

Sri Lanka

By the end of July, 1990, the conflict between the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE seemed to be entering a phase in which concentration would be on the control of the Jaffna peninsula, with heavy casualties predicted on all sides. Referred to by the CEYLON DAILY NEWS of the 22nd July as 'Vadamarachchi II', the confrontations in northern Sri Lanka seemed set on a path on no return, while hopes of any sort of negotiations or of a ceasefire seemed to recede into the distance. The indiscriminate destruction of life and property in the North and East continued with no respite for the civilian population of these areas.

In the wake of this 'war' between the state and the LTTE, which is stretching on to its second month now, comes an unprecedented wave of displacement of persons (600,000) in the North-East Provinces, at the last count, on 24th July) accompanied by the growing polarisation between the different ethnic communities living in the island and burgeoning 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' leave little space for seeking a democratic and negotiated settlement to the conflict in Sri Lanka.

The blowing up of the causeway at Elephant Pass (the narrow passage of land that linked the Jaffna peninsula to the mainland) on the 20th July has de facto created an island out of Jaffna. Within the peninsula, the Sri Lankan security forces are caught within their camps - among others, at the Jaffna Fort, the Karainagar Naval Base and the Palaly Air Port - but the transport of reinforcements and supplies has been gravely hampered. On the 25th July, the SL Air Force destroyed the Karaitivu ferry line as well, by aerial bombing, thereby virtually bringing to a halt all vehicular traffic between the Jaffna peninsula and the mainland. By the 29th July, the security forces were engaged in a battle to capture territory in and around the Kilinochchi-Mankulam area in the north of the Northern Province. A curfew was declared in this area from Monday 23rd July to the Friday the 27th, as a part of this operation. The Jaffna peninsula itself was the target of attacks from air and sea. The war waged on in deadly earnest, as we enter August 1990.

All accounts reaching Colombo from the North and East make it clear that the SL security forces are meeting with stiff opposition at most points in their military operations to curb the LTTE. In many parts of the North-East Province, it seems that the security forces control major trunk roads, while the LTTE's guerilla forces are very much present in the areas immediately outside this area.

On the 19th July 1990, the Minister of State for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, issued an official statement that 440 members of the armed services had been killed in action since the 11th June 1990, with over 400 listed as missing - 315 Police officers and 113 Army men. The figures of LTTE casualties number over 1000 according to SL security force figures, while the number of civilian deaths in 'unknown'.

However, reports coming in from persons now housed in refugee welfare centres in the North, East and North-Central Provinces point to the fact that indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombing by the SL security forces have led to widespread destruction of property and lives in the North-East.

Speaking in Parliament during the debate on the motion to extend the Emergency, Mr. Euganeswaran, MP for Vanni District, mentioned several instances where civilians had been killed in Batticaloa and other parts of the Eastern Province since the conflict began. According to his sources, on the 13th July, there was a mass arrest of over 300 Tamil youths in the Batticaloa town; on the following day, 22 bodies were found smouldering on a pile of used tyres, recalling the horror of the killings of youth in the south of Sri Lanka in the second half of 1989. Among the bodies identified was that of Mr. K. Thangavadeivel, an Assistant Director of Planning and Implementation at the Batticaloa Kachcheri; he was a former student of the University of Jaffna and a well-known street theatre artiste. It was also reported that three or four bodies were to be found at the bridge in Kallady, as a daily occurrence, while Batticaloa hospital sources said that each day, over 10 persons suffering from severe injuries caused by shelling were admitted for care, with a specially large number of women being found among them.

Mr. Thivyathan, MP for Amparai District, alleged that armed groups associated with the SLNC were also involved in the killing of Tamil persons in the area; this was in addition to the killings done by the armed forces. He said that he had proof that on the 20th June, 40 persons were arrested at Veeramunai and shot and burned to death at Valattapiddy, while on the same day, 25 bodies were found burning in Kalmunai. In the Sannanturai area, 92 burned bodies were found in Thalayanthottam, and 72 more bodies were found, covered with hay, at Vintavur Division 5. In addition, he quoted the BBC correspondent as having seen 92 skulls in the Babuji Ice Cream Parlour in Kalmunai. The T.E.I.O. said that they have listed 650 'disappearances' so far in the past six weeks in the North and East.

