no good news for the people regarding MZ. He affirmed the following:

1. It is not possible to remove the ban of fishing in Vadamardchchi and Valigamam west because conditions are still not right. More than 2000 families have lost their livelihood as a result.
2. The road in front of the Varani camp cannot be opened for security reasons.
3. The matter of stones being excavated along the Maviddapuram-Keerimalai road and the danger it posed to underground water supply is unavoidable because the runway of the Palaly military airport needed to be upgraded.

In the meantime military spokesperson, Brigadier Prasath Samarasinghe confirmed that plans are well under way to bring 200 long term prisoners from south to the MZ in Jaffna to grow the vegetable requirements for the more than 50,000 military persons in Jaffna. People in Jaffna raised heavy objections charging that this project is the first phase of a plan to settle Sinhala people in Jaffna and SLA is bringing the worst type of people to Jaffna for this.

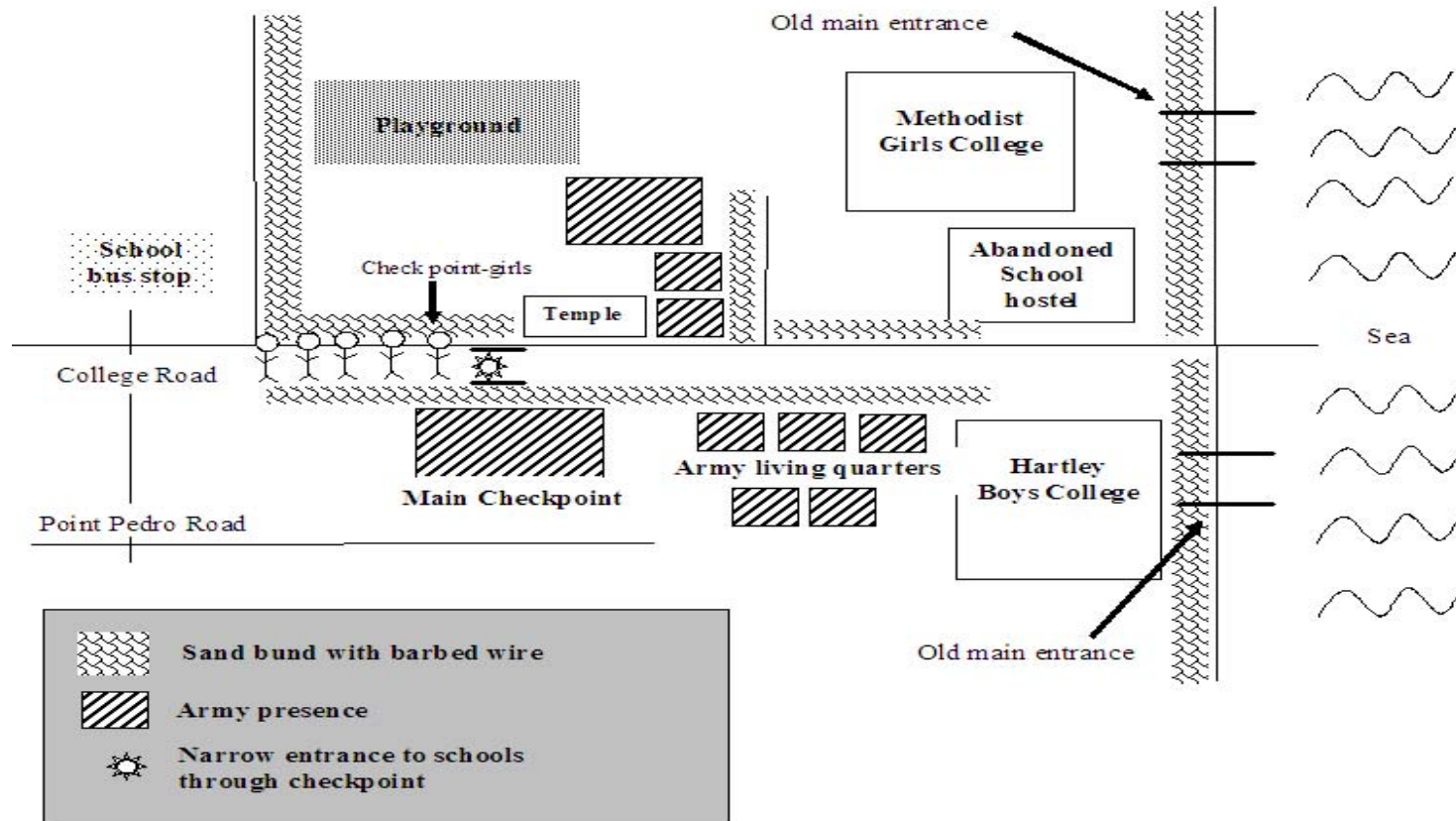
5. Issues surrounding Hartley and Methodist schools

Also refer to the document on child rights for a map of how these two schools are occupied by SLA and a description of the extreme restrictions placed on students.

