

The Escalation of the LTTE's Violent Activities and the Civil War in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

July 1983 was another turning point in the polarization of relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils, with brutal communal riots spreading all over the country.¹ The triggering event for the “1983 riots” was the attack on government troops by a militant group that resulted in the killing of 13 soldiers in the Thirunelveli area of the Jaffna peninsula. This event caused a huge tremor and shock among the Sinhalese in the South. Subsequently, the communal riots spread throughout the country due to the instigation of certain politicians and inaction by the police, resulting in the deaths of about 470 Tamils and with many others injured. More than 70,000 Tamils were displaced in the South and a number of families moved as refugees to the Northern peninsula. According to unofficial reports the death toll was as high as 3000.² The riots in 1983 resulted in a mass exodus of refugees from Sri Lanka, with more than 125,000 Tamils fleeing to Tamil Nadu in India and another 75,000 or so from the better social background taking flight to Western European and North American countries, claiming political asylum.³ Furthermore, the properties of

¹ See K.Rupasinghe (2006) *op cit.*

² *Ibid.*

³ A.R. Zolberg, A.Suhrke and S. Aguayo. *Escape from Violence; Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World.* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Tamils had been want only looted and burnt in Colombo and the suburbs.⁴ Other big cities and towns too bore the brunt of anti-Tamil violence. The communal riots in 1983 resulted in the escalation of the civil war in Sri Lanka, beginning from that very year.

“The anti-Tamil riots of 1983 resulted in immense benefits accruing to the Tamil secessionist insurrection process...For all Tamils, the riots were a deeply shocking and distressing event, and they experienced a collective alienation from the government and state of Sri Lanka. Tamils felt deeply betrayed by the government. For approximately a week, the government and state denied security of life and limb to a section of citizens within their jurisdiction.”⁵

Emergence of the Tamil military groups and expansion of violence

Following the communal riots in July 1983, the Tamil guerrilla militant movements were further organized well and gradually spread out their violent activities to the North and East in Sri Lanka. At the same time, the Tamil community that flew to foreign countries organized themselves and provided assistance to the secessionist movements through propaganda, fundraising, information networks and political lobbying in their host countries.⁶ All the Tamil militant groups were centred in Tamil Nadu state in India where they underwent high military trainings with the help of the Indian government while the Tamil Diaspora in Western countries contributed their financial and moral support during the following years.⁷ According to the authors there were 35 to 42 Tamil guerrilla militant groups that existed in the mid-1980s.⁸ Among the five major Tamil guerrilla groups,⁹ the LTTE headed by Velupillai Prabhakaran stood out as the unique militant organization in

⁴See T.D.S.A. Dissanayake, *The Agony of Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Swastika, 1983) ; Veena Das, *Mirror of Violence: Political Economy of Ethnic Violence in Sri Lanka* (New York: Oxford University press, 1990)

⁵Jagath.P.Senarathne. *Political Violence in Sri Lanka, 1977-1990.*(Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1997) p. 69

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 71

⁷ See K.M.de Silva (2012) op cit.

⁸See Marshall R. Singer, ‘Report on the Pressures and Opportunities for a Peaceful Solution to the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka’, *Journal of Developing Societies*, No. 2 (1986) pp 2-19

None of these post-July 1983 mushroom groups were of any significant size, and none survived for long. Many of these mushroom militant groups were attacked and destroyed by the LTTE in intra -Tamil conflicts in the second half of the 1980s and the LTTE became the sole militant group for Tamil separatism after October 1987.

