

**Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka Project**  
**Quarterly Report (double issue)**  
**Volume 1, No 7-8, April-September 2006**

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## **General Situation in Sri Lanka**

### Overall

The period covered in this double Quarterly Report, from April to September 2006, was one that has been extremely challenging for anyone working towards reducing political violence in Sri Lanka. It is a period during which the main armed actors fought major battles; where civilians, aid workers and military personnel were killed and disappeared as if international human rights and humanitarian law did not exist; children and youth were forcibly recruited for arms training as if it were child's play; and displaced and evicted civilians showed up across the seas in Southern India as if there is already active war in Sri Lanka. (An international news report started off with the line, "No one talks peace while waging war better than the Sri Lanka' government and Tamil rebels", while some national media report of the same as "Eelam War IV".)

As described in the previous Quarterly Report, the Liberation Tigers (LTTE) has been tactically increasing its acts of violence against specific military targets to provoke the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to launch a full-scale war by annulling the cease fire agreement (CFA). The GoSL<sup>1</sup> too carried out what it called "defensive, limited operations targeting LTTE areas" while insisting the CFA still holds, and indiscriminately bombarded and shelled areas affecting civilian population.

According to some analysts such as DBS Jeyaraj, a tactic of the military to counter the pressure mounted by the LTTE to retaliate was to engage in targeted killings and disappearances of those whom it considered members or sympathizers of the LTTE. In other areas, it is alleged that the military actively assisted or tacitly consented to the Karuna Group (K-group) abducting children to be trained for armed combat, as reported by BBC and AP. The result of these terror tactics of all the armed actors was that civilians experienced violence differently from region to region. In the three conflict hotspot districts that the Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka (NPSL) works in, namely Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna, violence against civilians unfolded itself in different ways.

An unprecedented number of child abductions occurred in Batticaloa district during the reporting period, while in the neighbouring Trincomalee district there was intense aerial bombardments and non-stop shelling. In the somewhat distant Jaffna district, a plethora of disappearances and gruesome killings took place with only a few gaining media coverage. For NP Sri Lanka's Batticaloa district field staff this meant a pre-occupation with abductions and IDPs; for Trincomalee district field staff it was the flight and forced return of IDPs and continuous fighting; and for Jaffna, the focus was on disappearances and civilians fleeing due to all types of shortages.

The response of each NPSL field site to the situation on the ground is described in detail in the next section of this report. This is preceded below by a brief account of the macro-political situation in the country that is intertwined with the military and armed actions, as well as a timeline of landmark events that shaped the political-military ethos.

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<sup>1</sup> The term GoSL is at times used to indicate the Sri Lankan military forces, and these two terms are used interchangeably when describing military actions. When the term 'GoSL' is used in a non-military context, the government of Sri Lanka is meant.

Political Developments

The security situation deteriorated further in April 2006 following the two-and-a-half month breathing space between end-January and mid-April as a result of the talks in Geneva in February generating some hope for improvement. Since April, both the GoSL and LTTE hardened its position on issues, and the outcome of this can be characterized under the following themes.

***Hardening of positions and ‘on the brink of war’.*** With the increase in claymore mine attacks, assassinations, extrajudicial killings and other gross human rights violations, both sides continued to accuse each other, while at the same time emphasizing that they did not wish to cancel the CFA of February 2002. The attempt on the life of the Army Commander in May then led to a series of tit-for-tat violent actions, leading the country to a de facto undeclared war.

In the political realm, the dominant thought put forth by both sides was that they had already made too many concessions without any substantive positive responses from the other side. While the GoSL expressed its willingness to work towards an “honourable peace” on the basis of “maximum devolution within a unitary state”, the LTTE insisted that it no longer be addressed as a ‘non-state actor’. In result, the chances for meaningful talks remained rather slim although both parties generally expressed their willingness to negotiate. This is amply exemplified by the Norwegian facilitators’ failed efforts to bring the two parties together on the issue of the security of the SLMM at the beginning of June in Oslo.

***The International Community as villain, saviour and meddler.*** The more the parties move into a confrontational mode, the more outside actors are perceived in highly polarized roles. On the one hand, some international actors are perceived as co-responsible for prolonging the conflict through their sympathy or allegiance with one side. On the other, it is the International Community to whom the parties appeal to take on more responsibility, and to take sides. A statement by the Donor Co-chairs in May strongly urged the GoSL to make “dramatic political changes to bring about a new system of governance” “addressing the legitimate grievances of the Tamils”, which came in the wake of the European Union proscription of the LTTE as an identified “terrorist organization. Both these announcements were intended to send a strong message to both parties to do their utmost in containing violence including the implementation of the Geneva provisions. As the two parties in conflict stepped up their re-escalation of violence, international actors, particularly India and the USA, sent strong messages that the parties should not go back to war but rather move to a political settlement on the basis of a sound power sharing agreement.

