
The widely advertised ‘war for peace’ came to an end came to an end more than three years ago. Yet the fruits of this peace are yet to be enjoyed by the people in the North, who were most affected mentally, physically and economically. This reality is verified by the day to day events which are taking place here. The hop for a real peace is declining day by day. The Commission for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Diocese of Jaffna feels that it is its historic duty to point out this in order that a way may open to establish a just, democratic and peaceful community in Sri Lanka.

Widening of streets, laying carpet roads, construction of new bridges, initiating the railway-track works, starting new banks, shopping complexes, hotel facilities, renovation and modernization of parks, etc. give an appearance to a visitor or a foreign dignitary that the North is developing at a rapid speed after the prolonged ‘war’. But all these factors cannot substitute a fearless, free, just and free society here.

According to the reports given by the Sri Lankan Government to the outside world and the international leaders and their representatives only a few thousands of displaced persons who are still in the camps have yet to be resettled of the 300,000 people who were evacuated from the war-ravaged Wanni area and the resettled people have been given the facilities of decent housing and means to restart their lives. The balance three to five thousands of people still in the camps will be resettled in a matter of two to three months and will be provided with all the facilities according to the Government sources. The Government says that 95% of the displaced persons have been resettled already. But the UN reports say that in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar 117,888 persons are yet to be resettled permanently. Of these there are 18,589 persons are in Vavuniya, 4,928 are in Mannar and 94,371 are in Jaffna. A substantial number of these people are living with their friends and relatives. In short the real picture is substantially different what is reported officially by the Government. It is also reported that the people on the whole are living with full freedom and are able to do whatever work they had been doing before the war without any restriction. But the ground reality is far from it.

We would like to point out certain developments to show how the day to day free and fearless life of the ordinary people has been affected. We can cite certain concrete instances to give credibility to our observations. Though this is neither an exhaustive report nor the instances cited give full details, this sufficient to indicate to reasonable level that the peace the people hoped for is a reality which is very far away.

The Plight of the Resettled People
Taking into consideration the resettled people whom the Government claims as 95% of the total displaced, the conditions of substantial number of them are far from satisfactory. Some villages and fertile lucrative lands of these people have already been taken over for their usage by the security forces to establish permanent camps and naval bases. When it came to the resettlement, the displaced people after undergoing immense inconveniences in temporary shelters for years have been forced to go to areas shown by the Government which are not in any way helpful to continue with their former work and find their livelihood.

Recently the original inhabitants of Thirumurikandy who had been sheltered in the ‘Menik Farm’ for the past three years, were taken back to their former place. They had dismantled their temporary shelters collected all their belongings at great cost and came with the hope
that they will be resettled in their former places of residence. They were disappointed when many of them were asked to be in some other places other than their former residential areas and they protested. Without any consideration for their plight they were put in buses and taken back to ‘Menik Farm’ that night itself. Now they are in a dilemma with no infrastructure to remain at ‘Menik Farm’ with no relief materials etc. Of late, some of these people haven resettled but their problem is far from over.

The plight of the displaced people from Mullikulam in the Mannar district is also disturbing. Some years ago they were asked to leave their homes with the assurance that they would be allowed to come back shortly. Hence they left their homes only with few of their belongings. But even after many years they were not allowed to get back and they were living temporarily in several part of Mannar without proper work and with little assistance to find their livelihood. Now they are allowed to get back to their villages. When they went they were not allowed to occupy their houses. Hence they had to find shelter under trees in the elephant-infested jungles. Their uncertain journey back home continues.

The people who were displaced from Vadamaradchy East were resettled some two years back with lot of promises. Still they are not provided with the basic amenities. The people thus resettled from Kudaththanai, Mamunai, Thalayaddy etc. who were fishermen complain that they have not many of the basic facilities promised to them. The NGOs who are willing to give them some relief are obstructed from doing so due to political reasons. The ‘pass system’ for fishing affects them also. When they see the fishermen from the South fishing in the sea in their vicinity they are not able to venture into the sea freely to earn their livelihood. They spelt out their grievances to the visiting TNA, MP Mr. Vynayagamoorthy and told him that they are afraid to speak out as they are surrounded by the army and navy whose heavy presence and interference affects their day to day life.

