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SEPTEMBER ISSUE
2020

Puradsi Media.
Phoenix - the Next
Generation



HFT 2020

The sacrifice of Lt. Col. Thileepan surpasses decades as one of resolve, sacrifice and uprising. What ideals arise when the next stage of Tamil resistance rises under the wings of unwavering youth riding the tendrils of sacrifice to negate geopolitical powers that join forces to deprive political spaces and legacies upholding such resilience?

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Relative Peace

The end of the armed conflict has seen a massive set back in the lives of Tamils across occupied Eelam. With the presence of grotesque threat, Tamils and marginalised communities live in a constant repression. While, the Government of Sri Lanka dances around the international stage citing relative peace and unity. The question remains, what is relative peace and who does it benefit?

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**"மக்கள் புரட்சி
வெடிக்கட்டும் சுதந்திரத்
தமிழீழம் மலரட்டும்!"**

Lt. Col. Thileepan

Hunger strike For Thileepan 2020 (HFT2020)

Sacrifice constitutes a significant aspect in the Tamils' struggle for liberation, where the sacrifice of martyrs remains as a doctrine which exposes and reinforces a multitude of political messages. One of those is that "Tamil sovereignty is inviolable and cannot be compromised." This remains crucial in guiding the Tamils' struggle for liberation especially within the current context where it continues to be pressurised and dismantled through various forces including geopolitical complicity as well as many others. As a result of such agendas, Tamil political spaces are targeted with pacification aims as a part of political COIN measures to deprive the struggling community to thrive.

"The main aim of pacification in modern counter-insurgency techniques is the closure of the political space from which a rebellion derives its staying power and ability to spread its influence with ease. The military drive against a rebellion can consolidate its successes ultimately only if it can achieve a near total closure of the political space in which a rebellion is brought forth and thrives." – D. Sivaram

The political spaces which are often targeted in a period following the genocidal onslaught which occurred in 2009, remain those for commemoration as such sacrifices and collective mourning remain crucial in binding and unifying the collective psyche of Eelam Tamils and thus function as a thriving force for their resistance. The strategy of pacification is often achieved through the closure or tranquilisation of political spaces. When a political space is deprived of its ability to function as a thriving force for its people, it becomes neutralised as a threat for effective resistance. As a result, political spaces within the Tamil diaspora and the occupied Tamil homeland are often targeted through the following tactics:

- ◆ Dilution
- ◆ Intimidation
- ◆ Infiltration
- ◆ Neutralisation
- ◆ Deprivation

Lt. Col. Thileepan and Tamil Political Spaces

In a similar manner, the legacy of Lt. Col. Thileepan remains as a unifying force in invoking the Tamils' collective political upsurge. In addition to his role in the Tamil struggle as a cadre and the political head of Jaffna at the time, the need for Tamil resistance became unshakeable and urgent in nature through Lt. Col. Thileepan's dry hunger strike unto death which resulted in his martyrdom. Whilst Lt. Col. Thileepan's death shook the Tamils' collective psyche to the core on the fundamental basis of humanity, it further exposed the regional superpower India's complete disregard for the

Tamils' basic rights. As a result, it functioned in mobilising the Eelam Tamil masses against the genocidal oppressors at the time – the IPKF and the Sri Lankan state.

Whilst Lt. Col. Thileepan's demands remain unresolved to this day, his legacy continues to be targeted and diluted by various global powers as a means of pacification. As a result, the purification of political spaces which commemorate Lt. Col. Thileepan constitute a crucial component of keeping such political spaces open. This would then function as a counter-COIN tactic - similar to that implemented by the LTTE to preserve political spaces through the Tamil Eelam state.

Counter-COIN and the legacy of Lt. Col. Thileepan

From 2017, we as Phoenix-the Next Generation have conducted the HFT campaign in an annual manner to expose geopolitical complicity within current context whilst simultaneously purifying the political spaces throughout the diaspora through commemorating Lt. Col. Thileepan's legacy in its entirety. Fundamentally, this campaign includes a 30-hour symbolic hunger strike through which demands towards our host countries, the genocidal Sri Lankan state and the international community are posed. Various commemorative practices are also conducted by Phoenix TNG in addition to such resistance as counter-COIN tactics against the pacification attempts undertaken by various powers. It is noteworthy that as a result of the HFT campaign, many diaspora organisations have revitalised their commemorations of Lt. Col. Thileepan through fasts and other means.

In a similar manner, HTF2020 was conducted according to COVID-19 restrictions in a global manner with participation in the campaign from Eelam Tamil youth across 6 diaspora countries:

1. Switzerland
2. France
3. United Kingdom
4. Canada
5. Australia
6. New Zealand

As a result, a total of 30 demands were formulated and posed through this year's campaign addressing a multitude of grievances affecting the Eelam Tamils. In addition to the 30-hour symbolic global hunger strike, an online event was simultaneously broadcast live for the duration of those 30 hours on Phoenix TNG's Facebook page. Such collective and amassed commemoration of Lt. Col. Thileepan's legacy by diaspora youth combined with the strong resistance portrayed by the Eelam Tamils within occupied Tamil Eelam against restrictions and intimidation instilled upon commemoration, have sent a strong message to such genocidal powers.

“இன்று நாம் இதை ஒரு அடையாளமாகத்தான் செய்திருக்கின்றோம். காலப்போக்கில், இதற்குரிய சரியான, தெளிவான பதில்கள் எமக்குக் கிடைக்கப்பெறவேண்டும்.” – Lt. Col. Thileepan

Switzerland



Images of Lt. Col. Thileepan and Col. Shanker at Tamilar Kalari

The symbolic hunger strike commenced on 25.09.2020 at 15.00 (European time). At that same time, a memorial event for Lt. Col. Thileepan and Col. Shanker was held at Waisenhausplatz in Bern, Switzerland. After the memorial rituals were completed, Phoenix TNG walked together as a group to Tamilar Kalari at Europaplatz. It is noteworthy that the protest of “Fridays for future” had also occurred at Waisenhausplatz on the same day, after the memorial event had concluded at the location. As a result, some interactions occurred between Phoenix TNG members and activists from “Fridays for Future”.