In Kalmunai, the President of the Citizens' Committee, Mr. S. Kanapathipillai, a very well-known poet (writing under the pen-name of Panthiuran) from Pandirippu and a person who had appeared on the platforms of the PFLT (the political party created by the LTTE) at its inception, was killed along with his older son, 24 years of age. Another of Mr. Kanapathipillai's sons is missing.

In Valaichchenai too, the President of the Citizens Committee, Mr. Jeyarejasingham, was shot and hacked to death.

On the 23rd July, hundreds of mothers from Pandirippu, a Tamil village situated in a predominantly Muslim area near Kalmunai in the East, organised a day of 'shramadana' (volunteer labour) to rebuild a Buddhist shrine that had been destroyed, with the participation of people from all three communities. As a preliminary act, they decided to go in a procession to the STF, quartered at the Kalmunai Rest House, to register a plea on behalf of a large number of youth, mostly students and officer workers, who had been taken into custody by the STF in the previous week. This demonstration was set upon by the STF and brutally dispersed.

In Bakkiella, in the Eastern Province, there were reports that some houses belonging to Tamils had been burned down by the armed forces; some refugees in a camp at Bakkiella had also been attacked; there were complaints of rape as well as of looting, in the course of this attack.

Reports of arrests and harassment of Tamil youth in other parts of the country continued to come in. The MPs of the EDF who visited Detention Centres at Roossa and Pelawatta reported that over 100 youths from the plantation areas were presently in detention in these centres. From Moneragala on the 21st July came a report that Tamil workers on Kumarawatta Estate had been attacked and had sought refuge in a nearby school. Two demonstrators at the University of Peradeniya, Mr. Ajith Devadasan and one other, were reported to have been taken into custody while travelling from Peradeniya to Vandy (a distance of about 3 miles) on a motor cycle on the

of July. There is no news about them from that point onwards. Seven students of the University of Peradeniya who were reported to have been taken into custody from a bus while travelling from Jaffna to Vandy were 'missing' for several days; on the 22nd, it was reported that they were in detention at Na Ula; it was later found that there is a detention centre at Na Ula, at which the ICRC was reported to have detected cases of ill-treatment of detainees, mostly Tamil youth.

There were also reports of mass 'cordon and search' operations in Trincomalee, from the 15th July onwards for several days.

One of the most disturbing features of the conflict in the past six weeks has been the creation of an unprecedented number of 'displaced' persons within the North-East Province and the severe difficulties faced by the civilian population of these areas due to the almost total disruption of transport, communication, power and water supplies, medical facilities and other basic necessities for carrying on with their daily lives.

The number of displaced persons at present adds up to over 600,000, who are presently housed in hundreds of refugee welfare centres set up all over the North, East and North-Central Provinces. In addition, the breakdown of transport, communication and civilian administration structures in many parts of these areas has led to large pockets of the country becoming 'inaccessible' to welfare and state agencies.

The coordination of all relief efforts by the Commissioner of Essential Services, Mr. Charitha Ratwatte, has meant that supplies of food, medical supplies, housing material, clothing and so on were reaching those in the major towns in the Eastern and North-Central Provinces. However, the transport of supplies to the smaller camps outside the major towns remained a problem. For example, in Amparai town itself, the situation was said to be 'not so severe', but there were scarcities of many essential items in Kalmunai and Sannaturai; there was a general lack of transport, and the LTTE was said to be levying a 'road tax' of Rs. 200/- one way for a vehicle on the road between Amparai and Kalmunai.

