

CENTRE FOR CANADIAN TAMILS

Issue for focus:

1. Internally displaced people

According to the report available from the local organizations, thousands of internally displaced people still not allowed going back to their homes and another group of people are being move to camp to camp continuously without allow to go back to their own land to settle. They are feared of sexual assault, harassment, abduction and killings.

According to the report released by the Bishop of Mannaar in January 2011, 146,679 Vanni people are being missing within a year of war. According to records of the SL Government Agent offices of Mullaiththeevu and Ki'linochchi districts, the population of Vanni was 429,059 in October 2008. The total number of people who got into SL government control after the war was 282,380, according to UN update as of 10 July 200. Even though The Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) never acknowledged or accepted this figure, various international reports have enough supporting documents to proof it.

There are disturbing stories coming from the IDP camps of the health conditions, poor quality and inadequate food supply, water, security etc.

2. The nature of the IDP Camps

The camps have shortage of facilities for the privacy of thousands of families living for years. Almost every week, they move the IDP people from one place to another in the name of resettlement. More than 90% of the IDPs have not been allowed to go back to their own places. Those are occupied by the Sri Lankan armed forces and the government proclaimed these areas as high security zones. There were deaths reported in the local media. There is a good number of people in these camps dies through infected deices, like malaria, dengue fever and lack of proper medical facilities.

3. Denial of Basic rights

Thousands of school children in the camps are without proper education/schooling. Few schools opened do not have any facilities there for their continuous education. Most of the teachers appointed are volunteers from the IDP camps itself. They are not trained to teach in schools. The children have interest in studies are not in a position to concentrate because of the malnutrition, health services and the clothing. Majority of the children in the IDPs are going for labour jobs to support the families.

4. The employment facilities for the adults in the IDPs

The people in the camps are not allowed to go out to find any employment. There is no land available for them to do farming, no loan facilities to start self-employment, not allowed to go out of the camp to find any meaningful employment. They are living in poverty with the expectation of going back to their old place, but that is not fulfilled by the GoSL. Because of these facts their living condition going is worsening day by day.

The military enforcement implemented in these camps, such as arrests, disappearances, detentions, the suspected deaths and extra judicial killings are enforced in the camps.

5. Denial of fishing rights

For years and years, fishing is the second employment source next to farming in the Vanni area, is now completely denied by the Sri Lankan army and navy. The boats, the fishing nets and the equipment of the local fisherman have been destroyed in the war or taken away by the armed forces. Even though the government claims the situation is normal in those areas, Tamil fishermen are 100% banned from their traditional fishing. At the same time, Sinhalese fishermen were brought into these areas and allowed for fishing. The navy is providing full security for the Sinhalese fishermen. They are flourishing with states support; while the local fishermen are starving.

6. IDPs outside the government setup camps

As like the local media reports, thousands of Vanni people have been forcefully taken to certain areas in the North and East against their wish and the suitable facilities in the name of resettlement. By way of doing this the government announce that they have been properly settled. In fact it is not a settlement. For most of them the places were new, assistance from the government, no employment facilities but these places are under the high security zones. It's like out of the frying pan into the fire. There are two types of serious problems the people facing in these types of "so call settlement".

- a. The insecurity of the woman – especially the young widows and unmarried girls.
- b. The increase in number of subsidies of women in these areas is another serious issue has to be taking for. The harassment of armed forces, the rising number of pregnancies of unmarried women are reported in the local media on a daily basis.

7. Security of young women

With the support of government politicians (Members of Parliament and some Ministers) large numbers of young women were taken to Colombo with the armed forces escort. This is happening in the name of providing employment in Southern Sri Lanka but majority of them are forcefully pushed into prostitution and in the mean time, quite of number of women were missing after they were taken to South.

Even though the parents made complain to the local authorities of such incidents, there is no action taken by the police personal to trace them or identify their places.

Quit a number of young women bodies were found in several parts of Colombo in the recent past gives the strong suspicions of government forces involved in these activities.

8. Misuse of international resettlement funding for IDPs

Allocation of fund by various donor countries and non-governmental organizations for resettlement and rehabilitation of IDPs are not actually use for the purpose. These funds and the equipment such as bicycles, mini tractors, building materials were transferred to Sinhalese areas in connivance with state officials. These misappropriations of use are done with the blessing of the two key persons:

1. Basil Rajapaksa, Minister of Economic Development. All these development program come under purview
2. Gotapaya Rajapaksa, the Defense Secretary, who is providing the road security for all these activities.

Instantly both Basil and Gotabaya are the brothers of the executive President of Sri Lanka.

9. The rights of the religious observances

The IDPs consist of Tamil Hindus and Catholics. They have been denied their religious observances systematically. This itself is a violation of human rights. Majority of the Hindu temples and churches have been destructed during the war time in a well-planned manor. Even after May 2009 the armed forces continue to destroy their worship places simultaneously, they 'plant' the Buddha Statues in several places such as, read sites, every corners, play grounds, public places. The local people are mentally suffered of these intimidations.

10. LLRC report

The LLRC report urged the government to close army camps closer to residential areas. The GoSL has taken no action to implement this recommendation. On the other hand the GoSL is setting up more camps to protect the Sinhala colonization and Buttha statues. More and more lands are forcefully taken by the GoSL for new army camps and settle their families.

The LLRC report recommended to grant legal ownership of the land to those who have been resettled but so far no action taken by the GoSL. On the other hand the GoSL completely denied the resettlement of those from Sampoor, Mullaittheevu and other parts of the North and East.

LLRC report released its report in November 2011 and so far the GoSL has taken no initiative to implement the recommendations. The GoSL refuse to implement the Geneva resolution and the suffering of the IDPs are continuing without the international communities intervention.