Military rule
The entire North is under military rule today. The most powerful ruling authority in the North, the Governor is an ex-military man. The G.A. and the civil authorities in all the departments are bound to implement his decisions. Here are some concrete instances to show how the military rule in the North is carried on:

- Girls in a leading school in Jaffna staged a protest few months ago against a senior official in the Department of education whose office is in the premises of that school. This official who is notorious for his overbearing character claims that he has connections with the high-ups in all levels and nobody can oust him. The Governor on hearing of this protest summoned five head-girls of the school and questioned them of the incident. The girls had to ask pardon for the behavior of the girls before coming back to the school. Such incidents should have been investigated in the school-level and settled before going further. This kind of action by the Governor is unprecedented anywhere here.

- The local military authorities in the North insist that prior permission has to be got from the military authorities before any public or even family function. This includes funerals and even celebrations of attainment of puberty. This unwritten law is strictly enforced in Wanni. Sometimes we see in Jaffna also some army camps enforce this ‘law’. Some six months back went to a funeral house in Chapel Street and pulled up the main householder for not notifying them of the funeral.
Even in religious ceremonies and functions in Churches and Temples we can find undue interference of the military. Last year the Heroes’ day of the LTTE fell on a Sunday (Nov.27th). On Sundays the Catholics have an obligation to go to Church and participate in Mass. On that day we can observe that in the Churches where Masses are celebrated bells are rung to get the masses in time for Mass. In view of the Heroes’ Day the soldiers went to many Churches and ordered the priests or the people in charge of ringing the bell not to ring the bells. In one Church in Chavacaccheri where there used to be an evening Mass, the soldiers went in and prevented the officiating priest from lighting the candles for the Mass. Unfortunately there was no electricity also at that time and it was getting dark. The priest had to engage in an argument with them to get the permission to light the candles.

The incidents of ordinary people being attacked by the army for no rhyme or reason are not rare occurrences in the North. Few weeks ago at Vyaparimoolai in Point Pedro there were some civilians standing at night during the festival in a Temple close by. Some soldiers who happened to pass-by attacked these people without any provocation whatsoever. When these people went to the Police-Station to lodge a complaint, the police refused to take down any complaint. Then the people concerned went again to the Police-Station with the TNA MP, Mr. Vynayagamoorthy and only after a prolonged argument the complaint was taken down. In another instance a few months ago there was a minor accident in the Paranthan junction in the A-9 high-way between a vehicle belonging to a Sinhalese and the other belonging to a Tamil. Then there was a heated exchange of words between the passengers of both vehicles as well as their drivers. Then the army who came that way beat the driver and the cleaner of the vehicle belonging to the Tamil without any inquiry or questioning. In fact it is the function of the Police to have an inquiry and file a case against the guilty if necessary and the Police Station is not far away from there. This is not the only incident of similar nature in the A-9 high-way or in other places in Jaffna.

A lot of propaganda is given by the Government to the local and international media that there has been a substantial reduction of the number of soldiers in the North and vast areas occupied hitherto by the army have been vacated to enable resettlement of people displaced from there. But the ground reality is substantially different. Army presence and movement is very much there without any major change. In some places temporary army camps are converted into well-entrenched permanent bases. When some houses and lands here and there are given back to the owners with much propaganda, large areas of land and even village are cordoned off surreptitiously for ‘security reasons’. From Valikamam North alone people from 23 Grama Sevaka divisions are still not able to get back to their lands or houses. At Mathagal, Mandaithievu, Mannar, Sannar, Mullikulam, Muthur, Pothoseivil and some other places even new lands are cordoned off and the people are banned from entering these areas where they had been living for many generations. Some schools are still under occupation. There are also some moves to take over some institutions such as the prestigious Government Teachers Training College complex by the security forces. There is some confusion as to who is in charge of resettlement of displaced people. The day to day developments indicate that the powers the G.A. has in this regard are only nominal.

Another aspect of the military rule is the sidelining of the democratically elected TNA MPs from public functions and from any role in the development work in the North. These MPs are not invited for any consultative meeting in development though they are the majority MPs in the North. Inviting them for any public function is also discouraged.
Some time back there was big function at Pallai Government MMV and in that a Souvenir was to be released. In view of the all the printed copies were brought from the press and stacked in the School and were ready for release. At the eleventh hour the Souvenir release was cancelled as ordered by ‘high authorities’ because there was a felicitative message given by the local TNA MP. In another instance there was a School function at Veravil in Wanni and a TNA MP Mr. Sretharan has been invited as a Special Guest according to the invitation card. On account of this, this function was also had to be ‘postponed’.