After finalising some arrangements at the Tamilar Kalari, Phoenix TNG members proceeded to the Indian embassy to hold a symbolic protest. Candles were lit in front of the embassy and transparencies were held up. The day's events concluded with a “Special-Poosai” for Lt. Col. Thileepan at Saivanerikoodam at Europaplatz.

On 26.09.2020, Phoenix TNG participated at the memorial event organised by STCC in Zurich. Afterwards a small event was arranged by Phoenix TNG at Tamilar Kalari, where the studio for live streaming was organised. The event concluded at 21.00 with the completion of the 30-hour symbolic hunger strike. It is noteworthy that all of the participants broke their hunger strike and ate together.

Australia / New Zealand

In addition to participation in the 30-hour symbolic hunger strike and the online commemorative events, the Eelam Tamil youth of Australia and New Zealand had organised the first HFT2020 Convention. This convention was held online due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, it is noteworthy that this convention will be held in an annual manner as a part of the global HFT campaign. The theme for this year's convention was, “The Multi-dimensions of Lt. Col. Thileepan's Struggle for Tamil Liberation”



The HFT2020 Convention booklet developed through the combined efforts of over 25 youth from Australia and New Zealand dedicated to Lt. Col. Thileepan during the local commemorative event in Sydney, Australia.

and had a wide array of presenters who addressed the theme from various viewpoints. It is noteworthy that the event was held online between 9am – 12 noon (AEST) and was open to the youth of the diaspora as well. The convention was live-streamed during Phoenix TNG's 30-hour online event. It is noteworthy that the youth of Australia had composed an original music composition in memory of Lt. Col. Thileepan entitled “தீபத் தாகம்: The Thirst of Thileepan”. This song was also released as a HFT2020 release during Phoenix TNG's online event.

Presentations from this year's convention are as follows:

- ◆ Guest presenter: Non-violence and the struggle
- ◆ Nitharsan of Puradsi Media: Responsibility
- ◆ Mr. Ana Pararajasingham: Geopolitics
- ◆ Dr. N. Malathy: Female Lead Social Change



The HFT2020 Convention booklet developed through the combined efforts of over 25 youth from Australia and New Zealand dedicated to Lt. Col. Thileepan during the local commemorative event in New Zealand.

Furthermore, over 25 youth from Australia and New Zealand had compiled a 50-page convention booklet including:

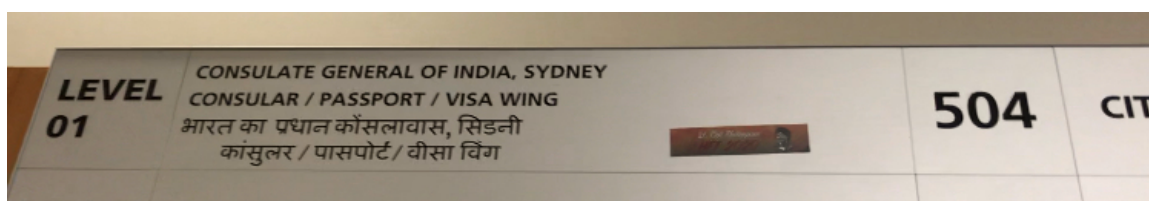
- ◆ detailed information about Lt. Col. Thileepan's legacy
- ◆ transcripts and translations of Lt. Col. Thileepan's speeches
- ◆ political analysis of his teachings
- ◆ colouring activities for children

Following the completion of the online convention, the youth of Sydney participated and assisted in the organisation of the local commemorative event for Lt. Col. Thileepan at Yaarl Function centre from 17.00 AEST. Here, the youth had arranged colouring activities for young children, read their demands made as a part of the HFT2020 campaign and screened their contributions to the HFT2020 online event.

It is noteworthy that the youth had also stuck an image of Lt. Col. Thileepan at the Indian Consulate General in Sydney as a sign of symbolic resistance. Moreover, the HFT2020 Convention booklet which was compiled by the youth of Australia and New Zealand had been dedicated to Lt. Col. Thileepan at commemorative events in Sydney and New Zealand.



Images of youth in Sydney engaged in the local commemorative event co-organised by the youth.



The HFT2020 Campaign image stuck at the Indian Consulate General by local youth as symbolic resistance.

Undying Flame

Lt. Col. Thileepan's resistance continues to guide and cement the Eelam Tamils' drive for Tamil liberation and forms a crucial component of sustaining Tamil political spaces amidst attempts to neutralise them through COIN methods. Through collective counter-COIN initiatives, it becomes essential for the diaspora to unite behind the doctrine of "Thileepam" to purify and strengthen Tamil political spaces. It is essential to keep these spaces open to allow the Tamils to thrive in furthering the struggle. In a similar manner, Lt. Col. Thileepan's legacy remains crucial for globally subjugated communities in their struggles as well and thus international solidarity behind "Thileepam" also remains vital. Through such efforts, it becomes evident that the Tamils' counter-COIN tactics are at a stage to proceed to the next phase of resistance in the Tamils' struggle for liberation where there is no room for compromise.

International News

01.09.2020: **Afghanistan** – In a response back to Gotabaya's congratulatory letter to Afghanistan in light of their Independence Day, the Afghan president acknowledged the common values between Sri Lanka and

Afghanistan and emphasised the importance of SL's assistance in fostering the finalisation of Afghanistan's peace process, reports Colombo Gazette.

08.09.2020: **Australia** – During a meeting between David Holly and Mahindha at the Temple Trees, Mahindha had invited Australia's Prime Minister, Scott Morrison to visit SL, reports Colombo Gazette.