***Reduced space for civil society peace work.*** At the same time, the space for civil society activity on conflict resolution issues was reduced and restricted (a trend also addressed in the Co-chairs’ statement from May). While large pro-peace public gatherings were possible parallel to the Geneva Talks in February, civil society groups and peace organizations have become more reluctant to organize substantive events in the wake of increasing violence since April

***Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law:*** The UN, SLMM and INGOs have become more and more outspoken in criticisms of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Extrajudicial killings and abductions are committed with impunity by all sides,

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and civilians not protected in military fighting. The Supreme Court in September declared that neither United Nations conventions signed by Sri Lanka nor the directives of monitoring bodies are binding on the country.

### **Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka Project (NPSL)**

#### Overall

The current period of reporting (April-September 2006) is one that was highly rewarding as well as challenging for NP Sri Lanka. The rewards came by way of twelve new Field Team Members that were deployed in mid-August following their six weeks of In-Country Training. The number of new staff joining the management too increased with a Communications Manager coming on board in mid-June, followed by the Human Resources Manager starting in July. The number of national staff at the field site level also increased during this time Temporary contracts were changed into permanent contracts so staff would be treated equally.

The main challenges for NPSL during this period came in two forms. Foremost of these was the inability of some field site staff to return to their sites following an all Staff Retreat NPSL had in early August, as a result of the unprecedented and unexpected sudden increase in violence in the regions where the field sites were. This was particularly the case for Jaffna, Mutur and Trincomalee field staff. A key reason for not returning to the three field sites mentioned above was the risk to life resulting from ubiquitous claymores, incessant shelling and spontaneous aerial bombardment. Another reason why return was not possible were restrictions on the free-movement of people; on the one hand bureaucratic (governmental-military) restrictions hindered the movement of I/NGO personnel and aid workers, and on the other, physical restrictions due to the closure of all travel by land, air and sea prevented movement.

The inability to go to their new field sites was quite a frustrating experience for the twelve new FTMs, as it was something they much looked forward to after many months in the Core and In-Country Trainings. It was equally frustrating for the continuing FTMs who were very eager to return because of the requests for protection by their field site communities. NP's mode of engagement with their communities is understood as one of "moving towards the centre of violence" and not to move away from it, so the inability to be with one's local community at a time when they felt they were most needed was a daunting experience for most FTMs.

In addition to the above situation dictated by the political-military situation in the country, team integration too was a challenge for all FTMs, as new FTMs outnumbered the continuing ones in almost all field sites.

#### Activities of NPSL

##### Jaffna District: NP Jaffna Field Site

The North, (with the exception of Jaffna is an area mostly controlled by the LTTE with only the main highway under government auspices), has been a hotspot of violence

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during the period of this report. Since open fighting between Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and LTTE started in August, the North including Jaffna was cut off from the rest of the island, making humanitarian assistance highly difficult. Throughout September, Jaffna remained generally cut off from the rest of Sri Lanka. Food items were being provided by GoSL cargo ships under the protection of the navy but the supply was not enough. The ICRC is unable to do anything because the parties cannot agree on the method of transportation. Sporadic UN chartered flights to Jaffna have started but regular civilian flights remain on hold. On the peninsula mobility and movement is still restricted.

There is also a climate of fear due to disappearances and killings, with journalists, businessmen and clergy being victims. One of the clergy who disappeared is Fr. Jim Brown of the Catholic Church in Allaipiddy. It is the same church that got bombed early August while IDPs were hiding in the church, destroying it and killing more than 20 people. Back in May, NPSL provided protection to the IDPs in that church in Allaipiddy who sought sanctuary from the violence.

*Detering further harm through protective presence*

Following the brutal murder of a family including a 4-year old and a baby and several other people in Allaipiddy, a small community of one of the Kayts islands in the Jaffna peninsula, NP Jaffna staff in May provided protection to hundreds of people from the community who had fled in fear to the nearby church. For more than a week, the Jaffna team was visibly present, thus served as a deterrent at the church and accompanied others to safe places.