⁹According to the reports there were five major Tamil militant groups: LTTE – Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam, TELO - Tamil Eelam liberation Organization, PLOTE - Peoples liberation organization of Tamil Eelam, EPRLF - Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front, EROS - Eelam Revolution Organization of Students. While the other four militant groups agreed to cooperate with the Sri Lankan government under the India – Sri Lanka peace accord, the LTTE refused to involve itself with the democratic stream in 1987.

the Tamil insurgency movement fighting continuously for a separate Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka.¹⁰

As its first strategy, the LTTE regularly launched a chain of guerrilla attacks not only in the North but also in the Eastern and the Southern areas of the Island, targeting Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka. Although, from 1975 onwards some violent activities were clandestinely organized by Tamil militants, they came into the open in 1983. After that they escalated and conducted their activities freely and brutally for two and a half decades exacting a heavy toll on their perceived enemies. The LTTE attacks were aimed at the security forces, civilians, the clergy, government officers, politicians and intellectuals without distinction. Many of the attacks were directed at politicians or military officers, and usually a number of civilians also died along with the targeted politician or military officer. Among the hundreds of guerrilla attacks of the LTTE, there were some brutal massacres that reverberated throughout the world. The following narrative presents the chronology of some selected attacks carried out by the LTTE during the struggle for Tamil Eelam.

The LTTE declared war against the Sri Lankan government in November 1984 by blasting the Chavakachcheri Police station, killing 24 police officers. That was a major ambush on the security sector of the government in the beginning of the Tamil insurrection. The guerrilla attacks of the LTTE were of diverse types. First, several incidents were reported of attacks on Sinhala and Muslim villages by killing innocent civilians and chasing others away from their native villages in the Eastern and the Northern regions. The all party representative committee's¹¹ interim report noted that,

“It is well known that the LTTE to its own advantage cruelly resorted to ‘Ethnic Cleansing’ of other communities from the Northern and the Eastern provinces. Over 90,000 Muslims have been driven away from the Jaffna district in 1990... The Muslims were chased away from the Mannar district too, whilst the Sinhalese have been

¹⁰ The LTTE had been organized by its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and the organization consisted of more than 20,000 cadres with Army, force of sea tigers, Air wing, intelligence unit, suicide bomb squad and a police which was under military ranks. The organization existed with all the sophisticated arms and ammunitions. See interview with Sri Lanka Army commander General Sarath Fonseka in Lakkbima Newspaper, 24 May 2009.

¹¹ All party representative committee gathered in 1984 to seek a solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and consisted of all political parties represented in parliament of Sri Lanka.

completely driven away from Jaffna and the other districts of the North and parts of the East. Both these communities were subjected to multiple harassments.”¹²

It must be mentioned that in the early 1980s the LTTE had extended their attacks to the Sinhalese civilians who lived in the Sinhalese villages of the North and the East.¹³ For instance, the attacks of the LTTE targeted two Sinhalese farming colonies, the “Dollar Farm” and the “Kent Farm,” resulting in the killing of 62 Sinhalese civilians in December, 1984.¹⁴ In October 1992, the guerrilla ambush in Ahamadpuratargeted a Muslim village in Palliyagodella in the Polonaruwa district, ending in the massacre of 146 Muslim civilians.¹⁵ Further, a number of attacks were reported, involving massacres of innocent civilians in the villages of the Northern and the Eastern provinces.¹⁶ The second strategy of the LTTE was attacking Buddhist and Muslim religious places and destroying the cultural heritages of other religions. Among reported attacks, the one relating to the “Sri Maha Bodhi” stands out. This famous Buddhist temple was attacked in May, 1985 and 120 Buddhist devotees were killed in this incident. 43 Buddhist monks were assassinated in Ampara in June, 1987 and the “Somawathie” Buddhist Temple in Polonnaruwa was attacked in December, 1987. In January, 1998 the LTTE attacked the most famous Buddhist Temple and UNESCO world heritage site, the “Temple of the Tooth” in Kandy, killing 18 and wounding 117 Buddhist devotees. The LTTE attacks were aimed at the Mosques and Muslim devotees, too. For instance, in August 1990, 476 Muslim devotees who were at Friday prayers in the Mosques in Onduchchimadam, Eravur, and Kaththankudy areas in Batticaloa district were massacred by the LTTE gangs and once again in September of the same year, another 116 Muslim civilians were killed at Eravur in the Batticaloa district.¹⁷ As the third strategy of the LTTE, ambushes were carried out on public transport services resulting in the killing of hundreds of innocent passengers. Among those terrorist attacks was the one in January 1985 when the LTTE guerrillas blasted the “Yal Devi” express passenger train at Murukandi while on its way

¹²All party representative committee interim report Subcommittee - B (2006) in R. Edirisinghe, et al.(2008) op cit. p. 855

¹³The aim of this was to expel the Sinhalese who were settled by the government under the former colonization projects in the Eastern Province.