14.09.2020: **UN/20th amendment** - According to Daily Mirror, Michelle Bachelet, the UN HC for Human Rights, said that the proposed 20th amendment to the Constitution may negatively impact on the independence of key institutions, including the National Human Rights Commission. All the actions conducted by the new government were reported to have set a very negative trend.

19.09.2020: **Reconciliation** – According to Colombo Gazette, SL had informed the UNHRC in Geneva that it would not accept an externally driven reconciliation framework.

21.09.2020: **Afghanistan** - Ambassador of Afghan to Sri Lanka Ashraf Haidari and Governor of the Western Province Marshal of the Sri Lankan Air Force, Roshan Goonetilleke discussed creating ties between nations to promote bilateral trade and investment. Colombo Gazette reported subnational ties are set to be formalised between Kabul and Colombo.

21.09.2020: **UN** - During the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations at the UN General Assembly, Sri Lanka's President called for non-interference in domestic affairs of countries via video link. He highlighted the country's contributions to the UN agenda including peacekeeping operations reported in the Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.

22.09.2020: **UN** - According to Economy Next, Sri Lanka demands that the United Nations to adopt a policy of respect for "the sovereign equality of States, respect for territorial integrity and non-interference in their domestic affairs." At the virtual 75th General Assembly on 21.09.2020, he firmly expressed "that partnerships between the Member States and the UN continue at their best when no country is held hostage to the interests of a few."

22.09.2020: **Monitoring** -According to Daily Sunday Times the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) is currently monitoring Chinese mobile applications in several countries to ban some of these applications. Before deciding on the ban, they want to solve the problem with cyber security forums.

23.09.2020: **LTTE** - Sri Lankan president seeks support of UN to defeat LTTE's international network urging the global community to stand in solidarity with Sri Lanka to counter terrorist ideology reports Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.

25.09.2020: **Canada** - Canadian High Commissioner David McKinnon called Foreign Secretary Admiral Prof. Jayanth Colombage to discuss the country's reconciliation efforts. Discussion centred on development assistance, COVID-19, reconciliation efforts and the SL expatriate community, reports Colombo Gazette.

26.09.2020: **India** - Modi met Mahindha via a virtual bilateral summit where discussions took place regarding the

implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution and promoted working towards issues of Tamils and achieving reconciliation in a unified state. Modi announced a grant assistance of USD 15 million for the promotion of Buddhist ties between the two countries, according to the Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.



Modi and Mahindha's discussions through a virtual meeting.
Source: Colombo Gazette

25.09.2020: **India** - The Indian High Commission in Colombo announced in the Annual General Meeting of the Sri Lanka India Society in Colombo that a clear Security Policy has been declared by the Sri Lankan government. Deputy High Commissioner to India Vinod K. Jacob announced the policy was a fair assessment and cited the overall portfolio between the two countries stood at close to USD 3.45 billion, reports Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.

28.09.2020: **Japan** - The Japanese government has engaged with the

government of SL to move towards empathetic learning to achieve sustainable education goals, reports Colombo Page. The program titled 'Learning for Empathy' is said to be a collaborative tool that will be fully aided by the Japanese government, SL UNESCO National Commission and the New Delhi Zonal Office.

30.09.2020: **UN** - UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has raised concerns regarding Sri Lanka's surveillance of civil society organizations, human rights defenders and others in SL and in Geneva in a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Colombo Gazette reported the High Commissioner urged the authorities to immediately end the intimidating visits by Sri Lanka's agents following concerns raised by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in December 2019.

30.09.2020: **Review** - SL's Minister of Mass Media, Keheliya Rambukwella informed Colombo Gazette on 29.09.2020 that attention will be focused on the Press Council Act of SL to make amendments to include current global media trends and platforms. He subsequently reported there was an "increase in complaints on unfair allegations being raised against individuals, companies or businesses via electronic, print and social media platforms".

Bilateral Discussions

Bilateral discussions were held between Sri Lanka and the following countries:

- ◆ 02.09.2020: Japanese Ambassador, Akira Sugiyama called on Mahindha at the Temple Trees to congratulate the Rajapaksas on their election victory and reaffirm Japan's commitment to assist SL.
- ◆ 03.09.2020 – 04.09.2020: According to Colombo Gazette, Gopal Baglay had engaged in a series of meetings with SL's ministers for port and trade to discuss matters of mutual interest.
- ◆ 04.09.2020: According to SL's Foreign Ministry, Gunawardena had held talks with the Ambassador of the Delegation of the EU in Colombo, the EU Ambassadors of Italy, the Netherlands the Charge d'Affaires of the Romanian, German and French embassies to discuss bilateral cooperation.
- ◆ 08.09.2020: US's Teplitz held talks at SL's Ministry of Justice and discussed areas for cooperation, reports Colombo Gazette.
- ◆ 14.09.2020: The Ambassador of Italy in Colombo, Rita Giuliana Manella had met with Mahindha at the Temple Trees to discuss areas of bilateral cooperation, reports Colombo Gazette.
- ◆ 14.09.2020: During a meeting at SL's Foreign Secretary between Colombage and the Afghan Ambassador, Haidari, Afghanistan had requested the early conclusion of bilateral mechanisms with SL to foster other areas of cooperation, reports Colombo Gazette.
- ◆ 16.09.2020: On 15.09.2020 the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka paid a courtesy call on Commander of the Navy, reports navy.lk
- ◆ 18.09.2020: During a meeting between Gunawardena and the Ambassador of Egypt in Egypt had affirmed the stance assumed by SL to protect its national independence and sovereignty whilst discussing other areas off mutual interest and cooperation, reports Colombo Gazette.
- ◆ 21.09.2020: Australian Foreign Minister, Marise Payne congratulated Dinesh Gunawardena on his reappointment and discussed the expansion of partnership in bilateral talks.
- ◆ 21.09.2020: Pakistan Maj. Gen. (Retd) Muhammad Saad Khattak met with SL's Minister of Justice, Ali Sabri and discussed topics of bilateral interest.
- ◆ 22.09.2020: Mahindha and Modi to engage in bilateral talks on 26.09.2020 to discuss strengthening ties between the two governments, report Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.
- ◆ 22.09.2020: International video conference held to mark the "50 years of Vietnam-Sri Lanka relations: Achievements and Prospects" to discuss further expansion of trade and bilateral initiatives, reports Colombo Page.
- ◆ 24.09.2020: Major General (Retd) Muhammad Saad Khattak, High Commission of Pakistan met with Sajith Premadasa to discuss bilateral topics of interest.
- ◆ 25.09.2020: Australia's High Commissioner met SL's Commander of the Eastern naval area, reports Navy.lk.
- ◆ 26.09.2020: Newly appointed SL envoy in China to engage in talks to promote tourism to China, reports Colombo Page. The goal for SL was reported to be restructuring to generate capital to the island.