In early August, NPSL held its week-long staff retreat, during which period fighting between the LTTE and the GoSL erupted in Jaffna and the Jaffna team members were unable to return to their field site afterwards as travel to Jaffna was completely cut off.

*Reuniting with family*

After several failed attempts the Jaffna team was able to reunite one of the families of the local staff who are now safe in Colombo. It continues to advocate the protection issues that concern Jaffna in forums in Colombo and is preparing for a return to Jaffna and to work with Jaffna IDPs who settled in the Mannar district. A ten day protection assessment in Mannar will be carried out by several members of the Jaffna team in October.

*Trincomalee District: NP Mutur and NP Trinco (Town) Field sites*

For Sri Lanka's two largest cultural communities, the Sinhalas and Tamils, the main annual festival is the *Sinhala-Tamil New Year* that usually falls on the 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> of April (or 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> depending on the lunar calendar). This year, this key festival, usually noted a symbol of inter-cultural harmony and common heritage, was marked by ethnic riots. Even more tragically, these riots occurred in Trincomalee, a city celebrated for its multiculturalism. (Trincomalee is a port-city in the east with almost equal numbers of Muslims, Sinhalas and Tamils.) The riots were triggered by a bomb explosion in

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Trincomalee's main vegetable market on April 12<sup>th</sup> that resulted in a rampage by Sinhala mobs throughout the city's business area, with over 30 shops mainly belonging to Tamils being burned, as security forces and the police stood by and watched it all happen. The speed with which the violence erupted after the explosion seems to indicate an element of pre-planning. Some observers referred to the situation as reminiscent of the countrywide anti-Tamil pogrom in 1983.

In June, raids by the armed forces killed around a dozen people and displaced tens of thousands. The area targeted was near the harbour of Trincomalee and is close to the offices of the Nonviolent Peaceforce. Trincomalee is considered one of the best sea ports in the world, thus holding a significant strategic interest to the stakeholders including India and the USA.

*Unarmed protectors attacked while armed protectors watched*

During the riots in April, NP Trinco staff was quickly on the scene following the explosion and riots, and spoke to various people who witnessed the incidents in order to assess the situation. As the riots lasted for several hours and spread towards areas where Tamils and Sinhala lived in adjacent communities, many people fled to places of safety such as temples, schools and churches. On the way to provide accompaniment and protective presence at some of these places of safety, NP Trinco staff were attacked by a mob of angry youth close to a military checkpoint. The staff were mostly unhurt. Sadly this attack occurred while the police and armed forces stood by and watched the windows of the truck being smashed and the staff being threatened with a hand grenade.

*White Tigers – Sinhala perception that INGOs favour the Tamils & Tigers*

Parts of the Sinhala community have a negative sentiment towards INGOs thinking that they tend favour the Tamil people. This was partly why NP Trinco staff was attacked on the day of the bombing and riots. However, in the days to follow the NP Trinco staff provided accompaniment to local humanitarian groups that delivered aid to those displaced including Sinhala people. Thanks in part to our well connected local staff, the NP Trinco Team was also able to reach out to the youth that attacked them and through dialogue persuaded them to take part in a peace gathering with other groups.

*Protective presence at places of safety where the displaced had gathered*

As a result of the market bombing and the ensuing riots, a pervasive sense of tension prevailed between the Sinhala and Tamil communities. The police nor the armed forces were in control of the situation. When soldiers were putting up new sentry points in a neighbourhood already fearful of the army, at the request of civilians, NP Trinco approached the army commander and mediated an agreeable solution to all involved. NP Trinco had to further engage with the military and use its good rapport with them, to seek protection from the police and Air Force soldiers for the displaced persons at a church that was visited by 'white vans' that are notorious for abductions.

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*The truth is out there – facilitating local information to reach the national media*

In general, there has been a failure on the part of the media to provide the people living outside of the North and East with an accurate picture of what is going on there. Only through fact-finding missions by civil society groups into events such as the ethnic violence in Trinco is the situation adequately reported. NP Trinco and NP Mutur were able to facilitate such visits by civil society actors including human rights activists, while NP Colombo raised awareness about the situation in the North East at various fora. International human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch are now calling for an independent investigation into the market bombing including the riots afterwards.

Another instance where NP Mutur facilitated disaster assessment and information flow was following the aerial bombardment in Sampoor by the Air Force in retaliation of LTTE's suicide attempt on the military commander's life on April 25<sup>th</sup>. At the request of several humanitarian agencies, NP Mutur led an aid convoy into the area affected and assessed the situation.

