

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	329
Land:	Sri Lanka
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	"Amnesty International Report 2007"
Udgivet:	13. juni 2007
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	30. juli 2007

you need a style #id for tooltip

you need a style #id for tooltip



[Blog](#)



[Homepage](#) > [Asia Pacific](#) > Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

Head of state: Mahinda Rajapakse

Head of government: Ratnasiri Wickremanayake

Death penalty: abolitionist in practice

International Criminal Court: not ratified

The human rights situation in Sri Lanka deteriorated dramatically. Unlawful killings, recruitment of child soldiers, abductions, enforced disappearances and other human rights violations and war crimes increased. Civilians were attacked by both sides as fighting escalated between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Hundreds of civilians were killed and injured and more than 215,000 people displaced by the end of 2006. Homes, schools and places of worship were destroyed. Although both sides maintained they were adhering to the ceasefire agreement, by mid-2006 it had in effect been abandoned. Emergency regulations, introduced in August 2005, remained in force. A pattern of enforced disappearances in the north and east re-emerged. There were reports of torture in police custody; perpetrators continued to benefit from impunity.

Background

Although the government and LTTE met in February to discuss implementation of the ceasefire agreement, a further meeting scheduled for April did not take place. Further talks in October ended in disagreement over the government closure of the main highway to the Jaffna Peninsula.

In March the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, reporting on a 2005 visit to Sri Lanka, said that freedoms of expression, movement, association and participation were threatened, particularly for Tamil and Muslim civilians.

In May, President Mahinda Rajapakse unilaterally appointed new members of the Human Rights Commission after their predecessors' terms of office had expired. The Commission appeared no longer to comply fully with constitutional and international standards for national human rights institutions.

In May Sri Lanka was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for a two-year term. In support of its candidacy, the government pledged to form a new Human Rights Ministry and introduce a Human Rights Charter.

In May the European Union (EU) listed the LTTE as a terrorist organization, freezing its assets and barring its officials from travel to or within the EU. In response, the LTTE leadership said all EU monitors on the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) should leave the country by September.

In September the Supreme Court ruled there was no legal basis for the UN Human Rights Committee to hear cases from Sri Lanka. The Court held that Sri Lanka's accession to the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil

and Political Rights was unconstitutional and illegal as it gave the Committee judicial powers without parliamentary authorization.

International human rights bodies raised concerns about the escalating human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in September and November.

Rising civilian deaths

Both the UN Secretary-General and the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator expressed concern at the rising civilian casualties in the conflict. The UN estimated that some 3,000 civilians had been killed in conflict-related violence since hostilities had worsened in 2006. The LTTE targeted army personnel and civilians with suicide bombings, claymore mines and grenade attacks.

In April, following a suicide bomb attempt on the life of army chief Lieutenant-General Sarath Fonseka in which 10 people were killed, a major air and artillery offensive was launched on LTTE positions in Trincomalee District, killing at least 12 civilians. After a bomb in Trincomalee town left five people dead, including a child, more than 20 Tamil and Muslim civilians were killed and thousands forcibly displaced in apparent reprisal attacks by members of the Sinhalese community.

The LTTE denied accusations that it was behind a claymore mine attack on a bus in June in which 67 civilians were killed in Kebitigollawe, northern Sri Lanka.

The SLMM found government forces responsible for the killing in August of 17 aid workers from the Action Contre La Faim agency in Muttur, Trincomalee District. A magisterial inquiry had not concluded by the end of 2006. Also in August, 51 young people were estimated killed and 100 injured when the air force bombed a former children's home in Mullaitivu, northern Sri Lanka, claiming it to be an LTTE training centre. Three severely injured girls were detained under emergency regulations, one of whom remained in the custody of the Terrorist Investigation Department in Colombo.

In October a suicide bombing of a navy convoy 170km north-east of Colombo, killed around 100 navy personnel, the largest number of people killed in a suicide bombing in recent years.

The army admitted shelling Kathiraveli, Batticaloa District, in November but accused the LTTE of using civilians as human shields. As many as 40 people were killed and more than 100 wounded when a school sheltering displaced people was hit.

The internally displaced

Over 215,000 people were displaced in the north and east as a result of renewed fighting, and at least 10,000 fled to India. Tens of thousands of people were displaced by a major armed forces offensive in July to seize control of the Mavil Aru waterway in eastern Trincomalee District.

An estimated half a million people had been displaced earlier in the conflict and by the 2004 tsunami. Many of these remained vulnerable to harassment and violence from the LTTE, other armed groups and members of the Sri Lankan security forces.

Displaced people had few employment opportunities and limited health and education services and suffered the effects of alcohol abuse and widespread domestic violence. Most tsunami camps were well-funded and of a reasonable standard, but those for people displaced by the conflict often lacked electricity, transport and proper sanitation. Concerns remained about this disparity of treatment.