Venomous Valor and the Baila of Peace: Notions of Relative Peace

VITHUSA

Following the end of the armed struggle and the brutal massacre of Tamils by the Sri Lankan (SL) state, there has been a notable shift in dialogue around reconciliation and accountability. Where Tamils actively continue to move towards justice, remembrance, meaningful existence and representation - the state and its representatives move away from it citing *relative peace and unity* on the island. Introspectively, one wonders what relative peace is, who determines it, what is achieved through this use of language and how its displayed by the state on a global scale.

Relative peace comes from the understanding that in the absence of conflict, people on the ground are living in rather comfortable circumstances. Where war does not exist, peace does. This flawed dichotomy and definitional underpinnings of intercommunal conflict excuses a state from its continued acts of violence. This understanding of relative peace fails to take into consideration the post conflict impacts on societies disproportionately affected by said state. Thus, legitimising the overwhelming use of state force to attain the countries' projection of maintenance of peace. This relative peace rhetoric has been absorbed as a means to exploitatively occupy the Tamil homeland and the community's right to exist holistically.

As historically noted, the island of Sri Lanka and its deep seeded systemic racism has been used as a tool to repress the Tamil People. A comprehensive look into this has been undertaken by many human rights activists and advocates. For the purpose of this piece, the work will centre on what was coined as the people's struggle - the liberation movements. It is indisputable that the liberation movements across the island, in relation to the Tamil People's concerns arose from the failure of the state to mindfully consider and actively preserve the diversity on the island. To combat the structural violence by the Sri Lankan state arose young Tamil militancy. Fortified by a determined goal of a separate state and equipped with a strong time centric plan, the LTTE became one of the most powerful militant forces on the island.

During those times there was a dire need for social care. With the ongoing loss across the Tamil homeland, Tamils were left in a position of constant movement. Tamils were further deprived of social support by the genocidal SL state. Many of those who were fortunate to receive support, received them in the form of remittances from abroad. At a time where instability and loss were ongoing, the need to re-establish a supportive social state for the Tamil People became paramount.

Social Care

During the times of the LTTE, although the armed struggle was ongoing with the SL State, on the ground, within the Tamil homeland there was relative peace. The Tigers established a fully egalitarian Tamil Nation under which the society functioned as a whole. Within the social realm, it is fair to claim that there was relative peace *if* the definition of relative peace was that allocated to the social sphere but also from a governance standpoint. The Tigers governance was carried forth in a meaningful and authentic way that remained true to Tamil identity. These included social welfare, social education, social awareness, communal remembrance and memorialisation efforts.

- ◆ Anpucholai (Parents of Martyrs)
- ◆ Mayor Illam (Paralysed Female Cadres)
- ◆ Navam Arivukoodam (Adult Education Centre)
- ◆ Vettimanai (Victory Home - Women Affected by Mental Health)
- ◆ Venpura (White Pigeon Project - Demining/State of the Art Prosthetics)
- ◆ Children's Homes:
 - ◆ Sencholai
 - ◆ Senthair
 - ◆ Kantharuban Arivucholai

Through the guidance of Hon. V. Prabhakaran, the homeland intrinsically encompassed Tamil ways of being and social care. Which appropriately reflected the holistic Tamil landscape of Eelam and also extended to those non-Tamils' residing within the Tamil homeland.

Memorialisation

Additionally, in his first address to the Tamil People during the inaugural Maaveerar Naal memorial event in 1989, Hon. V. Prabhakaran stated the following:

“இல்லாவிடின்காலப் போக்கில் குறிப்பிட்ட சில சில ஆக்களுக்கு முக்கியத்துவம் கொடுக்கப்பட்டு அந்த கௌரவங்கள்குறிப்பிட்ட ஆக்களுக்கு போகாமல் எல்லோரும் சமமாக ஒரே நாளில் பார்க்கப்பட வேண்டும், என்பதற்காகத்தான் இந்த மாவீரர் நாளை கொண்டாட முடிவு எடுத்துள்ளோம்.”

Whereby he identified the significance of collective memorialisation and the importance of each martyr's sacrifice to the armed struggle. Simultaneously highlighting the equal status of all members of the movement irrespective of their respective ranking. More importantly, he ensured this message reached the people of the community and the community also actively participated in these memorialisation events. It is also worthwhile mentioning that as the armed struggle progressed, there has been significant tributes paid to units and individuals on specific days. This was not a means to take away

from the collective sacrifices rather, to reinforce the significance of each of these sacrifices and its associated teachings.

Following the SL occupation of Tamil Eelam, we see rapid dismantling of memorialisation events across the nation. It goes without saying that over the course of 11 years, there has been indiscriminate surveillance of Tamils' both on the ground and dispersed globally. With the Rajapaksa regime in power, overt acts of state violence in the form of enforcing communal docility are underway.