*Testing team resilience at times of great adversity*

The resilience of the entire Nonviolent Peaceforce Sri Lanka team was heavily tested in May, when it came under attack by an unknown armed group. On May 21 at 3:15PM, a shot was fired and a grenade hurled in front of the NP Mutur office. The grenade explosion injured FTM Fabian Periskic on the hip, while a bullet had entered the truck which was parked outside the office. Fabian's injury required immediate surgery, which was possible with UN and SL Air force assistance that airlifted him to Colombo. Of course the incident resulted in much anxiety among the entire team.

*Exodus from Trincomalee and making the perilous journey to South India*

More and more people are fleeing their homes in the Trincomalee district and transit through Mannar to go to South India. A very high level of uncertainty and fear seem to be cause for the exodus.

NPSL's past experience with IDPs in Trincomalee and Jaffna and today's high protection needs of IDPs who fled because of the violence, has resulted in a partnership agreement between NPSL and UNHCR. Also we hope to continue the cooperation with Christian Aid on several issues: While members of the Trinco team took part in a learning workshop by Christian Aid, NPSL submitted a new partnership proposal for 2007 to the organization that focuses on the support of Peace Committees and other local coping mechanisms that can address the human security situation today.

*From Maavil Aaru to Mutur and to Kantale*

The seven-day stand off between the government military forces and the LTTE over the closure of irrigation water by the LTTE in the Trincomalee district ended with Air Force strikes on LTTE targets starting on 26<sup>th</sup> July. In retaliation, LTTE suicide bombers allegedly tried to sink a Sri Lankan army transport ship with 850 personnel aboard. The Army and LTTE fought with mortars and artillery after the LTTE attacked and overran

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several eastern military camps that took them to the town of Mutur where fierce fighting broke out for several days.

During the fighting NPSL and other actors such as the ICRC and the UN appealed to the government, SLA and LTTE to halt their fighting and protect the civilians caught in the fighting. It was then that NPSL requested the Emergency Response Network of NP be mobilized in an effort to influence the government and LTTE to abide by International Humanitarian Law and make sure that civilians including the NPSL staff were not put in harm's way any further.

The LTTE managed to capture the Mutur town but not before security forces' artillery destroyed many of the houses in the predominately Muslim town. No civilian areas were spared. The hospital and schools where civilians had found refuge were hit resulting in dozens of civilian deaths. The shelling and shooting between the LTTE and SLA continued while over 20,000 people, in a desperate attempt to escape, fled en masse to find safety in the jungle and other towns far away from the fighting. Among the exodus of people that fled the town of Mutur were four NPSL Sri Lankan staff members and their families including children and infants.

NPSL continued to monitor the situation and prepared itself in case a ceasefire would allow it to help families of NPSL staff. Over the weekend, a short ceasefire ensured that several NPSL trucks could conduct a search and rescue operation. In convoy with other INGOs and the ICRC, one NPSL team brought one of the families to safety while escaping an angry crowd of Sinhala villagers. The family had suffered immensely while three of its children had gotten lost in the chaos. The second NPSL truck a day later was less lucky and got stuck in a crowd throwing stones at the truck that smashed the window and injured the hand of the Program Manager. Nevertheless, on Sunday August 6th, all staff and their families were brought to safety and received medical attention and assistance. The Mutur incident was also an eye-opener with regard to how much NPSL could and could not do for its staff at a time of emergency. NPSL was rather helpless initially to assist with the ordeal one of its Mutur staff went through, in terms of having to walk 3 days without food or water, having to be carried some of that tremendous distance, and having most of the people fleeing along with her killed.

In addition to NPSL, another INGO, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) had staff in Mutur town. Seventeen of them assembled in their office following standard operating procedures of agencies in such situations. After the fighting was over, they were found murdered by persons unknown.

Throughout August and September many humanitarian agencies have been trying to help the tens of thousands of people that are displaced in the town of Kantale. In early August, NPSL held its week-long staff retreat, during which period renewed fighting between the LTTE and the GoSL erupted. Due to the security situation in Trincomalee, the Mutur and Trinco team were forced to operate from outside the district and they conducted restricted activities mostly in the IDP camps in Kantale, relocating to Dambulla for some weeks. In September a return to Trinco town was deemed safe enough, with the Mutur team operating from Trinco as it had already done since the grenade attack on its office in May.