Lack of humanitarian access

Humanitarian aid agencies were unable to reach many of those at risk in the north and east. From August, aid supplies to the north were obstructed by the closure of the Jaffna Peninsula road and a sea blockade by the LTTE. Humanitarian and medical workers were threatened, harassed and subject to abductions and attacks, and their work further hampered by new registration requirements.

The UN called on both parties to the conflict to allow humanitarian agencies free and unimpeded access to the affected population, and to provide greater security for aid workers.

Unlawful killings and impunity

The number of unlawful killings dramatically increased. Several hundred extrajudicial killings were reported. They were carried out by forces of the government, the Karuna group, a splinter group of the LTTE reportedly co-operating with government forces, the LTTE and other armed opposition groups.

- In January, five students were shot dead at close range, allegedly by the government Special Task Force in Trincomalee town. The only witness prepared to come forward - the father of one of the youths - received death threats.
- Unidentified gunmen suspected of links with the armed forces shot and killed Vanniasingham Vigneswaran, a Tamil National Alliance politician, in Trincomalee in April. A member of the same party, Nadarajah Raviraj, was shot dead in Colombo in November.
- In April, eight Sinhalese farmers were hacked to death by suspected LTTE members in Kalyanapura.
- The navy denied responsibility for a spate of incidents in May. Details remained unclear but the incidents resulted in casualties and deaths on Kayts Island off the Jaffna Peninsula, which included the deaths of 13 Tamil civilians, among them a four-month-old baby and a four-year-old boy. The area is controlled by the navy.
- In August, unidentified gunmen killed Kethesh Loganathan, Deputy Head of the Sri Lanka Peace Secretariat and long-time critic of the LTTE, which were widely believed to be behind the killing.

Child soldiers

At least 50 children a month were recruited as soldiers in the north and east. According to UNICEF, the UN Children's Agency, by mid-2006 there were still 1,545 under-age fighters in LTTE forces.

In June over 100 children were reportedly recruited in government-controlled areas in the east by the Karuna group. In November, a special adviser to the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict reported that government forces had been actively involved in forcibly recruiting children to the group.

Enforced disappearances

In July presidential directives were re-issued requiring the security forces to issue receipts for arrested persons and inform the Human Rights Commission within 48 hours. The Commission reported 419 enforced disappearances in Jaffna for the first half of 2006. A local non-governmental organization recorded 277 abductions from April to September. Disappearances and abductions were attributed to several forces, including the security forces, the LTTE and the Karuna group.

- In January, seven aid workers employed by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization were abducted by unidentified armed men.
- Eight young Tamil men who went missing from a Hindu temple in Manthuvil East, Jaffna District, in May were feared to have been taken away in army vehicles seen in the vicinity.
- Father Thiruchchelvan Nihal Jim Brown, a Catholic priest from Allaipiddy, and Wenceslaus Vines Vimalathas went missing after crossing a navy checkpoint in August on Kayts Island. It was feared they had been taken into custody by navy personnel.

On 4 September President Rajapakse said an international commission of inquiry would investigate abductions, disappearances and extrajudicial killings. On 6 November, however, the government announced the establishment of a national commission with an international observer group.

Torture

There were numerous reports of torture in police custody. According to the non-governmental Asian Commission for Human Rights, two people died in custody in 2006.

Death penalty

A number of high profile murder cases fuelled demands for an end to the moratorium on executions. According to the Director General of Prisons, at least 12 death sentences were passed. Approximately 167 people remained on death row. No executions were reported.

AI country reports/visits

Reports

- Sri Lanka: A climate of fear in the East (AI Index: ASA 37/001/2006)
- Sri Lanka: Waiting to go home - the plight of the internally displaced (AI Index: ASA 37/004/2006)
- Sri Lanka: Observations on a proposed commission of inquiry and international independent group of eminent persons (AI Index: ASA 37/030/2006)
- Sri Lanka: Establishing a commission of inquiry into serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law in Sri Lanka - Amnesty International's recommendations (AI Index: ASA 37/031/2006)
- UN Human Rights Council, Third regular session: Compilation of statements by Amnesty International (including joint statements) (AI Index: IOR 41/034/2006)

Visit

AI delegates met senior government officials in Sri Lanka in September.

Article tags : [Asia Pacific](#) , [Sri Lanka](#) , [armed opposition groups](#) , [child soldiers](#) , [conflict](#) , [death penalty](#) , [torture and other ill-treatment](#) , [war crimes and crimes against humanity](#)

[Close this box](#)

To:	
Recipient's email:	
From:	
Your name:	
Your email:	
Your message:	

Neither Amnesty International nor any other organisation will contact you or any of the email recipients without your permission.

[Send to friend](#)