Using the Easter Attacks and now COVID-19, the SL state has sent additional troops into the Tamil homeland in large numbers, backed by racist monks and settlers from the south leading to a change in the geopolitical landscape. With these multiple changes in place, we also see the limiting of memorialisation events across the Tamil homeland by the state. Relevant to September, a court-ordered ban was filed on 17.09.2020, to prevent Thileepan Anna's memorial event to take place. Days prior on 15.09.2020, decorative arrangements around Thileepan Anna's SL state desecrated memorial was, once again removed. Yet, these blatant acts of violence are justified by the genocidal state, thus determined to be valid and appropriate under the SL state's understanding of relative peace in the social sphere.

Maintenance of Relative Peace

Both spaces could be described as maintaining relative peace. So, what is the difference?

Yes, it is true that both spaces could be considered to hold relative peace yet, at the same time one can argue that this can also be false. If we look at relative peace from a utilitarian perspective offered by Bentham and Mills in addition through a geopolitical lens. We can determine that relative peace applies when there are social and equitable prospects in place that offer the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people of said social sphere. Within Tamil Eelam, this was deemed applicable, where the fight was to liberate the people from the bounds of SL governance.

This liberatory goal was achieved to the fullest degree where the Tamil people and other settler communities were able to inhabit the Tamil homeland in relative peace. Where other communities were not prohibited from wholly living their most authentic lives. Further, one of Hon. V. Prabhakaran's guiding principle was: do no harm to the Sinhalese people, the fight is with the SL state and its chauvinistic ideals.

However, within SL occupied Tamil Eelam, the greatest good for the greatest number of people renders Tamils and other marginalised communities unable to access the benefits of social care. In this context the utilitarian perspective is only applicable from a governmental standpoint and applies to the whole of the island. Therefore, by unfortunate default absorbing Tamil Eelam within it. Thus, these benefits are applied on a

charity basis where visible desperation must be present in order for social care to be appropriate.

Even under these circumstances, it is rare that Tamils receive aid from the state without strings attached. Thus, relative peace is achieved through a majoritarian perspective that encompasses Tamil Eelam within the island of Sri Lanka. Under these pretexts, the state and those who reap the benefits are often those from the ruling ethnic society. Therefore, rendering the issues of marginalised communities on the ground invisible and invalid.

Delirium of Peace

Countless acts of violence are ongoing within the occupied Tamil homeland, particularly as it relates to post armed conflict issues. Majority of these ongoing acts of violence coincide with the genocidal states' failure to, once again appropriately respond to concerns brought forth by the Tamil People. Although these acts of violence are readily being imposed by the SL state, it uses diplomatic language to invalidate the concerns of the Tamil People.

The same diplomatic language has been used since the end of the armed conflict in 2009, to push a victor narrative. A narrative that projects ideas of grandeur accomplishments without a critical unpacking of the accuracy of events during times of armed conflict and following. This same narrative is utilised when promoting a relative peace framework to the larger public and the global world. The use of this language and the term 'relative peace' affirms to a certain degree the type of peace any post armed conflict utopian state should have. Yet, the realities on the ground for Tamils vastly differ.

As tourist flock to the genocidal paradise; Tamils across occupied Tamil Eelam come face to face with genocide every day. These SL state directed violations of human rights and right to life come in the form of:

- ◆ Land Occupation by SL State and SL Forces
- ◆ Sinhala Settlements aided SL State, SL Forces and Sinhala Monks
- ◆ Establishment of Tourist Destinations by SL State and SL Forces
- ◆ Buddhisisation by SL State, SL Forces and Sinhala Monks
- ◆ Drug Trafficking by SL State and SL Forces
- ◆ Establishment of SL War Monuments
- ◆ Prevention of Tamil Memorialisation Events
- ◆ Destruction of Tamil War Memorials
- ◆ Prevention of Tamil Employment Opportunities
- ◆ Prevention of Tamils returning to their lands
- ◆ Avoiding Tamils calls to justice and accountability
- ◆ Avoiding concerns brought forth by Families of the Disappeared

This relative peace language has allowed for the genocidal Sri Lankan state to continue to advance on the global front.

Leaving behind a community of people deprived of their right to heal, their right to exist and their right to be included without adopting a unitary racist identity. The same identity that saw to the bloodshed of Tamils. It is undeniable that we as people have suffered immense losses. It is also undeniable that we continue our fight, our resistance and remain resilient against the genocide imposed on us by the slaughterhouse known as Sri Lanka.

Military News

01.09.2020: **Russia** – According to SL's navy media unit, 3 Russian ships had arrived at Hambantota port as a pit stop, reports Colombo Gazette. It was reported that the 2 anti-submarine ships, Admiral "Tribuc" and Admiral "Vinogradov" as well as a maritime tanker, "Boris Butoma" had arrived.

01.09.2020: **US Report** – In the Annual US Report to Congress on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China, the US have stipulated that China's PRC may develop bases across the following countries for PLA military logistics facilities:

- ♦ Sri Lanka
- ♦ Myanmar
- ♦ Thailand
- ♦ Singapore
- ♦ Indonesia
- ♦ Pakistan
- ♦ UAE
- ♦ Kenya
- ♦ Seychelles
- ♦ Tanzania

- ♦ Angola
- ♦ Tajikistan

02.09.2020: **Navy** - According to navy.lk, the Ambassador for the Republic of Turkey in Sri Lanka paid a courtesy call on the Commander of the SL Navy at the Navy Headquarters.

08.09.2020: **Explosives** - According to navy.lk, several explosive items were found during a special naval operation at Udayarkattu in Mullaitivu and at Kahalla in Katugasthota (a sand mining site of Mahaweli River).