The fear of people in the East is such that threatening leaflets distributed in Mutur, purporting to be from the LTTE, caused many amongst the largely Muslim population to flee once again. Those same people were then compelled to return to Mutur by the

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security forces, and have been denied relief rations unless they return there, in violation of international humanitarian law.

In Trincomalee district, throughout September, NP Mutur and NP Trinco have been working with the large number of IDPs. Again, the situation required the teams to work in different locations with specific dynamics at the same time. The teams were able to link aid agencies to those groups of IDPs that were not receiving assistance. Most of the IDPs fled and resettled in places according to ethnic lines. NP Mutur and NP Trinco made an extra effort to ensure that they continued to work with all communities, hence with the Tamil IDPs in Valaichchenai, the Sinhalese IDPs in Seruvila and Muslim IDPs in Kantalai and Kinniya.

*Protecting witnesses and seeking justice*

In August and September NPSL supported Dr M. by way of accompaniment from his home in Trinco to Colombo and through regular visits to his house. Following the January 2nd killing of five youth in Trincomalee, efforts to were made to ensure temporary safety for the only witness who has come forth (Dr M). Sadly, the application for Dr. M and his family to obtain asylum in the UK fell through with the refusal of visas by the British government. However, NPSL continues to raise the case with various human rights bodies and diplomatic missions including the UK government with the request to change its verdict based on humanitarian grounds and the high level of threat against this family whose son was allegedly killed by the navy forces.

*Batticaloa District: NP Valaichenai and NP Batticaloa (Town) Field sites*

In Batti district the operations of the teams have been limited to activities in government-controlled parts of the area, as the GoSL has banned INGOs from entering LTTE-held territory. The human rights situation in the district is cause for much concern as in other parts of Sri Lanka. Extrajudicial killings, bomb attacks and abductions are almost daily occurrences. NGO activists speak of a culture of impunity because almost none of these incidents result in a legal follow-up... even if the terrorised family members dare to file a complaint with the police. The LTTE break away “Karuna Faction” is operating more and more openly in the district, with many witnesses reporting their open cooperation with the Sri Lankan army. At the moment, no access is provided to people in need in LTTE controlled areas, indiscriminate attacks happen with no distinction being drawn between civilian and military targets, and large-scale abductions of children for military purposes by the LTTE, and also by the Karuna group in government-controlled areas take place.

The civilian military training campaign and child recruitments that are taking place in the North East, both by the LTTE and its breakaway Karuna group are most likely in anticipation of battles that lie ahead. Reports from the East indicate that the child recruitment (abductions)is extremely cruel. Families who have lost one of their children to one group are being doubly victimized to “give” another child to the other group, which also results in brother fighting brother.

The brutal killings of ten Muslim farm workers in Pottuvil in the East is another example of the breakdown of law and order related to security of life in the country and the

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growing practice of impunity. The Home for Human Rights, a local NGO, reported this month that more than 1,000 extrajudicial killings of civilians have taken place since November last year.

*Assisting existing capacities for human rights monitoring & documentation*

NP Valaichchenai has continued its work on issues related to abductions and disappearances as well as responded to the many requests for accompaniment. NP Batticaloa continued its role as the security focal point for the district and has begun to establish a network building support of the initiative with UNICEF. Due to the fact that the national Human Rights Commission (HRC) is only functioning at the staff level, the already poor human rights situation in Sri Lanka has deteriorated further leading to a culture of lawless impunity. Therefore, the Batti team has been pro-active to support the HRC in Batticaloa. So far, progress has been made on sharing information and coordinating with the ICRC and the HRC regarding arrests and round ups.

*Coordinating protection for families with other protection agencies*

In a purposely less visible approach, the teams in Valachchenai and Batticaloa have sought a safe place for several families under threat. Such requests have become a daily phenomenon but turn out to be a rather challenging task, as they bring to the surface the great number of obstacles to identify safe places as well as the limitations of major actors such as the UN in protecting the most vulnerable. Several UN agencies are seeking closer relationships with NPSL whose work is recognized to fill gaps that have emerged, especially when the situation in Sri Lanka gets more violent. This allows NPSL to bring issues of concern to the table and take the lead in protection and human security matters. For example, NPSL was invited to send a delegation to an international roundtable discussion in Canada on child protection as part of a joint initiative between UNICEF and NPSL that marked the start for the support of community structures on the protection of children and families.