Batticaloa town was said to come to life each day for a few hours in the morning, but by noon, the town would be deserted and in the grip of a 'self-imposed' curfew. After repeated requests for a meeting with the Coordinating Officer for the area made by the Citizens' Committee of Batticaloa had been ignored, they had to seek the intervention of the President himself to make such a meeting possible; the first meeting between the Citizens' Committee and officials of the SL security forces was held on the 20th July 1990.

First-hand reports of the situation in Mannar came in to Colombo on the 11th of July, when a Catholic priest, the Rev. Fr. Pancras, returned from a relief mission to the area. Placing his life at grave risk, riding on top of a lorry at one point, acting as a look-out man for the driver to warn him about the approach of helicopters, Rev. Pancras had visited over 15 centres where over 50,000 refugees were housed on the mainland of the Mannar District. He reported severe food shortages and a lack of water as creating major problems there. Persons he spoke to had complained of being victims of indiscriminate shelling and bombing from the Army Camp at Thalladi; villages such as Adampan, Mantai and Vattakkandal had been most affected.

Mannar island had been cut off from the mainland from late June. Reports account for over 35,000 persons stranded there, with no water and with food in short supply. However, large contingents of persons were also said to be leaving the island by boat, risking bombardment by air and by the Navy, to make their way to South India or at least to Peralai on the mainland of Sri Lanka.

The Rev. Emmanuel was one of seven priests to come out of the Jaffna peninsula on the 14th July, bearing with them several documents from the heads of religious organisations in Jaffna, appealing for a cease fire and a negotiated political solution to the ethnic conflict.

According to their accounts of the situation in Jaffna, many persons living in the town of Jaffna itself had evacuated the area close to the Fort in particular prior to the heavy shelling in early July, which had destroyed the centre of the town almost completely. Civilian casualties at that stage were less than anticipated, due to the preparedness of the populace. However, indiscriminate shelling and particularly firing from the air and sea had taken a heavy toll of life and property since that time. For example, he said that on Saturday 14 July, 6 civilian deaths were reported due to a bombing attack on Jaffna town, while on the 13th a bomb fell on the Home for the Aged run by the Holy Cross Society and six persons were injured.

There were severe shortages of food and water, as well as of fuel and medical supplies. The Jaffna General Hospital had been almost completely destroyed by bombs. Banks kept open for an hour each day on some days of the week but business and financial transactions were curtailed as a result of the situation.

The main thrust of the Rev. Emmanuel's presentation to concerned persons in Colombo was that despite the pronouncements of state officials to the effect that this was not a war against the Tamil people of Sri Lanka but merely a war against the LTTE, in fact the situation was giving the Tamil people a message with the opposite effect. The simile he used was that of 'using a hammer to kill a mosquito'. Through its actions, in particular of neglecting to ensure that the people of Jaffna were supplied with adequate food, water and other essential items and facilities to help them survive during the time of conflict, the feeling generated among the Tamil people was that the Sri Lankan state was penalising them - the ordinary Tamil people - as a part of its war against the LTTE.

An example cited by the Rev. Emmanuel was that of the practice of at firing at all moving vehicles from the air, even those bearing white flags, which had led to a large number of civilian casualties.

The fact that the civilian administration had also almost ceased to function in Jaffna has led to a further complication of the situation, with the people having no authority to turn to, in order to seek solutions to their problems.

In Anuradhapura District, there were reported to be over 15,000 persons seeking relief and assistance, in over 30 centres set up in different places in the District. These persons mostly belonged to Sinhala and Muslim communities, and had fled there from villages in the Trincomalee, Mullaitivu and Mannar areas, such as Kuchchaveli, Irakkakandu, Pudarikkattu (Sagarapura). In addition, there were over 60 villages in the Anuradhapura District, where the villagers had not abandoned their homes but where they were reduced to dependence on state relief because of the disruption of their daily life due to the conflict situation.