- On the 26th of July, 2012 the second semester examinations were in progress in the Government School and the security forces came in and interrupted the examinations and took the children in buses to Thunukkai for a sports festival. The school authorities are not able to do anything with regard to this kind of interference in the school activities of the children.

**Destruction of War-cemeteries, Prohibition of Prayer-Services for the War-victims**

In a war the accepted international norm which is followed is that the winners show respect to the cemetery of the losers. Before the end of the war there had been many war-cemeteries in the North, which used to be well-maintained. Even during the ceasefire time (from 2002 to 2006) the militants were allowed to maintain them and the people used to frequent these places to remember their dead and to pray for them. Once the war was over, all these cemeteries were bulldozed without any trace and in some places new buildings and even army-camps have been established. The security forces are also very vigilant in preventing any prayer-service or function to remembrance of not only the dead militants but also the civilians. On the first anniversary of the proclamation of the end of the war, a multi-Religious prayer service was organized at Nallur to commemorate all the victims of war. It is to be remembered that it was a time when the Government held the position vehemently that there was zero casualty in the ‘war for peace’. After this peaceful religious event Fr. Jeyasekaram, a Catholic Priest belonging to the Diocese of Jaffna who was one of the organizers of the aforesaid prayer-service was interrogated and warned. Few days afterwards, when he had to go to Colombo to attend some personal work again he was called and questioned and his NIC had been confiscated and hitherto not returned.

**Burglaries, Robberies, Murders etc-Daily routine Events**

Every day we read in the dailies and hear of burglaries, robberies and murders and other violent incidents in the North which is something unprecedented. Most of those who carry out these are masked or wear full-helmets and have in their possession weapons which are used by the army and the armed-groups aligned to the government. Their pattern is somewhat same such as holding somebody in ransom at gun-point and they take their own time and collect whatever valuables before leaving. We also can observe the army posted all over and the police patrolling the streets even at nights. It is surprising that these robbers are able elude all these vigilant watches. In the course of these robberies those who have resisted have been murdered. The LLRC in one of its recommendations stated that the armed groups who are with the Government should be disarmed. This has not happened as it is evident from the liberal use of these sophisticated weapons during the robberies etc.

**Buddhistsation of the North**

Once the war with the LTTE was won by the Government and the A-9 road was opened for the normal traffic a full-scale Buddhistization of the North is underway. First huge statues of Buddha and Dagobas were erected either in or near the army camps with full participation of the security forces. Some of these were erected near permanent Hindu Temples which had
been there for centuries. To the total dismay of the Hindus and against their religious sentiments, in some places the already existing Hindu Temples were brought down and in those places Buddhist worship sites are established as in Chavachachcheri and Kilinochchi. At Thiruketheeswaram village which has a very ancient Hindu Temple and at Murunkan near the existing Hindu Temple, statues of Buddha have been erected. In the A.9 road we can observe many such new Buddhist worship sites with the statues of Buddha and Dagobas. There is one Dagoba built anew at Mankulam. At Mirusuvil we can find now a new statue of Buddha almost a few yards away from the existing statue of the Catholics, (a statue of St. Mary). Unlike in the South where there are a substantial number of Hindus, Moslems and Christians and their respective Temples, Mosques and Churches besides the majority Buddhists, in the North the number of Buddhist civilians is negligible. Buddhism is present in the presence of the security forces and the visiting people from the South. It is true that there had already been some well-established places of Buddhist places of worship for many years such as Nainativu, Jaffna Town, Mathakal and Kilinochchi. Attempts to put up statues of Buddha at every nook and corner do not help to win the hearts of the people of Jaffna who are specially known for their religious sentiments. In some places like Mathakal at the expense of expanding existing Buddhist site the people who had been living close by owning lands are remove by force and asked to find some other place. They are also not allowed to go for fishing from the nearby sea. The people see in this kind of development a move to colonize the Sinhalese as the slogan of the Government is Sri Lanka is for all and anybody can live anywhere. Already, settlements are underway in the regions of Nedunkerny and Manal-Aru which is given now a Sinhalese name Weli-Oya. The Tamils who had been living there for generations are ejected from there and their paddy-fields to give place to the settlers from the South. What the people resent is the state-sponsored settlements. People won’t object to any body buying a land or house and living here as it happened many years ago.