12.09.2020: **Uniform** – The elite forces of the SLA Commando Regiment and their Special Forces had developed the first digitalised and 4-colour camouflage uniform for elite and prestigious troops, reports Newswire.lk. It is noteworthy that this uniform has infrared (IR) technology affixed to the uniform to assist in their operations. The IR patches are supposedly attached to each shoulder pocket and is to be used for Identification of Friend or Foe during

night operations. It was reported that similar techniques are used by the US and UK military.



A new digitised uniform released for elite SL officers.
Source: Newswire LK

16.09.2020: **Mullivaikkal** - According to navy.lk, during a special search conducted in Mullivaikkal, Mullaitivu on 15.09.2020, the SL navy had managed to recover an assortment of explosive items from a private development site. It is suspected that these items had been left behind by the LTTE in 2009.

09.09.2020: **Security** - SL's State Minister of Fisheries, Kanchana Wijesekera had mentioned in SL parliament that poaching by Indian fishermen had increased in SL waters and thus he had discussed the strengthening of security in the Northern seas to prevent poaching, reports Colombo Gazette.

14.09.2020: **Appointment** - According to Colombo Gazette, Gotabaya had appointed SL's Rear Admiral Kapila Samaraweera as the Chief of Staff of the SK Navy with effect from 12.09.2020. It was further reported that Rear Admiral Ulugetenne had officially presented the letter of appointment to Samaraweera on 14.09.2020.

24.09.2020: **Naval fleet** - Two Japanese Naval fleets arrive at Sri Lanka's Colombo port on 23.09.2020 on two- day visit according to Sri Lanka Navy Media Unit reports Colombo Page. The two ships are scheduled to conduct naval exercises on 24.09.2020 with the Sri Lanka Navy before leaving the island.

24.09.2020: **Mali** - According to army.lk, SL UN Peacekeepers in Mali received new recovery vehicle and 3 containers (65 vehicles are serving the Mali Combat Squadron) which are currently undergoing trials of acclimatisation in Mali after shipping agents unloaded them and took them to the MINUSMA HQ,

25.09.2020: **Arrest orders** - Colombo Gazette reported that Mahindha has instructed the SL Navy to arrest Indian fishermen in SL waters in a meeting held between Ministers, official and Sri Lankan fishermen's associations. Mahindha cited that Northern fishermen had raised concerns regarding the impacts on their livelihoods in the North according to a statement by the PM's Office.

29.09.2020: **Arrest** - According to Colombo Page, the SL Navy and occupying police had apprehended a 52-year-old following a special search operation at Irukkulampiddi, Mannar on 28.09.2020. The man was said to have 952kg of dried turmeric which was said to be smuggled into the country by sea route - the investigation is ongoing.

25.09.2020: **Japan** - According to navy.lk, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) ships arrived in SL on 23.09.2020 for a combined naval exercise carried out that lasted a day with the SL Navy.

There was an exchange of knowledge and experiences of the two navies, while

enhancing mutual cooperation between the two countries.

Domestic News

Sri Lanka

03.09.2020: **20th Amendment** - According to Daily Mirror, SL's Government Printers Department had issued the Gazette of the 20th Amendment to the Constitution. According to Daily Mirror, six petitions were filed challenging it. Reports indicate that SL's opposition had requested a referendum to be approved in SL parliament with a two-thirds majority. The SL Supreme Court is reported to hear the petitions against the 20th Amendment, reports Colombo Page. The 39 petitions against the Bill with an additional 21 petitions filed on **28.09.2020** will be considered before a five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya. It was further reported on 29.09.2020 that the SLFP had appointed a ten-member committee to study the draft of the Amendment. Colombo Page reported following this study recommendations and proposals of the committee would be handed over to Mahindha to review the Bill further. SL's Former Speaker Karu Jayasuriya was also reported to have led a campaign to protect democracy in SL titled "The Nation Movement for Social Justice (NMSJ)". The primary goal of the campaign is to raise awareness on the harm of the 20th Amendment on Sri Lanka's democracy, reports Colombo Gazette.

03.09.2020: **Easter Sunday Attacks** – According to Colombo Gazette, Pillaiyaan had appeared before SL's Police unit of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry on the Easter Sunday Attacks to record a statement and was questioned.

08.09.2020: **Appointment** – Convicted for murder committed during the 2015 SL Presidential Elections, Premlal Jayasekara had been excused of his crimes and been brought to SL Parliament to attend parliamentary sittings, reports Colombo Gazette. It was further reported that the SJB had worn black scarves in retaliation and a few SJB members had worked out of SL parliament in protest.

14.09.2020: **Recruitment** - Fifty thousand graduates recruited for government jobs will commence their army orientation training programme. It will take place in SL Army centres including, Security Force HQs, Regimental HQs and training schools, upon guidance given by Shavendra Silva, reports Sunday Times LK.

14.09.2020: **Appointment** – According to SL's PMD, Gotabaya had appointed 12 new High Court Judges, reports Colombo Gazette.

21.09.2020: **Indictment** - According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Bribery Commission filed indictments against

Former Finance Minister Ravi Karunayake and Perpetual Treasuries Limited beneficiary owner Arjun Aloysius. Both have been accused in the Central Bank treasury bond scam as reported by Colombo Gazette on 03.03.2020.

21.09.2020: **Corruption** - Transparency International Sri Lanka's Executive Director Asoka Obeyesekere raises concerns over impact of police corruption on public trust. He noted the interference of political authorities and the undermining impartiality and credibility of investigations, reports Colombo Gazette.

22.09.2020: **Harassment** - Controversial Monk Venerable Ampitye Sumanarathana Thero threatened officials of the Department of Archaeology in Chenkalady on 21.09.2020 with regards to delays in demarcation of land. Video footage by media personnel show the monk squeezing the neck of the official and later seen being pushed and slapped according to the Colombo Gazette.



A monk pictured harassing officials.
Source: Colombo Gazette

22.09.2020: **Worship** - Historic Katargamam Temple gets new Basnayake Nilame. Dishan

Wickramaratne Gunasekara was unanimously elected to the post following elections reported Colombo Gazette.