In Parliament on the 20th July, Mr. Ekanayake presented the following figures with regard to the numbers of persons displaced as a consequence of the present conflict:

District	approx. No. of persons
Jaffna	292,000
Vavuniya	50,000
Mannar	65,000
Batticaloa	25,000
Trincomalee	107,920
Pollonnaruwa	600
Amparai	40,000
Moneragala	600
Anuradhapura	10,300

However, as reported by SEDEC, the Catholic Relief Organisation that is working in the Refugee Welfare Centres in the North-Central and Eastern Provinces, these figures are subject to fluctuation, with particularly the Muslim and Sinhala persons moving towards the southern areas.

There were also reported to be Muslim refugees from Mullaitivu, Jaffna and Mannar who had travelled to Puttalam and were housed in various Centres there.

Most of the persons who were seeking refuge had been the victims of indiscriminate attacks by the security forces on villages in the North and East, in the course of their operations against the LTTE. In addition, there were reports of Tamil shops and homes being set on fire in many areas; even the town of Vavuniya, which is a large one, was said to have suffered considerable damage, while 70 Tamil houses were said to have been destroyed by fire in Manampitiya in the Eastern Province.

In addition to water and food shortages, the scarcity of medical supplies and medical attention had led to a number of deaths - for example due to snake bite of rabies - in Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Omanthai. Almost all the state hospitals and dispensaries had ceased to function from early July, and the Government Medical Officers' Association (GMOA) in fact has reported that over 70% of its members have been abducted by the LTTE since the outbreak of fighting in mid June 1990.

Further aggravating the situation, most areas of the North and East have been deprived of electricity and water services, telecommunication and postage facilities for over one month now; Banks have remained closed for the greater part of the period, creating tremendous hardship among the people who subsist on remittances from abroad.

The barriers placed on transport, in particular in travel of persons from the north, is another factor that is creating a great deal of hardship and resentment among the civilian Tamil population. While there is no official 'ban' on travel, the situation in the north is such that any moving vehicle is liable to be fired upon from the air. The fuel shortage, as well as the risk factor, is leading to a steep increase in prices charged for travel. And even if one undergoes the trauma and risk of travelling through scrubland by foot and on bicycle and reaches a trunk road to the south, there are security checkpoints at which again one can be cross-examined, harassed and even detained. Such incidents of harassment and detention have been reported in particular at points between Vavuniya and Anuradhapura.

The situation regarding the sending of supplies to the North and East is another case of 'too little, too late', it seems. In the first week after the outbreak of the conflict, news began to filter through from the north regarding severe food and fuel shortages. Yet, the official stand was that there were plenty of stocks of food in those areas. What was not clarified was that although there were stocks of food in the stores, there was no way of distributing it to the consumers.

It was only on the 12th July that lorries of food and other essential items were dispatched to the Eastern Province; 12 lorries left for Vavuniya on the 13th July; there, they were off-loaded and the food loaded onto lorries that had come there from Jaffna; from there on, under the purview of the ICRC, the convoy of lorries made their way to Jaffna, reaching there on the 15th; on their return, on the 19th July, the convoy was attacked and one lorry driver hurt. The damage to the Elephant Pass

Quarantine has hampered any further movement of supplies to the North. Two ship loads of essential items were sent to Talaimannar on the 19th July. Yet, according to the Rev. Emmanuel, to feed the people within the Jaffna peninsula alone would require 40 lorry-loads of food per day.

On the 17th July, the government of Sri Lanka signed a status agreement with the International Committee of the Red Cross; this is an agreement whereby the legal framework necessary for the granting of privileges, immunities and facilities to the ICRC is created.

Following on this, on Monday 23rd, confirmed reports said that the government had granted permission to the ICRC to set up two large refugee camps in Mannar and Vavuniya; work had already commenced on this project.

The situation created in the Indian arena, particularly with many reports of the rapid influx of refugees from Sri Lanka to the south of India - on the 10th July, All India Radio reported 15,200 refugees having fled to South India since the current outbreak of fighting - was a major factor in these steps taken by the state mainly to contain the crisis with regard to the out-flow of refugees to India.