**Terror Tactics- Threatening with Guns, Waste-oil etc.**

Human Rights activists, outspoken persons of justice and those who point out corruption and abuse of power in high levels are threatened by various means including death threats.

Two years ago a body of Religious Dignitaries from the South representing all the major Religions in Sri Lanka came to Jaffna on a fact-finding mission. In a meeting between them and a cross-section of the of the people in Jaffna including the clergy, Fr. Jeyakumar belonging to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Jaffna commented that the people now in Jaffna are generally afraid to express their views. When the news of this exchange of views in this meeting appeared in the papers the following morning some motorcycle-borne unidentified men went to his parish-house in Kayts asked for him and threw dirty water which they brought in some containers on Fr. Jeyakumar and disappeared. In the meantime the mobile phone of one of the assailants had dropped in the Church premises accidentally and it was handed over to the Kayts Police by Fr. Jeyakumar when he went there to lodge a complaint. Fr. Jeyakumar was told by the police that they would be able to trace the culprits as they have his mobile phone. Even after two years nothing has moved!

Some months back there was an another incident involving the opposition leader of the Jaffna Municipal Council, Mr.Vinthan who was threatened by some men riding close by on a motor-bike showing a pistol. The number of the motor-bike was noted down given to the police and promptly given to the police.

In another instance few months back in the Family Service Center (Ahavoli) there was a session to free legal aid to affected people due to war or any other Human Rights violations, conducted
by the Center for Peace and Reconciliation in collaboration with Human Right activist lawyers especially from the South. When the session was in progress there were a lot of deserving people gathered to seek legal assistance and suddenly there appeared some people whose faces were mostly covered and they threw waste-oil to the vehicles of the lawyers and at the people gathered there and disappeared.

At the moment is an investigation going on to probe into the corruption which had been going on for sometime in the Jaffna Government Hospital. Few weeks ago Dr. Jeyakumar who is in charge of the Cancer Unit and who had served with dedication to upgrade it, was targeted with this waste-oil treatment. He had a main role to play in bringing to light some of malpractices and abuses in the Hospital Administration involving heavy loss to the Government coffers. His house was attacked and waste engine-oil was thrown cause heavy damage especially to his books and valuable notes. The culprits as usual are still at large.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Mannar, Rt. Rev. Dr. Rayappu Joseph who is respected by the Catholics and non-Catholics alike for his genuine efforts to bring about justice, also is threatened. Bishop Joseph, in his evidence to the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) clearly stated that about 146,000 people are still not accounted for after the war on the basis on the statistics provided by the Government authorities and dates also have been given. It observation must have put the government in a predicament. It is very clear that the Bishop presented his findings were not conjectures but based on firm evidence taken from Government records. In spite of that coming to the Bishop’s House and having an inquiry is nothing but an act of intimidation. Adding to the a Cabinet Minister made a statement in the Parliament leveling some baseless accusation against the Bishop and the higher authorities remaining indifferent about is also a continuation of this intimidation.

Frustrated by the long delay and inaction in settling them down in their home-towns the residents of Valigamam North who had been ejected from there more that 20 years ago, a group of them, men and women with some their MPs went in buses to Tellipallai to lodge their protest to this land-grabbing in a non-violent manner and to resettle them in their own houses and villages. Again here the unidentified men appeared with waste-oil and splashed it to the buses and to the people. In a place where there is little civilian presence and in the midst a heavy army presence this has happened and the people were warned that if such protests take place in future worse thing would take place.