¹⁴ See "Humanitarian Operation - Factual Analysis, July 2006 - May 2009." (Colombo: Ministry of Defence, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2011)

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶See "Humanitarian Operation - Factual Analysis, July 2006 - May 2009." (2011) *ibid.*

¹⁷LTTE attacked religious places. Please see, T.D.S.A.Dissanayake, *War or Peace in Sri Lanka*. (Mumbai: Popular prakashan, 2004); C.V.De Voorde, "Sri Lanka Terrorism: Assessing and Responding to the Threat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam." *Political Practice and Research: An International Journal* 6, no. 2 (2005): 181-99; Humanitarian Operational Factual Analysis(2011)

to Colombo from Jaffna. This resulted in the deaths of 34 civilians and 22 Army soldiers who were travelling on the train; 11 compartments were completely destroyed. In July 1986 another passenger train was attacked in Dehiwala, killing 114 passengers and wounding more than 500 people. Several passenger buses were attacked in Trincomalee, Kebithigollewa, Piliyandala, and Buttala in the years 1986, 2000 and 2006. In May 1985 a passenger aircraft was severely damaged using explosives in the Colombo airport, killing 16 passengers.¹⁸ These are some of the selected major incidents out of the many that took place during the LTTE's rampage.

As the fourth strategy, the LTTE used a significant technique to attack persons and places in the country by sending suicide bombers who were known as "human bombs"¹⁹ to demoralise the civilians and disrupt life in the country. These terrible experiences were reported largely in the 1980s and 1990s in the urban areas, mainly in the capital city of Colombo. The suicide bombers targeted public places, very important persons and military personnel. Among those attacks, one that shocked Colombo city was a terrible suicide bomb that killed 114 people and wounded 700 in April 1987 at the Central Bus stand in Colombo. In another scary incident, a suicide bomber exploded a truck loaded with more than 100 kilograms of explosives in front of the Central Bank in Colombo, killing 91 persons and wounding at least 1,400 others. According to the reports there were hundreds of suicide attacks launched by the LTTE over a period of two and a half decades, killing hundreds of people.²⁰

In addition, several politicians, academics and military officers were attacked by the LTTE suicide bombers not only in the country but also in India. For example, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa, Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, UNP Presidential candidate Gamini Dissanayake and several other Sinhalese politicians and Tamil politicians like the leader of the Opposition and the leader of the TULF A. Amirthalingam, and the Mayor of Jaffna were assassinated by suicide bombers. Further, the LTTE guerrillas killed several scholars - Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam, a prominent Tamil lawyer and a politician, and human rights activist

¹⁸ Attacking public transport and killing innocent civilians. please see *ibid*.

¹⁹ The LTTE trained suicide bomb attackers known as black tigers.

²⁰ Attacking public places, please see Humanitarian Optional Factual Analysis (2011) *op cit*.

Mrs.RajiniThiranagama and several others. In June 1990, Tamil guerrillas killed 724 unarmed police officers in the Ampara and Batticaloa districts.²¹

Finally, the LTTE targets also included the economic hubs of the country in efforts to undermine the country's economy. For example, the Petroleum refinery complex, Bandaranaike international airport, Katunayake (on two occasions!), The Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Telecommunications complex were targeted by the LTTE. According to statistics, 297 major LTTE attacks on civilians had been reported from 1984 to 2009.²²

The above incidents point out that the LTTE attacks were not only targeted primarily at the government forces but also at each and every sector in the society. As a guerrilla group, the aim of the LTTE was to break down the civil society's security in order to destabilize the country. This was proved forcefully when Sri Lanka experienced a decline in her economic progress and dropped to a lower rank as a weak state in the world's economic index.²³ On the other hand, the massive attacks of the Tamil Tigers prompted the militarization of the country, resulting in the decision to increase the defence expenditures to as high as 18% of the government's total expenditure after the escalation of the civil war.²⁴