22.09.2020: **Easter attacks** - Former SL President Maithripala Sirisena attended a hearing conducted by the Presidential Commission reported Colombo Gazette. On 19.09.2020 it was reported that Sirisena has been accused of offering a bribe to Inspector General of Police Pujith Jayasundara (now suspended) if responsibility was taken for the attacks according to Colombo Gazette.

22.09.2020: **Appointment** - Colombo Gazette reported, in a signed letter by Gotabaya, that Pillayan was formally appointed as the Batticaloa District Coordinating Committee (DCC) Co-Chairman during Parliament. The DCC is responsible for monitoring development activities of State institutions and NGOs at a district level.

22.09.2020: **Development** - Chamal Rakapaksa, Minister of Irrigation paid an emergency visit to observe the development work in the lower valley of the Uma Oya project on 21.09.2020, reports Colombo Page. Discussions occurred with regards to the project and there is a tentative completion date of March 2021 accordingly.

22.09.2020: **SL Parliament** - Mr. Chandrakanthan, the assassin of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Joseph Pararajasingham was elected to parliament although he has been imprisoned for over five years, Sunday Times reports.

23.09.2020: **Easter attacks** – SL's CID informed Colombo Magistrate's Court of the completion of investigation into the Easter Attacks. The findings have been directed to SL's Attorney General Dappula de Livera for further input reports Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page.

25.09.2020: **Gotabaya visit** - Colombo Page reported following Gotabaya's visit to Haldummulla, Badulla on 25.09.2020 that he had announced that all communal concerns raised in a verbal manner are required to be addressed and implemented. He was further reported to have stated that a failure to implement such remedies will result in firm action towards government officials.

29.09.2020: **Landmine treaty** - The GoSL announced the drafting of laws to enforce the anti-personnel landmine treaty, reported Colombo Gazette. SL Cabinet co-spokesman Udaya Gammanpila told reporters approval has been received to draft the laws citing the delay in signing onto the Ottawa Treaty in 18.09.1997 was a result of the ongoing war in the country and the LTTE's use of anti-personnel landmines during the war which resulted in the SL Army's

need to counter the threat. The Colombo Gazette noted the treaty was signed and ready to be enforced by law.

28.09.2020: **TNA** - R. Sampanthan had suddenly fallen ill leaving the party temporarily suspended, reports Colombo Page. Temporary leadership of the party had been handed over to MP Mavai Senathirajah until Sampanthan's recovery.

28.09.2020: **Royal Park murder** - The Supreme Court has been reported to hear the petition against the impending presidential pardon of Jude Shramantha Anthony Jayamaha on 19.01.2021, reports Colombo Page. The pardon made of Jayamaha by Sirisena was deemed unconstitutional by the Women's Media Association who subsequently started the petition.

30.09.2020: **Protest** - SJB has set 05.10.2020 as the day of protest against the 20th Amendment to the Constitution reports Colombo Page. Subsequently a massive protest will be undertaken on 08.10.2020 at Hyde Park according to the SJB's General Secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara.

Economic News

01.09.2020: **Infrastructure** – According to SL's President's Office, the GoSL had decided to rehabilitate all roads within Gotabaya's tenure as SL's president over

the next 4 years, reports Colombo Gazette.

02.09.2020: **India** – The High Commissioner of India to SL presented SL's Minister for Power with an offer from India to Sri Lanka worth USD 100 million for 3 solar projects, reports Colombo Gazette. According to reports, the decision was announced during the International Solar Alliance Founding Conference from March 2018 which was held in New Delhi.

03.09.2020: **MT New Diamond** - According to Sunday Times, MT New Diamond crude oil tanker was sailing 38 nautical miles off Sangamankanda Point when it caught fire with an explosion in a boiler in the ship's main engine room. It was reported that the SL navy, SLAFF, SLPA and Indian Defence forces were engaged in putting the fire out to "preserve the marine biodiversity." Owners of crude oil tanker MT New Diamond agree to settle fully to the interim claim of Rs. 340 million. An additional claim was submitted by AG Dappula de Livera according to the Coordinating Secretary to the AG State Counsel Nishara Jayaratne Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page reported on 24.09.2020.

15.09.2020: **Central Expressway** – According to the Chinese Embassy in Colombo, the first stage of construction for the Central Expressway had commenced within the Kadawatha to Meerigama section, reports Colombo Gazette.

21.09.2020: **Pakistan** - The High Commission of Pakistan in Colombo held an inaugural virtual business forum with Sri Lanka Export Development Board to bring attention to trade and investment

opportunities on 18.09.2020. Identified sectors of exports by Pakistan to Sri Lanka included Portland cement, textile products, Basmati rice, pharmaceuticals, iron and steel products among other goods, reports Colombo Page.

22.09.2020: **Digitalisation** - According to Colombo Page, a MoU with SL's Commissioner General, Department for Registration of Persons was agreed upon between the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka and the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE). This will allow for the CSE and Central Depository Systems to obtain digital verification of the National Identity Card (NIC) details available when a person opens a CDS account via CSE app. Mahindha was reported to have launched an initiative to digitise the end-to-end operations of the SL Stock Market on 17.09.2020.

23.09.2020: **Coconuts** - Arundika Fernando, SL's State Minister of Coconut, Kitul, Palm and Rubber Cultivation Promotion and Allied Industrial Products Production and Export Diversification announced in a media briefing on 22.09.2020 that the GoSL had ruled on controlling the price of coconuts in the future and set a maximum retail price of LKR 70 per coconut. According to Colombo Page, the minister stated action will be taken to enforce laws against those who do not sell coconuts at prices set by GoSL.

