

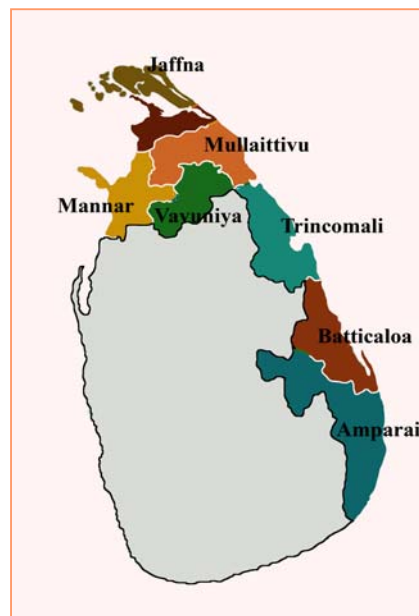


Human rights and humanitarian situation report in Tamil Eelam for February 2007

Press release of LTTE Peace Secretariat

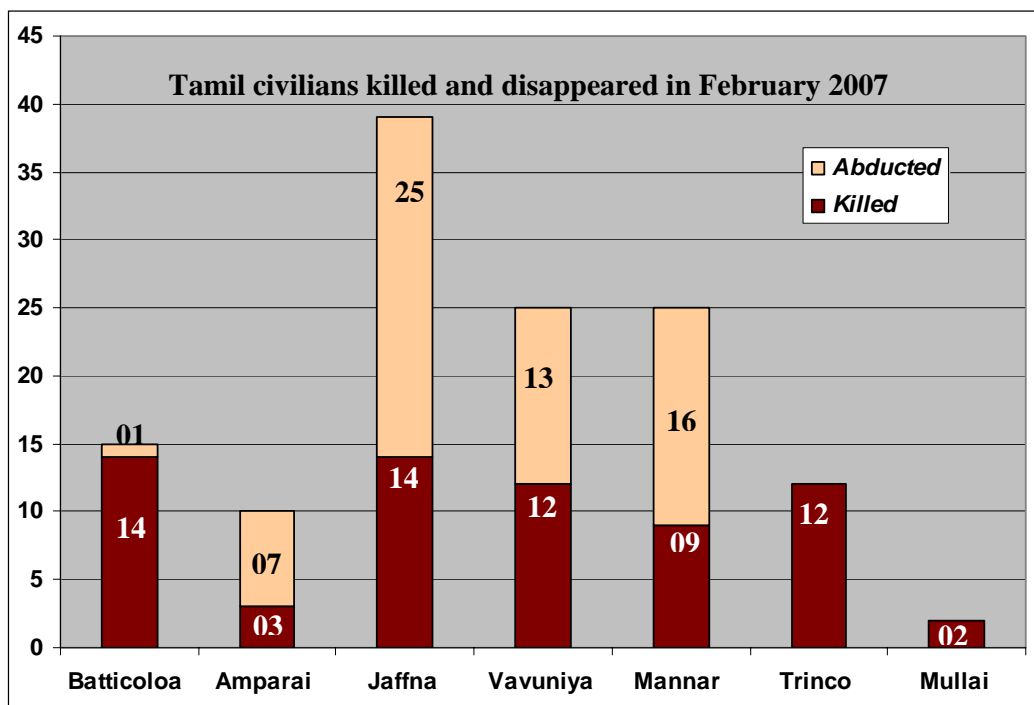
Civilian casualty during Cease fire
– 2002 till present

Type	Number
Killed	1627
Disappeared	697
Displaced	252,000
Militarized	300,000



Summary

Sixty six Tamil civilians were killed and *sixty two* Tamil civilians were disappeared in the Northeast by the GoSL operated forces in the month of February. The distribution of the victims over the geography follows established patterns in Jaffna and Vavuniya. However, this month saw increased number of killing in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Mannar.



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On 1 February, President of the Jaffna Multi Purpose Cooperative Society, M Gananathan aged 64, was shot and killed near the Mampalam junction Sri Lankan army camp. Gananathan was a social activist. As an aside, his daughter Thayanithy was killed by a Sri Lankan military vehicle in 1996, when the vehicle rammed into a group of school girls. Thayanithy was 19 years old at that time. Outraged Thayanithy's best friend, Krishanthi Kumarasamy, took on the Sri Lankan military accusing them of deliberately killing her friend. It is no accident that this same Krishanthi was brutally raped and murdered by the Sri Lankan military and the case received international attention only after the tireless work of her family to seek justice. It remains the only case in the history of the Tamil conflict, in which Sri Lankan military was found guilty of rape murder of Krishanthi.

On 9 February, Joseph Thevakaran was traveling on a motorbike with his wife when Sri Lankan military stopped the couple for checking. While the military was checking their ID card and asking questions, paramilitary group arrived in white-van and abducted Thevakaran in front of his wife and the military. He has disappeared ever since.

On 26 February, a school principal, Siluvairasa Amalanesan, and the Director of Madhu Education Zone in Mannar, T Rajakone, were killed in a claymore attack by the Sri Lankan military very near the Vilaththikulam school. The very next day very near the same area a family of four, parents and two children, traveling on a bicycle, were injured by another claymore attack by the Sri Lankan military.



Plight of fishermen

Attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy on fishermen at sea off the Mullaitivu coast increased in February. It became daily event for fishermen to be chased by the Sri Lankan Navy and the frightened fishermen to cut off the nets they have spread and rush back to the shore. The net is lost for ever costing the fishermen several thousand rupees.

Keethan was attacked in this manner when he went to retrieve the net he had spread the night before. Keethan and his co-fishermen were fired at by the Sri Lankan Navy and the fishermen escaped by leaving their nets in the sea and rushing back.