Following the all staff retreat in early August, only the Batti and Valaichchenai teams were able to conduct full operations focusing on the many child abductions and recruitment, identifying safe places and supporting local actors working in IDP camps. However, these two teams also faced restricted access in areas they previously were able to work.

*A first step towards promoting good governance – reducing violence during elections*

NPSL continues to support local actors including one of its original partners: PAFFREL. In May, earlier postponed local elections took place in the Batticaloa. In a collaborative effort with PAFFREL monitors, the presence of two NPSL teams helped inspire voter confidence, induced positive behaviour change among polling officials, increased the visibility of NP's work that led to new relationships with polling officials and the public in general, and mitigated hostilities that are common to local elections in Sri Lanka.

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*Abduction Day*

A three-day period in the middle of June saw the highest number of children being abducted in the Valaichchenai area. The abductions occurred openly and during the day. NP Valachchenai staff was menacingly told by a sword wielding cadre not to go on inspection of abductions. According to UNICEF, 67 cases are attributed to the Karuna group since January. In June the temple festival season also started and NPSL has tried as in previous years to work together with other international NGOs to coordinate and provide protective presence at these festivals.

NP Valachchenai is assisting several of the families of abducted children in their struggle to hold the Sri Lankan government accountable for their fate. In fact, NPSL is supporting an extraordinary initiative by 55 families in Batticaloa, who have signed and sent a petition to the highest authorities in Sri Lanka and internationally raising the attention about their plight.

*Intra-district field site collaboration*

In Batticaloa, NPSL teams attended a strategy meeting by UNICEF on the increase of child abductions in the district. The Valaichchenai office raised its concern about the increase in visits by families whose children were abducted and the lack of any accountability by the authorities. A particular concern is also the lack of safe places for children under threat. Several possible actions were identified which will be further elaborated at the district and Colombo level before they are implemented.

Another challenge the teams face in the Batticaloa district has been the influx of Internally Displaced People (IDPs), increasing from 37,000 to 62,000. Both NP Valachchenai and NP Batti staff in the district have stepped up their efforts to address this issue. They received additional short-term help from members of NP Mutur. A large number of Tamil IDPs who fled the violence in Mutur came to the Batticaloa district and remain there in IDP camps. Several of those camps are in volatile areas. In a collaborative effort, members of the Mutur and Valaichchenai teams prepared an assessment of the protection needs of these IDPs and shared these with other agencies and groups including UNHCR.

A six month review of the work of the new office in Batticaloa revealed the need for consolidation of the activities and the inclusion of IDPs as part of its future activities. The focus of the office in the coming period will therefore be on certain areas, most notably, human rights, (child) abductions and IDPs through the support of the citizens groups and Peace Committees. It is also recognized that religious leaders should be supported because of the valuable but risky role they play in the current environment. Such activities will need to be complemented with a proper monitoring and documenting mechanism. Initial discussions with the Asia Foundation to use their newly developed HR documentation system in the field are promising. All of these efforts are part of the strategy to work toward enhancing the human security standards in the district and country.

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*Colombo and NPSL*

*Overcoming bureaucratic hurdles, undeterred by discouragement*

The government is putting up obstacles for agencies working in the East and North as a deterrent for them working in these areas. All international organizations are now required to get work permits for all of their expatriate staff and requests by INGOs for safety equipment such as satellite phones are being held up by the Ministry of Defense.

It should be noted that there exists an anti-foreign sentiment in parts of the country and among certain influential members of the GoSL. The GoSL has started an aggressive campaign to discourage INGOs from working in the East and North. Already, INGOs are restricted from working in LTTE, the so-called 'uncleared' areas. The newly imposed work permits by the GoSL for expatriates of INGOs is the latest in a series of obstacles put up by the GoSL. All INGOs including NPSL have been required to apply for work permits at the Ministry of Defence, in the process also having to give the names and details on all national staff being employed (a requirement NPSL only partly fulfilled). The process has been quite confusing while the security forces on the ground caused a great deal of anxiety among those working for INGOs by enforcing the work permits while none had been issued, and the first being issued then only allowing work in Colombo. Disconcerting is also the so-called Parliamentary Select Committee that has been created to investigate NGO activity in Sri Lanka.

In addition, Parliament is about to pass a law that allows the GoSL to expel international agencies out of the country. Already six international organizations including MSF France and Spain have been requested to leave the country immediately. In a further attempt to curb the activities of INGOs and NGOs, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka has issued INGOs new bank account numbers that it has started to monitor. A recent donation to NPSL by NP Japan took several weeks before it cleared. Local NGOs that work in LTTE areas are facing more difficulties. Funds in the bank accounts of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) have been frozen.