Escalation of the Civil War in Sri Lanka

The number of massive attacks carried out by the LTTE and other militant guerrilla groups had forced the government to respond to them from the perspective of maintaining public security as well as safeguarding the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. What had gradually developed into a protracted civil war had evolved over four stages in Sri Lanka. The LTTE guerrilla attacks on the armed forces and the police in Jaffna peninsula increased the pressure on the security forces of the government. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the assassinations of Tamil politicians and civilians who were against or who did not support the separatist interest of the Tamil guerrillas was also a matter of great concern. The Tamil militant guerrilla groups had acquired expertise in the assembly of

²¹ Attacking politicians and other important people, please see *ibid*.

²²Waduge, Shenali. D. "LTTE Murders of Civilians: Justice Denied " *Daily News*, 28 August 2013; See "Humanitarian Operation Factual Analysis, July 2006 - May 2009." *ibid*.

²³See the reports of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka from 1990 to 1999.

²⁴See K.M.de Silva (2012) *op cit*. p. 223

improvised explosive devices by this time.²⁵ They could hold the armed forces of the government at bay and limit them to their own camps in Jaffna with the help of those strategies. As the Tamil militant groups grew stronger, the Sri Lankan government lost control of the civil administration of the peninsula. In the meantime, the LTTE began to expand its violent activities beyond the Jaffna peninsula, especially in the Eastern and Southern parts of the country. When these activities of the LTTE escalated in the Sinhalese and Muslim areas, the government decided to strengthen their military operations against the Tamil guerrillas. In May, 1987 the government launched a military offensive named “Operation Liberation” in the Jaffna peninsula to take back the LTTE controlled areas, and this was later referred to as “Eelam war I”. When the army was able to capture the LTTE controlled areas gradually, it looked as if the LTTE would lose the war and armed conflict would end.²⁶ However, at that moment the Chief Minister of the Tamil Nadu government, M.G.Ramachandran rushed to New Delhi and asked Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to intervene in the war in Sri Lanka.²⁷ The Indian government compelled the Sri Lankan government to halt the military offensives against the Tamil rebels and “Eelam War I” came to an end in July 1987.²⁸ (Indian intervention in the conflict in Sri Lanka will be discussed under the peace process in this chapter).

“Eelam war II” began in June 1990 when the peace talks between the President Premadasa regime and the LTTE collapsed. As soon as the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) left the country, the LTTE occupied the entire areas of the North and the East of the country. Taking advantage of the situation, the LTTE started to attack the forces and the police stations, killing hundreds of government troops in the Eastern province.²⁹ Further, hundreds of Sinhala and Muslim civilians were killed in the Eastern province. In November 1990, around 75,000-100,000 Muslims were banished from Jaffna peninsula and their properties were looted. During this period, the LTTE took up to killing the

²⁵By this time the guerrillas used land mines of different weights from 10 kg to 60 kg with high explosives. They buried those land mines to block the access and exits of the military camps in the Jaffna peninsula. See Jagath.P.Senarathne (1997) *op cit.*, p. 74

²⁶At that moment, the government forces got ready to capture the LTTE leader who was in Vadamarachchi area in Jaffna.

²⁷ When the war was spreading in the Jaffna peninsula, the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees entered Tamil Nadu across the Palk Strait, grabbing the attention of Tamil Nadu in connection with war. See Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka*. (New York, Bloomington: iUniverse, 2009)

²⁸Indian government dropped 22 tons of relief supplies on the Jaffna peninsula on 4th June, violating Sri Lankan air space to compel a halt to the military operations against Tamil guerillas.