During the third week of July 2012, a non-violent protest was organized at Nelliady to stop the land-grabbing and seek justice for the torture and killing of Nimalaruban in the prison at Mahara. The Police tried to get a Court order in the Point Pedro courts to stop it. But the Judge after considering the pros and cons of the matter and being satisfied with the assurance given by the organizers of the protest allowed it to go on and asked the Police to give protection to ensure a peaceful demonstration in the bus-stand area of Nelliady. During the protest around the Bus-stand of Nelliady about 150 policemen were stationed there to ensure law and order. But, suddenly there appeared two motor-bikes with four men, heads fully covered with tinted-helmets, displayed to the clear view of everybody there including the policemen the flag of the LTTE, knocked down an old man and disappeared. The police just looked on. The people were stunned by the inaction of the police. Later the police have said if they get the number of the motor-bikes they can take action. Now the number noted down by somebody also has been given to the police and so far no action has been taken evidently. That night at about 2 a.m. two houses of the organizers of the protest were targeted, one at Nelliady and the other at Kudaththanai and in both houses waste-oil was thrown and window glasses were broken.
With regard to the above incidents, at least about three the police have been given definite clues sufficient enough to get the culprits, viz. the mobile-phone of one of the assailants of Fr. Jeyakumar and motorcycle numbers of the gun-men of Mr. Vinthan and the unidentified who hurled the LTTE flag during the protest at Nelliyady. If the police are not able to arrest the culprits even after such a long time it must be a sigh of either inefficiency of the police or some kind of restraints to their functioning by high authorities.

**Jobs and Privileges to only the Supporters of the Government**

If anybody wants a job or a favor done he or she has to be the supporter of the Government. Some months back hundreds of volunteer-teachers and jobless graduates were staging a protest campaign to manifest their plight. One of the Ministers who is from the North came to meet them and asked them first to which party they had supported in the last election (Local Government). Some replied that no proper candidate from the Party of the said Minister which is with the Government was in the fray for them to vote!

Lot of relief materials have been sent since the end of the war by the India and many other countries to be distributed to the most affected by the war. These materials are not distributed properly. There were among other things cycles, tractors, water pumps, fishing-gear, etc. which were distributed according to the lists prepared the ruling party people. In some places the people recommended after proper scrutiny through the normal means were ignored. At Vavuniya among the beneficiaries of tractors, there were some people belonging to the majority community who were not affected by the war and who live quite far away from where the war took place. In the district of Mannar, fishing- equipment worth about 350,000 Rs. each was to be distributed to the affected fishermen. Not all these equipment reached the proper destination. Some of the beneficiaries never went for fishing in their lifetime as they were no fishermen by profession!

**The Plight of the Fishermen in the North**

The fishermen in the North had hoped that after the war that they would be able go fishing without any restraints and that they would be able to get back to their former fishing-villages. Their hopes are far from being realized. Still there is the pass system as well as time limitation in some places. In spite of the assurance given by the Minister of Fisheries of not allowing anybody new from the South to the region of Mullaitheivu, other than those who were fishing there before the war, hundreds of new people are coming from the South. The security forces there are making all the arrangements for their stay and for fishing. These people are using the methods and the fishing gear which are not allowed in the North.

Myliddy used to be one of the best fishing ports in the Peninsula and more than four thousand fisher-families used to live in and around that area. Efforts are now underway not to allow those people to go there anymore and make that area into a high-security zone.

**Obstacles to the Judiciary System**

The judiciary had been giving some form of relief to the affected people. The developments in the recent past indicate that there are many obstacles for the free and fair functioning of the judiciary. Intimidation and pressurization have made inroads in to the judiciary also. Extraordinary (political) transfers of judges, prolongation of cases which need to be attended urgently indefinitely, keeping the suspects in custody for many years especially the political prisoners and those who had helped the LTTE and not giving information about them etc are some of the phenomena of this travesty of justice. ‘Justice delayed is justice denied’, is very relevant in this regard.
There is case of one lady named Tirumakal who is in prison for the past 16 years without any proper case filed against her. During these 16 years she has been taken to the Courts for 429 times! There are also four other men who are there who have been in prison as many years and taken to courts as many time as her! The despair gone through by the family members of these people especially if they were the only breadwinners of their respective families is appalling.

Two years ago there was a case in Chavacachcheri where a school-boy named Kapilnath was kidnapped and killed. The prime suspect happened to be a powerful man belonging to the EPDP Party which is aligned to the Government. As the evidence available was strong against the suspect he was remanded and the case was in progress. During those days some gunmen were sighted near the residence of the Judge at Pandianthalvu loitering about to give the message that the case should be dropped. As a precaution the police gave additional security to his residence. However, suddenly the Judge, Mr. Pirapakaran was transferred to Akkaraiapattu! Since then the case had not progressed and the accused has been given bail after sometime!