*The call for International Human Rights Monitoring in Sri Lanka*

International Human Rights agencies are lobbying hard for an international human rights monitoring mission preferable under the auspices of the UN. The mission could do fact finding and reduce further violations. Such a mechanism would conduct monitoring, documenting and verifying of human rights violations and humanitarian problems, support investigation and prosecution and ensure the protection of the civilian population. Perhaps because of these pressures Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapakse announced his intention to invite an international commission to inquire into recent killings, disappearances and abductions in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, NPSL facilitated a mission by the Human Rights Watch and participated in an International Workshop on child protection organized by UNICEF in Canada.

Throughout September the spate of assassinations and abductions of Tamil people suspected to be either pro or anti LTTE continued without any sign of abating. In Colombo dozens of Tamil businessmen were abducted which prompted the GoSL to set up a Parliamentary Group to investigate these abductions.

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*Improving NPSL staff and organizational security*

External security assessment expert Rob Cooper was invited to evaluate NPSL's security situation and make recommendations to improve the security of all staff and field sites (infrastructure). Mr. Cooper's advice was well received by FTMs and the management alike and several of his recommendations have already been implemented; e.g., First Aid training and kits, adhesive film for all windows and glass, emergency/bunker room in NP offices and residences including food & essential stocks for survival, the 'go-bag', etc.

*Managing staffing & programmatic needs through recruitment, improvisation and fundraising*

The month of June was particularly stressful as a result of the NP financial crunch. In consequence, NPSL explored many channels for raising funds and was successful in winning grants from several institutional donors including two UN agencies.

Wider NP IGC Member Ramu Manivannan visited Sri Lanka in June, to assist with the in-country training, help with fundraising within Sri Lanka, and to assess NPSL by talking with each FTM.

In August, NPSL hosted a visit by a representative of NP Japan who had come to help with the fundraising efforts and to learn more about NPSL. The fundraising activities in Sri Lanka received an additional boost through the visit of Alessandro Rossi of the NP Brussels office. Various meetings with donors were carried out and new possibilities identified.

September saw a visit by NP Executive Director Mel Duncan and Programme Director Christine Schweitzer to both support the ongoing work of NPSL and to learn more about our work in the field. A brochure on counsellors was compiled in July and it is expected to be useful as an important resource for all staff. As part of the strategy for support involving safety and security measures, NPSL held a counselling and self-care workshop for the FTMs at the end of September with a Dutch psychologist who offered his services to NP.

As result of the financial crisis in June, the decision to go ahead with the external evaluation has been postponed to 2007.

May saw the departure of Jan Passion, who served NPSL passionately from the start, is felt. Long term FTM Rita Webb and her husband Marty, served as Acting Team Managers in the months of May to July, supporting the FTMs who are working under increased stress before the new incoming batch. The staffing gaps that been filled by two new managers arriving in June and July: Communications Manager Dilshan Muhajarine from Sri Lanka and Human Resources Manager Iqbal Hossain from Bangladesh.

The number of FTMs leaving NPSL in the period under report has been extraordinary high, partly due to contracts coming to an end and partly due to individual circumstances. Twelve new FTMs arrived in Sri Lanka in June to commence their In-Country Training (ICT) held in Colombo (mainly presentations on the Sri Lankan context) and Batticaloa (mainly language training), with visits to each of the field sites. Because of lack of funds, the ICT unfortunately focussed mostly on language training.

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## **Appendices**

### Sources and Literature: Links to Internet that have information of current situation

#### *Official Sri Lankan and LTTE Sources*

Sri Lankan government: <http://www.priu.gov.lk/> and

Official webpage of the Sri Lankan Government's Secretariat for Coordinating the Peace Process (SCOPP) <http://www.peaceinsrilanka.org/>

Tamil Eelam Homepage: <http://www.eelam.com/>

#### Referenced Sources:

UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions calls for urgent measures to end political killings and to strengthen protection for human rights in Sri Lanka April 27 2006

<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/view01/16F8C22F9FB1E05EC125715E0037176E?opendocument>

#### *Sri Lankan NGO and Media Sources*

The Academic : <http://www.theacademic.org/>

Centre for Policy Alternatives: [www.cpalanka.org](http://www.cpalanka.org)

Digest of News Links at Lanka Academic Network:

<http://www.lacnet.org/slnews/index.html>

Google news: <http://www.google.com/alerts?q=&hl=en>.