The killing of 76 Muslims in Onnachchidam in the Eastern Province on the 16th July was followed by reports of Tamil/Muslim clashes in other areas of the Eastern Province, for example in Kattankudy, Kalmunai, Pandirippu and Periyanelavanni. Tamil villagers in these areas were reported to have fled their homes for fear of reprisal attacks by Muslims. Subsequent to this, STF camps were set up in Onnachchidam, as well as in Akkaraipattu, at the Kalmunai Rest House, at Karaitivu (where previously the population had faced many difficulties due to the presence of the Sinhala regiment), Tirukkivil and Potuvil among others. This served to further complicate the situation.

Between the 23rd and the 26th July, 48 Sinhala villagers, men, women and children were killed in various parts of the Eastern and North-Central Provinces - Tammana Elavaka (in Medavachchiya), Vaan Els Oya (in Trincomalee), on the Maduru Oya Right Bank and in Tamanna (in Polonnaruwa). At the site of the massacre of 22 persons in Elavaka, it was reported that people found leaflets said to be from the 'Black Dravidian Movement' in all three languages. This has led to a further cry for the strengthening of security for Sinhala villagers in the area, as well as for the arming of more volunteer 'Home Guard' units.

On the 31st, the SLMC MP for the Vanni District, Mr. Abu Bakr reported that 12 Muslim villagers had been killed in what he feared to be a reprisal for the killing of Sinhala villagers in the Elavaka area; hundreds of Muslim villagers were reported to be leaving the area out of fear, creating a new wave of refugees.

Another very disturbing feature of the present situation has been the increase in reports of bodies turning up in certain areas of the south after a brief period of respite from such activities. From Vandy it was reported that over 20 bodies had been found in and around the town, and in Peradeniya (7 bodies in Mahawatta, a small village adjacent to the University campus) during the first two weeks of July. Similar reports were available from the south, particularly from areas in the deep south such as Ambalantota and Hambantota. Two bodies had been found in Bundala on the 19th July; a vegetable trader in the Ambalantota market had been abducted that week as well. Six persons were reported to have been abducted from Matara in the first week of July; On the 27th, newspapers reported that 15 persons had been massacred in a village near Moravaka in Matara. The use of T 56 guns in this killing led to suspicion pointing at the JVP, but in most of the other cases, those killed were said to be JVP members who had returned to their villages after the situation had seemed to be 'normal'. Reports on Sunday 29th that there were several burned bodies found on the roadside in Mundalama (on the Chilav/Puttalam road) only served to confirm the opinion that the terror in the south was not yet over. And reports of robberies and, in one or two places, disruptions of power supplies to the south, are further indicators of the fact that the situation in the south is far from secure or 'normal'. It seemed that the state too was taking these signs of the resurgence of the JVP seriously; as early as the 8th July, all Police Stations were issued with orders to 'shoot on sight' to quell any incidents of rioting, looting or violence in areas outside the North and East. The fact that none of the basic issues related to the social or economic development of the southern Provinces have been addressed by the state in the past months means that the objective conditions that led to the creation of the JVP in those areas remain unchanged; in addition, the present 'war' in the North-East could serve to vindicate the JVP's 'patriotic' stance. On all counts, the prevailing situation could provide a very fertile background for the JVP to return to the political arena as the standard-bearers for the new phase of the 'patriotic' war,

which is now being enforced by the state and by almost all the opposition groups as well.

The role played by the media in building up a 'war hysteria' cannot be down-played in the present situation. The DIVAYITA, in particular, the Sinhala daily which has in the past had a reputation for fostering racialist tendencies, has been putting out multi-coloured front page stories of the war in the North-East, accompanied by accounts of acts of heroism of soldiers and so on. The newspapers in general also give a great deal of publicity to the National Defense Fund and to all the various efforts made by different groups and individuals to collect contributions to the NDF.