On 5 December 2005 Hundreds of students of Hartley College and Methodist Girls High School located in the MZ in Point Pedro setup road blocks and protested against the SLA attempt to construct a new checkpoint on College Road leading to both schools. Jaffna University students who also launched a protest in support of the school students were was threatened by SLA which opened fire in the air.



It is worth noting that the Hartley and Methodist school students have regularly protested about the presence of SLA in their school throughout the CFA period. SLA has persistently refused to vacate the school grounds. Students anger has over flown on several such occasions when they have stormed into SLA camp and broken SLA barriers and sentry points.



6. Some of the public places occupied by Sri Lanka Armed forces in Northeast (The list is not complete)

Mannar

1. The Assistant Government Agent Head Quarters at Periyakadai in Mannar belonging to the Mannar Government Agent is occupied by the Sri Lankan Police.
2. The Assistant Food controller Quarters at Periyakadi Mannar belonging to the Mannar Food control Department is occupied by the Sri Lankan Police.
3. The A.O Quarters at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to the Mannar Government Agent is occupied by the Sri Lankan Police.
4. The Land Commissioner Dept. Quarters at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to Land commissioner is occupied by the Sri Lankan Police.
5. D. D. P's Quarters at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to Government Agent is occupied by the Sri Lankan police.
6. Milk (MILCO) Pvt. Ltd. Milk chilling Centre at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to the Milk (MILCO) Pvt. Ltd. is occupied by Sri Lankan Police.
7. Canteen of the Kachcheri at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to Government Agent is occupied by Sri Lankan Police.
8. The Co-operative building at Periyakadi in Mannar belonging to Mannar dist. Co-op. Council is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
9. The fish market at Pallimunai in Mannar belonging to St. Lucia's Church of Pallimunai is occupied by Sri Lankan Police Officers.
10. The fisheries building on Pallimunai road belonging to Ceylon Fisheries Corporation is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers.
11. The Public building in Sunny village in Mannar belonging to Ceylon Electricity board is occupied by Sri Lankan navy.
12. The Community Hall building in Thalvupadu, Mannar belonging to Kachcheri , Mannar is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy officers.
13. The Railway station in South bar in Mannar belonging to Ceylon Govt. Railway is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers.
14. The Public market in Pesalai south Mannar belonging to Pradeshiya Sabha, Mannar is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers.
15. The Society's Head office in Uyilankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai South MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan police officers.
16. The whole sale stores in Uyilankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai South MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan Army .
17. The Rural bank building in Uyilankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai South MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan Army .
18. No 01 branch Building in Uyilankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai South MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.

19. The Fuel station in Uyilankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai South MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
20. M P C S Branches in Parapankandal Mannar belonging to Manthai south MPCS is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
21. The Rail way station in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Ceylon Govt. Rail way is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy .
22. The Govt. Quarters in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Sri Lanka Customs is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy .
23. The Govt. Quarters in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Dept.Immigration and Emigration is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy.
24. The Govt. Quarters in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Postal Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy.
25. The Govt. Quarters in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Port employees Co-op society is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy.
26. The Govt. Quarters in Thalaimannar Pier, Mannar belonging to Ceylon Govt. Railway is occupied by Sri Lankan Navy.
27. The Society's Head office in Thiruketheswaram, Mannar belonging to Manthai west MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
28. The rural bank building in Thiruketheswaram, Mannar belonging to Manthai west MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
29. The Rice mill in Thiruketheswaram, Mannar belonging to Manthai west MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
30. No 01 branch building in Thiruketheswaram, Mannar belonging to Manthai west MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
31. The Whole Sale Depot(ii) in Murunkan, Mannar belonging to Nanattan MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
32. The rural bank Building in Murunkan, Mannar belonging to Nanattan MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
33. No. 01 Branch building and store in Murunkan, Mannar belonging to Nanattan MPCS is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
34. The Agriculture Research center Murunkanpitty Mannar belonging to Agriculture department is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers.
35. The Post office in Murunkanpitty Mannar belonging to Postal department is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers.
36. Milk collecting centre in Chemmanthivu Mannar belonging to Department of livestock is occupied by S. T.F.
37. Govt. Quarters, Irrigation in Chemmanthivu Mannar belonging to Irrigation department is occupied by Sri Lankan police officers.
38. The Public library in Nanaddan, Mannar belonging to Nanaddan Pradeshiya Saba is occupied by S. T. F
39. The Central Dispensary in Iranai Iluppankulam, Mannar belonging to Health Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
40. The Agrarian Service center in Iranai Iluppankulam, Mannar belonging to Dept. of Agrarian services is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
41. The Pradeshiya Sabha building in Iranai Iluppankulam, Mannar belonging to Manthai west Predeshiya Shaba is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.