<http://www.info.lk/slnews/>

<http://www.lankapage.com/>

LAcNet News (also to be found going to the Digest of News Links of Lacnet listed above): <http://www.lacnet.org/slnet/>.

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka : [www.peace-srilanka.org](http://www.peace-srilanka.org) , Mailing List order at [peace2@sri.lanka.net](mailto:peace2@sri.lanka.net)

People's Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL): <http://www.paffrel.lk/>

Sarvodaya: [www.sarvodaya.org](http://www.sarvodaya.org). They also offer a mailing list.

Social Issues: <http://www.infolanka.com/org/srilanka/issues.html>

Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights in Sri Lanka : <http://www.spur.asn.au/>

Sri Lanka Page: <http://www.lankapage.com/> (internet paper, Sinhalese-oriented)

Tamilnet: <http://www.tamilnet.com/>

The Island: <http://www.island.lk/> (newspaper)

University Teachers for Human rights (Jaffna): <http://www.uthr.org/>

*Articles and pages of international NGOs on Sri Lanka*

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Amnesty International: <http://web.amnesty.org/>

Bastian, Sunil, The Failure of State Formation, Identity Conflict and Civil Society Responses – The Case of Sri Lanka, University of Bradford, Centre for Conflict Resolution Working Paper 2, Bradford August 2002, Order at Bradford University, Department of Peace Studies, <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/pubs/pubs.htm>

Coy, Patrick G., "What's A Third Party To Do? Nonviolent Protective Accompaniment in Sri Lanka with Peace Brigades International". Paper presented at the 35th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association Washington D.C., March 28-April 1, 1999

European Centre for Conflict Prevention, The Peace Process in Sri Lanka. The need to involve civil society actors, A seminar organised by the European Centre for Conflict Prevention, November 13,2002, <http://www.conflict-prevention.net/>

Harris, Simon, Lewer, Nick, Operationalising Peacebuilding and Conflict Reduction. Case Study: Oxfam in Sri Lanka, University of Bradford, Centre for Conflict Resolution Working Paper 11, Bradford August 2002, Order at Bradford University, Department of Peace Studies, <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/pubs/pubs.htm>

Human Rights Watch: <http://hrw.org/reports/world/srilanka-pubs.php>

Peace Brigades International: <http://www.peacebrigades.org/lanka.html>.

Refugee Council United Kingdom: [www.gn.apc.org/brcslproject](http://www.gn.apc.org/brcslproject)

Witharana, Dileepa, Community Peace Work in Sri Lanka: A Critical Appraisal, University of Bradford, Centre for Conflict Resolution Working Paper 12, Bradford August 2002 Order at Bradford University, Department of Peace Studies, <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/pubs/pubs.htm>

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Glossary of Abbreviations and Names

AHAM= a community based organization working with children in the Trinco district.

CBO = Community-based Organisation

CSO = Civil Society Organisation

DRMU = Disaster Relief Monitoring Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka

Erik Solheim: Norwegian Special Envoy

FCE = Foundation for Co-Existence

FTM = Field Team Members

GoSL = Government of Sri Lanka

HR = Human Rights

ICRC = International Committee of the Red Cross

IDP = Internally Displaced Persons

JHU = National Heritage Party (party of Buddhist monks)

JVP = Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Maoist party, in coalition with SLFP) People's Liberation Front

LTTE = Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (led militarily by Velupillai Prabhakaran)

MPC = Mutur Peace Committee

MT = Management Team

NACPR = National Advisory Council on Peace and Reconciliation

NESOHR = North East Secretariat of Human Rights

NGO = Nongovernmental Organisation

PAFFREL = Peoples' Action for Free and Fair Elections

SLA = Sri Lankan Army

SLFP = Sri Lanka Freedom Party (governing party. Prime Minister is Mahinda Rajapaksa)

SLMM = Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission. (Set up under the cease-fire agreement to monitor breaches of the agreement. Staffed mainly by Scandinavian military personnel in civilian clothes. Ca 50 personnel)

TC = Team Coordinator

TNA = Tamil National Alliance (LTTE presenting party in parliament)

UNICEF = United Nation Children's Fund

UNP = United National Party (concluded cease fire agreement with LTTE in 2001/2002, had majority until elections in 2004- Prime Minister was Ranil Wickremesinghe)

ZOA = Dutch NGO working with local staff in Sri Lanka.

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