Earlier this year (2012) there was an incident of kidnap, rape and murder of a thirteen year old girl named Tharshini Jesuthasan at delft. The culprit an EPDP activist was caught and handed over to the police. Though the EPDP high command disclaims him as their present member, he still wields influence in that region and the islands where EPDP presence is heavy. He was still in a position to get a contract in a lucrative building work in the hospital in Kayts. Such contracts can be got only by the EPDP members or their close associates in the islands. Even after his being remanded the case does not seem to make much progress. The police do not seem to be very much interested in giving their full cooperation to the Courts in Kayts. Human Rights activists fear that this case also will be on hold indefinitely like the Kapilnath murder case.

On account of the permission given by the Judge of the Point Pedro Courts to have the protest meeting at Nelliady against the grabbing of civilians’ lands in the North and claim for justice for the murder of Nimalaruban in a prison in Colombo the residence of the judge was targeted. The day after the protest some unidentified persons threw some empty coconuts and some unspecified materials at the house of the Judge in Nelliady.

An outrageous incident of intimidating a Judge by a Minister in the Government took place in Mannar. Dissatisfied with the verdict in the Courts by the Judge Mr. Judson the Moslems of Mannar protested and went to the Courts of Mannar and pelted it with stones causing heavy damage. The police had no recourse to tear-gas attack as some policemen were also injured. More than 11 people were arrested. The Minister phoned up twice, once on the 17th and then on the 18th of July 2012 the Judge concerned and asked him to change the verdict and release the arrested as they were his men. Then the Judge was warned of severe consequences if he failed to do so. The Minister concerned also met the Secretary of the commission for Justice Mr. Manjula Thilakaratne to transfer the Judge immediately to which he replied that it was not the work of this Commission.

The Plight of the Forgotten Lot

To this category belong the thousands of political prisoners, those who were arrested for helping the LTTE in varying degrees, those who had surrendered during the final stages of the war with white flags, white-van victims, those who were taken by the security forces from their families for questioning and since then disappeared, those who were handed over to the security forces voluntarily by their family members fearing the failure to do so would have
dangerous consequences if they were found out to be in some way connected to the LTTE, the repatriated ex-LTTE members, etc. The situation of the Tamil prisoners in the prisons, detention and rehabilitation centers in the South is very precarious. This has been evident from the massacre of the Tamil prisoners twice in quick succession in the Welikada prison and then after some years in the Boosa rehabilitation center where there were many casualties. At other times also there had been attacks on Tamil prisoners even for the slightest provocation. The victim of the latest attack few weeks back was Nimalaruban. Culprits of these attacks have never been brought to books!

A good number of these unfortunate people are kept *incommunicado* and their family members do not know whether they are alive or not. At times the family members of such people come to know the whereabouts of these people only when they were beaten, wounded and hospitalized. In the recent hostage incident and the ensued violent rescue operation the Tamil prisoners were moved to Anuradhapura and then to Colombo. They were severely beaten and limbs broken and were not given any medical attention for long hours. In this incident only one of them died. Another one named Muththurasa Dilruckson from Jaffna is still in a coma stage. When his relatives went to see him being in coma stage after being beaten severely, his legs were tied by chains to the bed! He disappeared in Colombo in 2006 and his near-one did know what had happen to him. In fact he was arrested then and his family member had not been informed about it. Now after being beaten up with limbs broken and in coma stage, yet chained to his bed, his family members have access to see him! It is not the first time that prisoners who were in very serious condition were chained to the bed. It shocking that the medical professional ethics accepts to treat patients in coma stage while still in chains! The latest news we get is that the Bishop of Mannar, Rt. Rev. Dr. R. Joseph wanted to visit the prisoners especially four of them who are Catholics, who were injured in the series of attacks at Vavuniya, Anuradhapura and Mahara on humanitarian grounds and the prison authorities have denied him permission!

A recent disclosure by the second powerful man in Sri Lanka that the white-van takes in people who are guilty of serious offences and who need to be questioned. In Sri Lanka there seems to one normal judiciary system and another extra-judiciary which does not come under the normal procedure. The normal law-enforcing agency, the police do not seem to be aware of such arrests.