In every office or institution, private or public, employees have more or less been compelled to donate a day's wages to the NDF; From Ratmalana came a report from a factory worker who dared to 'query' such compulsion; he found himself yanked out of bed in the early hours of the morning and threatened with a gruesome death unless he put up a banner glorifying the 'patriotic security forces' and took the lead to collect a day's wages from his colleagues. Even school children have been pressurised to donate the cost of their mid-day meal to the NDF.

There is special emphasis on all manner of religious ceremonies being performed to invoke blessings on the armed forces; even Buddhist monks - who are dedicated to a philosophy that is non-violent in its very essence - are shown blessing soldiers about to set out to the battlefield; this image is enhanced by references to the King Dutugemunu who ventured out to battle with Buddhist monks at the head of his troops.

The divergence of the newspapers in reporting the conflict in the North and East in all its complexities is another disturbing factor; a comparison of the Sinhala, English and Tamil daily newspapers of any given day will confirm that they report from diverse angles; the Sinhala and English newspapers for example, in reporting the debate on the motion to extend the Emergency in Parliament, did not mention the various allegations of civilian killings made by the MPs of the North and East Provinces in the course of the debate. Thus, in general, the Sinhala and English reading public remain unaware of the extent of human misery being undergone by fellow citizens in the north and east of the country and only find themselves driven to embrace the myth that 'every Tamil is a Tiger'.

All statements issued by non-governmental and human rights organisations, both in Sri Lanka and abroad - for example the statement issued by a number of European NGOs linked to Sri Lanka, such as NORAD, NOVIB and the British Refugee Council, the statement issued by a number of human rights groups such as the MDDR, MTRJE and Devasarana Development Centre, the statement issued by Women for Peace - calling for a halt to the conflict and a return to the process of negotiations, have been blacked out by the daily Sinhala and English press; only the Tamil daily, the VERA-CESARI, has consistently carried such statements and declarations. If one were to rely on the Sinhala and English newspapers alone, the country would seem hell-bent on annihilation of the LTTE, and totally unconcerned about the consequences of such a policy on the civilian population of the North and East of the country.

With the introduction of two Amendments to the Provincial Council Bill on the 7th July, the North-East Provincial Council was dissolved on the 8th July; only the SLMP, the TULF and the Liberal Party protested this move. On the 9th July, the President made a statement that he was prepared to negotiate with the LTTE only in the presence of international observers but in fact no steps have been taken to initiate such a process up to the end of July 1990.

In a statement said to have been issued in London on Friday July 13th, the PFLT (the political party of the LTTE) also made it clear that they would not consider running in the elections for the North-East Provincial Council when they were held; the statement made it clear that the only solution the LTTE held possible in the present circumstances was the creation of a federal system in Sri Lanka.

After some delays and disputes, a delegation consisting of members of the SLFP, the SLMC and the JVP went to India on the 15th July, to clarify the situation to the Indian state and to opposition groups. This step was taken in the light of growing concern in India regarding the continuation of the conflict and the steady influx of Sri Lankan Tamils as refugees to the south of India. Although the initial proposal had been to send the delegation to all SAARC countries, up to date no further plans have been announced.

Six Tamil political parties - the EOPLP, EOPNP, MTRJE, TULF, EOPDF and TULF have been holding discussions with the state regarding possible solutions to the ongoing conflict. However, except for reassurances from the President that all steps would be taken to safeguard the civilian

population, nothing concrete has been achieved. EROS, which in the beginning attempted to play a mediatory role in the conflict by becoming a line of contact between the LTTE and the state, withdrew its MPs from Parliament on the 23rd July and has remained outside the process from that point on.