Not all fishermen were lucky enough to escape. Karunaharan Jegatheeswaran, aged 22, and Sivananthan Suresh, aged 32, originally from Jaffna, were living in Puthumaththalan since August 2006. They did not return home after a fishing trip on 15 February. Their bodies washed ashore a few days later with gun shot wounds.

Jaffna fishermen also faced the brutality of the Sri Lankan Navy in February. On 5 February, Ponnaih Yogan and his father-in-law Kandasamy were at sea fishing in the Vadamaradchi seas off the northern coast of Jaffna. Around 5.00am, Sri Lankan Naval boats approached their fishing boat



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and began firing. The two frightened fishermen jumped from the boat and reached the shore after several hours of swimming. The Navy destroyed their boat and the fishing nets worth several thousand rupees.

Sri Lankan Navy violence at sea is hard to verify because there are no eyewitness and it usually occurs in darkness.

Destruction of property and displacement

Emboldened by the silence of the international human rights community over the brutal manner in which civilians were targeted to occupy Vaharai, the Sri Lankan military has begun the process of repeating similar attacks all along the Forward Defense Lines into civilian settlements. Large scale Tamil civilian displacements are taking place

Batticaloa: Tamil villages of Kayamadhu, Kurinchamunai, and Mankikaddu in Batticaloa were continually attacked with artillery by the Sri Lankan military. Many civilian settlements were being deliberately targeted. These villages are farming villages with large acreages of paddy fields. It is harvesting time now. The continual shelling is not only destroying the harvest but also interrupting the harvest work causing loss of harvest to people. At this time people sleep in the fields to protect the harvest from wild animals. Due to fear of shelling people are not sleeping in the fields. As a result wild animals are also causing destruction to the harvest.



Jaffna: Sri Lankan military also fired artillery from the northern FDL locations of Muhamalai and Nagarkovil. Villages of Palai, Tharmakerni, Puthukadu, Soranpatru, Masar, Muhavil and Iyakkachchi were attacked. However, people in these villages have already displaced in August 2006. Some fishermen who had returned alone to these areas for seasonal fishing were forced to displace. Many productive trees and plants were destroyed.

Vavuniya: On 20 February Sri Lankan Air Force bombed villages near the Vavuniya FDL, killing two civilians. Among the injured were two children. A vehicle belonging to the Nedunkerni hospital, carrying the injured civilians, was targeted by a claymore attack just hours later. Fearing these attacks, out of the 3500 families living on the LTTE side of the FDL (see map), 1000 families have already displaced. Others are in constant fear and are thinking of displacing. Schools have stopped functioning because children are not going to school in fear of shelling and bombing. People in these villages displaced in the 1990's in large scale due to the Jeyasikkuru Sri Lankan military operations and went back to their homes only after year 2000. They have just started to rebuild their lives and many have not even built permanent material homes. Now they are facing another major displacement due to fear of another Sri Lankan military operation.



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The status of Vaharai IDPs: IDPs from Sampur to Vaharai are presently stationed by the GoSL in Chavukkadi, a location south of Batticaloa town. That is 85 Kms from Sampur. The Sampur IDPs are expressing frustration that they are being stationed so far away from their home, preventing them from visiting their home to collect produce and check on their homes. The Chavukkadi location is also not readily accessible to all humanitarian agencies and media thus preventing news about their plight reaching the outside world.

The IDPs are also concerned about the activities of the Karuna group who have started abducting people among the IDPs. It is worth noting that the latest SLMM report also expressed concern about the abductions by the Karuna group among the IDPs.

A window into Jaffna

Black flag or Lankan flag: In order to mark February 4th, Sri Lanka's Independence Day, as a day of mourning, Jaffna University students flew a black flag inside the University. The Sri Lankan military entered the University and ripped the black flag. The military then took the University acting Vice Chancellor to the Urelu military camp and interrogated him for failing to hoist the Lankan flag on 4 Feb. A few hours after releasing the acting Vice Chancellor, the military entered the University again and brought the acting Vice Chancellor and Deans of Faculties at gun point to the flag post and forced them to hoist the Lankan flag. Once the military left University, angered students ripped the hoisted Lankan flag. The next day the military entered the University again and searched for the ripped Lankan flag.

Judges transferred: Jaffna Magistrate Srinithi Nanthasekaran who defied the Sri Lankan armed forces and went into Allaipiddy to recover the dead bodies from the church in August 2006 was transferred from Jaffna. She has received threats from the Sri Lankan armed forces in Jaffna. In a similar vein Muttur Judge Manikkam Kanesaraja has been transferred because he pursued the case of the murders of the seventeen aid workers of the INGO, 'Action Against Hunger'.



Srinithi Nanthasekaran at a scene of murder - in Jaffna

1996 disappearance cases: Eleven years on, the Sri Lankan military's conduct of disappearing people not only continues unabated but also is celebrated by the military hierarchy. A case of 25 disappearances after arrest by the Sri Lankan military in a single incident on 19 July 1996 was brought to the Jaffna magistrate court. Judge Premshankar, who heard the case in the magistrate court, has determined that sufficient evidence exists against Sri Lankan military officials functioning under Lt Col Thumintha. The judge has submitted the case in the high courts for further hearing. A total of 700 people disappeared during June to August of 1996 in Jaffna by the Sri Lankan military. An Association of Parents of the Disappeared has been pursuing the cases of their children's disappearance for the last 11 years with no outcome. Many of the military officials directly involved in cases of disappearance have been given promotions. In Sri Lanka, the culture of impunity is openly displayed as something desired and celebrated.

Note: For extensive information on the above and other human rights topic in the Tamil homeland please visit : <http://www.ltteps.org>

LTTE Peace Secretariat