The move by the security forces are making arrangements to give death-certificates to the people who have disappeared is distressing. As the first step at Mullaitivu, the security forces there contacted the families whose members are missing due to the above reasons and are trying to get their signatures on bland white papers promising to give death certificates to the people who have disappeared. A substantial percentage of these disappeared people are those taken into custody by the security forces for questioning. In the LLRC sessions more than one person gave evidence that in their presence their family members (husbands) who were in the LTTE surrendered to the security forces with white flags along with Rev.Fr. Francis Joseph (now 81), the former Rector of St. Patrick’s College, Jaffna and since then unheard of. The Bishop of Jaffna who is his guardian as he belongs to the Jaffna Diocese has not been told about his whereabouts. Another priest from the Diocese of Jaffna, Fr. Jim Brown and his lay-helper who were sighted last in front of an army security post at Pannai causeway during the initial stages of the final war and since then disappeared. Will these people also be given death-certificates? 

What does it imply?

The repatriated ex-LTTE members who have been released in stages are under tremendous pressure. They want to live a quiet life with their families. Unfortunately they under constant
surveillance, asked to be informants, asked to work for the progress of the agenda of the Ruling Party etc. Recently some special group of men claiming to be from the CID went to the villages in Wanni on mo-bikes, rounded up the repatriated ex-LTTE men, took them to the respective buildings and questioned them again of their connections, in some cases assaulted them and warned them of serious consequences if any untoward incident happened and went back. Before leaving they had told them not report to anybody of this inquiry. In some cases the special ICs given to them by an NGO to show that they are repatriated ex-LTTE members to prevent them from being rearrested have been confiscated. They have complained to the local MPs that they live in constant fear.

**Conclusion**
The above mentioned developments and observations in the post-war scenario especially in the North Sri Lanka which bore the brunt of the war are like the tip of an ice-berg in presenting the real picture of what is going on. The external face-lift given to the North does not in any way correspond with the somber reality deep down in the heart of the people as they feel that they are not basically free to express themselves, their fundamental human rights not respected, inability to bring to justice those who do harm to them, not able find any redress when ejected from their traditional residence and land and above all inability to manifest their protest for the above and other unspecified violations even in a non-violent manner, indicate that things are volatile.

Interested in building up of a Society in Sri Lanka which enjoys peace with justice we would like give our observations and urge the authorities concerned to act firmly.

- The civil administration in the North should not be merely apparent but real. The Security forces should refrain from interfering with the day to day lives of the people as well as in the functioning of the different civil departments of administration especially education.

- Democratically elected MPs should be given proper role in development work and in consultation of the same. Attempts to lure opposition MPs into the Government giving favors should stop.

- Independence of the judiciary should be ensured. Intimidation, pressurization ad untimely transfers of judges should stop. The white-van arrest and the justification of it by the authorities indicate that there is another parallel form imparting justice which is not acceptable in a democracy. There had been instances of disappearance of people taken in by white-van and this cannot be justified under any circumstances.

- Freedom of expression, freedom to dissent from the point of view of the Government, freedom to protest non-violently to defend their basic rights should be respected.

- Safety and security of the Tamil prisoners especially in the prisons in the South should be ensured. The government has not taken any effective measures even after repeated attacks of violence unleashed on them since 1983.

- The government must admit that the minorities have their genuine grievances which need to be resolved justly. Failure to do so may lead to another cycle of violence.

- The thirty year old war and especially the developments during the last days of the war have left deep scars especially in the victims affected most by the war.
• The recommendations of the LLRC though not in itself addressing all the grievances of the affected, can be considered a starter in the direction of healing of wounds.

• Unfortunately the response of the Government to the recommendations of the LLRC is not very encouraging. Statements indicating that implementation will take years to complete will not help. The ground realities show the LLRC recommendations are ignored. Eg. Disarming of armed groups aligned to the government has not taken place, a mechanism to find out the fate of the disappeared people is not initiated, resettlement of people ejected from the high-security zones have not gone far enough etc.

• The Government authorities must show that the excesses and criminal activities will not go unpunished irrespective of who the perpetrators are. This has not happened so far. Eg. The killing of the four school boys in Trincomallee and the massacre of the French NGO, ‘Action Fame’ aid workers in 2006. The Commission of inquiry comprising of foreign experts, appointed to investigate could not proceed due to lack of support from the local authorities. This kind of attitude will not in any way be conducive to build up good will.

In short the need of the hour is to show some genuine signs to address the grievances of the affected people and to present a blueprint to find a solution to the prolonging ethnic problem.

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