A general overview of the situation at the end of July, 1990, would lead us to the conclusion that there is growing polarisation between the Sinhala and Tamil communities, as well as between the Tamil and Muslim communities, in all parts of the island; there is no sign of any halt to

the actual conflict; Sri Lankan security forces are engaged in a multitude of operations in the North and East to gain control of territory that is now outside their purview; the LTTE for its part seems also to want to continue fighting; there seem to be no overtures from either side towards any form of a negotiation or ceasefire; the displacement of persons goes on, with the numbers approximating 50,000; a general 'war hysteria' prevails. In short, August 1990 seems to contain more of the same - human misery and suffering - for the Sri Lankan people.

**LANKA
GUARDIAN**

August 1, 1990

Statements on Sri Lanka

U.S.

In Sri Lanka, the welcome winding down of the bloody insurgency by the revolutionary JVP has tragically given way, in recent weeks, to renewed fighting between Sri Lankan security forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. We laud the Sri Lankan government's offer to resume talks to end the fighting and encourage the Tigers to accept it. We have long believed that minority grievances must be addressed by peaceful means within the framework of a sovereign Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chairman, the second key U.S. regional objective I would like to highlight is encouragement of democratic government. Democracy has a strong base in the Subcontinent. India and Sri Lanka have enjoyed forty years of representative government. Pakistan rejoined their ranks 18 months ago; its new democratic polity has already shown resilience under stress. And, as I testified recently before Chairman Solarz's subcommittee, the winds of democratic change that have swept the world these last twelve months have reached Nepal.

Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka are all faced with the gravest test confronting democratic governments: maintaining public order in the face of often violent dissent without undermining the very democratic values for which they stand. The balance is a difficult one.

U.K.

Mr Wyn Jones in the commons on 2 July asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department has made any representations to the Government of (a) Sri Lanka and (b) India concerning the recent escalation of violence in Sri Lanka and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The British High Commission in Colombo is in

regular contact with the Sri Lankan Government, and we have also made contact with the Indian Government. We are deeply concerned by the renewed fighting in Sri Lanka and by the suffering and loss of life this is causing. We are dismayed by the decision of the Tamil Tigers to break off negotiations with the Sri Lankan Government and resume fighting.

E.E.C.

Mr. Mario Sammartino, Charge d' Affaires of Italy as the representative of the current President of the EEC, Italy handed over the attached declaration, states the Foreign Ministry.

The declaration states: "The Twelve wish to express their deep concern at the current deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka. They deplore the refusal of the LTTE to continue negotiations and its decision to renew fighting in the North and East of the country which both causes great suffering among the civilian population and leads thousands of people to seek refuge in other areas.

In conformity with President Premadasa's appeal for consultation, compromise and consensus, they hope that a peaceful solution will be found to the domestic problems of the island with the object of safeguarding the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka.

Australia

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, today condemned the actions of the Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in breaking the ceasefire with the Sri Lankan Government.

"Whatever the frustrations of the negotiating process in which the LTTE have been engaged until this point, it cannot justify abandoning peaceful negotiations in favour of a return to the killing and destruction that has caused such misery throughout Sri Lanka in recent years," Senator Evans said.

"By resorting to violence, the LTTE has not only destroyed a real chance of a return to peace in Sri Lanka, but it also ensures that the Tamil people - the very people whose rights the LTTE claims to protect - will be the main losers as their homes again become caught up in the fighting".

There were already clear signs that the grotesque cycle of massacres and reprisals was starting up again, with the consequent death of civilians, including children, being used by each side as propaganda.

"There can be no winners from the conflict which is now taking place. The Australian Government urges both sides to act with restraint and resume their dialogue for the sake of all the people of Sri Lanka, regardless of their ethnic origin", Senator Evans said.

The LTTE has been waging a military campaign against the Sri Lankan Government in an attempt to realise its aim of a separate state, called 'Eelam', in the north and northeast of Sri Lanka.

Senator Evans said it was especially distressing that this latest round of fighting had come at a time when the Tamils had achieved most of their aims, short of a separate state, and needed only to complete the final negotiations to bring about a Tamil-controlled Northeastern Province.