Trincomalee

1. Mannar/ Navatkulam Roman Catholic Tamil Mixed School (R.C.T.M) in Periyanaavatkulam belonging to Education Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
2. Mannar/ Thiruketheswaram H.B.T.M.School in Thiruketheswaram, Mannar belonging to Education Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
3. Mannar/ Kaddaiyadampan Roman Catholic Tamil Mixed School (R.C.T.M) in Kaddaiyadampan, Mannar belonging to Education Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
4. Mannar/ Iranai Illupaikulam Government Tamil Mixed School in Iranai Illupaikulam, Mannar belonging to Education Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
5. Mannar/ Kakkayankulam Maha Vidyalayam in Kakkayankulam, Mannar belonging to Education Department is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
6. Thiruketheswaram temple in Thiruketheswaram belonging to Thiruketheswaram temple trustees board is occupied by Sri Lankan Army.
7. The temple in 12th mile post in Mannar belonging to Sri Muththu mariyamman temple management board is occupied by Sri Lanka Army.
8. The Temple in Irrattaikulam belonging to Mariyamman Temple trustees is occupied by Sri Lankan Police officers
9. The temple in Chemmanthivu belonging to Mariyamman Temple management board is occupied by S. T. F
10. The church in Irrattaikulam, Mannar belonging to Bishop of Mannar is occupied by Sri Lanka Police officers.

7. Challenges to the legality of the Military Zones

Several land owners, who were expelled from their land by SLAFs Military Zones in NorthEast have filed Fundamental Rights (FR) cases in the courts demanding the return of their land. Reading the history of these court cases reveals something about the legal status of these Military Zones in the Northeast.

1. The first such case was brought to the courts in December 2003. The Supreme Court directed the Attorney General to take immediate measures to enlighten the court on the legality of the MZ.
2. Again in May 2004, on another sitting of this Fundamental Rights case, the Supreme Court directed the Secretary of the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to submit a report on the question of maintaining MZ in NorthEast.

3. The Supreme Court requested the Attorney General to submit a report from the Jaffna Government Agent whether the petitioners could be allowed to cultivate their lands, located in the MZ.
4. In March 2006, the Supreme Court gave additional time to the prosecution to obtain a report from the Jaffna Government Agent regarding cultivation on lands by its owners within the MZs.
5. When the FR applications came up for further inquiry again Attorney General submitted to court that they were unable to get the report but wanted more time to do so.
6. In April 2006, the Supreme Court requested details of families displaced from the HSZ who have requested court intervention to allow them to resettle back in their homes.

8. No compensation and no alternate land

SLA is occupying coconut estates that are inside the MZ. These coconut estates produce is worth large sums of money. Yet SLA pays no compensation to the owners. Not only that SLA has cut large number of coconut trees in these estates and no compensation has been paid for this either. Many of these owners have lost any profit deriving from these estates for more than 10 years.

Even as late as in March 2006, SLA has refused to consider payment of rent for homes and land inside the MZ.

The issue of allocating alternate land to those who were expelled from their homes has also been raised on several occasions by various authorities. Yet no concrete outcome has come out. It should be noted that the land inside the MZ taken away from people are very fertile and it is not possible to allocate alternate land of that quality and of that acreage inside Jaffna. Remember that almost 30% of the land area in Jaffna are occupied by SLAFs in the pretext of MZ.