24.09.2020: **Financing** - Attorney General Dappula de Livera's advice was sought by AG State Counsel Nisharra Jayaratne regarding crime, money laundering and terrorist financing. Colombo Gazette reports an action plan

was decided upon against these proceeds.

24.09.2020: **USA** - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was donated to Sri Lanka's Minister of Health Pavithra Wanniarachchi by Teplitz. Donations included masks, nitrile gloves, isolations gowns with hoods, infrared thermometers and portable oxygen concentrators worth a total value of USD 191,000, report Colombo Gazette and Colombo Page

27.09.2020: **Counter terrorism** - Delhi and Colombo have engaged in establishing a counter-terror framework that has resulted in the enhancement of Intelligence on the high seas, reports Colombo Gazette. India plans to offer a \$50 million Line of Credit to SL's defence sector as the two nations expand defence and security partnerships.

29.09.2020: **Indian aid** - Sri Lanka's Media Minister Keheliya Rambukwella said there is no connection between the relief and assistance provided by India to Sri Lanka and the 13th amendments to the Constitution in a media briefing held at the Government Information Department on 28.09.2020. Rambukwella shared that Mahindha noted the responsibility and mandate of Sri Lanka to serve all races equally to work in unity and cooperatively reports Colombo Page.

29.09.2020: **Oil tanks** - Sri Lanka's Cabinet Co-Spokesman Udaya Gammanpila announced India has offered positive

response regarding reclamation of 101 British oil tanks from 1944 located in Trincomalee. Of these oil tanks 99 are in a usable state, this is the first time India reached an agreement regarding the Trincomalee Petroleum Farm since the initial agreement in 1987 following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, reports Colombo Gazette.

30.09.2020: **Foreign employment** - Piyankara Jayaratne, SL State Minister for Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification says that steps will be taken to assess eligibility for approving the family background report required for women who apply for employment during workshop held in Puttalam District Secretariat to educate the Development Officers of his Ministry. These steps aim to enhance the application process to meet the Sri Lankan states "Vision of Prosperity" policy, reports Colombo Page.

30.09.2020: **Inflation** - Inflation in SL is currently 4%. SL is putting a lot of money into circulation, which is causing stock prices to rise, Economy Next reports.



Coconut Meme
Source: Puradsi Media

News about Oppression & Resistance

15.09.2020: **Detention** – According to SL's Police Media Unit, Sivajilingam was detained in Kopay for erecting a banner in memory of Lt. Col. Thileepan, reports Colombo Gazette. He was later released on bail on 16.09.2020 on two sureties of LKR 200,000 each by the Jaffna Magistrate Peter Paul, reports Daily Mirror.

25.09.2020: **Body** - Body of Sinnathambi Nesamma, a Tamil 75-year-old mother of two was found washed ashore in Kalmunai. Relatives identified the body of the deceased and investigations are underway, reports Colombo Gazette.

25.09.2020: **Commemoration** - During the commemoration of Lt. Col. Thileepan, clashes broke out in Jaffna University between the students and occupational police. After the intervention of the university administration, the students were allowed to leave the premises. In response, the parties call on Gotabaya to allow commemoration ceremonies and emphasised that Tamil-speaking people have the right to mourn their dead, Sunday Times reports.

26.09.2020: **Thileepan** - According to Colombo Gazette, Tamils along with Tamil political parties staged protests across occupied Tamil Eelam against the SL government's court order against commemorating Lt. Col. Thileepan.

26.09.2020: **Commemoration** – Lt. Col. Thileepan was commemorated across the occupied Tamil homeland. It is noteworthy that Jaffna university students had knelt before a monument on campus grounds.

28.09.2020: **Protest** - According to Daily Mirror, Tamils staged a hartal in protest to the ban issued by the Northern Provincial courts banning the commemoration of Lt. Col. Thileepan. The shop owners in; Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar put up shutters and closed businesses for the day. All shops, schools and privately-owned buses were closed leaving pharmacies, restaurants and SLTB buses in operation. The hartal was initiated following the SL government's injunction against commemorating the death anniversary of Lt. Col. Thileepan, reports Colombo Page.



Tamil politicians pictured protesting to commemorate Lt. Col. Thileepan. Source: Colombo Gazette

Signs of Structural Genocide

12.09.2020: **Lt. Col. Thileepan** – In response to a hunger strike commenced by SL's high-level criminals at Boosa High Security Prison, Kamal Gunaratne had mentioned that all hunger strikes in Sri Lanka had been stopped within their early stages in the country where only Lt. Col. Thileepan's had proceeded to death due to his illnesses, reported defence.lk. Such delegitimation of the legacy of Lt. Col. Thileepan has a tendency to be a sign of structural genocide in regard to destructing the distinct history of Tamil resistance.



Occupational police seen during Hartal in the Tamil homeland following states restriction of memorialization for Lt. Col. Thileepan.

Source: Kumanan

29.09.2020: **Reconciliation** – According to Army.lk, SL's 51 Division HQ of the Security Force HQ-Jaffna had opened a "Harmony" Centre for the benefit of local youth in Kopay. The centre was reported to be funded by Mr. Vamadeva Thiyagendran who is the founder of the "Thiyahie Charitable Trust" and a key individual in fostering civil-military cooperation within the occupied Tamil homeland. This utility centre claims to provide locals with skill-building opportunities to foster reconciliation in the area. As a result, this is a reflection of SL's genocidal ideology of militarisation through which Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) tactics are used to normalise the military state apparatus amongst the population through civil-military cooperation and this cause a communal shift of psyche from one of distrust to trust.



A "Harmony Centre" was unveiled in Kopay with the financial assistance of the "Thiyahie Charitable Trust" to encourage civil-military cooperation.
Source: Army LK

Akkinip Paravaikal

The service is provided by:

Akkinip Paravaikal Newsletter

Overseen by Puradsi Media - the media outlet of
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Facebook page created: 29.02.2016
Puradsi Media's first article: 04.01.2017