²⁹The LTTE attacked the police stations of Batticaloa and Ampara in the East and killed 600 Sinhala and Muslim policemen. See. R. Gunaratne. *Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Crisis and National Security* (Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1998)

members of other militant groups as the LTTE wanted to affirm its own position as the sole secessionist group so that it could claim to be the sole representative of the Tamils.³⁰ For example, the LTTE attacked the EPRLF that ruled the North-East Provincial Council and killed 14 of its members including a member of the parliament.³¹ Further, the LTTE attacked the Sinhalese in the East and ethnically cleansed them from their claimed Eelam territory, while simultaneously in the South they targeted key political and military personnel using suicide bombers.³²

In order to prevent these violent activities, the Sri Lankan government launched several military operations in the Jaffna peninsula targeting LTTE cadres and their camps. During Eelam War II, the Sri Lankan military could not gain any significant victories. The Sri Lanka Army faced the most terrible LTTE attack at Elephant Pass in 1991 when more than 2000 combatants died on both sides. In November, 1993 the Sri Lankan army lost the Pooneryn military base that controlled access to the Jaffna peninsula during that period.³³ The LTTE attack on the Pooneryn military base resulted in the killing of more than 525 officers and soldiers and the loss through capture of 50 million rupees worth of military equipment in the camp.³⁴

The political scenario in the South had changed in 1994. Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumarathunga who headed the People's Alliance (PA) came to power in August 1994 through the Parliamentary election.³⁵ The new government was willing to commence "Peace Talks" with the LTTE due to being pressured by some peace and human rights groups to resolve the serious and critical issues that arose after the Eelam War II that took place between 1987 and 1994.³⁶

³⁰After departure of the IPKF from Sri Lanka in March 1990, the LTTE became the sole militant group in the North and East by destroying the other militant organizations.

³¹The Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council, Varadharaja Perumal escaped to Chennai but the other 14 members were killed including their Member of Parliament and general secretary of the party. See Asoka Bandarage (2009) *op cit.*, p. 154

³² During this period the LTTE killed Sri Lanka's defence Minister, Sri Lanka's Navy Chief, Sri Lanka's former National security Minister, Sri Lanka's President R. Premadasa as well as Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was addressing the Indian general election campaign at Sri Perumpudurnear Chennai. *Ibid.* p. 155

³³The other main land access to Jaffna through Kilinochchi, Vanni had been blocked by the LTTE.

³⁴See T.D.S.A. Dissanayake (2004) *op cit.*, Asoka Bandarage (2009) *op cit.*

³⁵Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike was elected as the President in the election on November 1994. She is a daughter of former Prime Ministers S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike who ruled the country from 1956-59 and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike who ruled the country in 1960-65, 1970-77 respectively.

³⁶See K.Rupasinghe (2006) *op cit.*

The peace talks with the government of Chandrika Kumarathunga collapsed and the ceasefire was broken when the LTTE attacked the Sri Lankan Navy in April 1995. After that “Eelam War III” began, inflicting heavy and untold damages to the country again. As usual, the LTTE attacks were targeting Sinhala and Muslim villages as well as the security forces in the North and the East of the country. During the period of the massive attacks carried out by the LTTE, the biggest bomb attack took place in Colombo in the premises of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, damaging the 13 storey building badly, killing 86 people and injuring 1400 people in January 1996.³⁷ In October 1997, the LTTE bombed the 39 storey World Trade Centre, killing 18 and injuring nearly 100 people. Another massive LTTE suicide bomb attack was reported on 25th January, 1998, targeting the sacred Temple of the Tooth, known as the “Dalada Maligawa”, a historical Buddhist Temple in Kandy.³⁸ Further, several brutal attacks were carried out by the LTTE during this period targeting Sinhalese and Tamil people not only in the North but also in the South. In July, 1999 Mrs. Sarojini Yogeswaran, a Tamil politician and the newly elected Mayor of Jaffna was assassinated in Jaffna and then Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam, a well-known Tamil lawyer, scholar and politician (TULF member) was assassinated by a suicide bomber in Colombo.³⁹ President Chandrika Bandaranaike was injured while she was leaving after addressing an election rally. A suicide bomber attacked her in Colombo in September 1999 killing another 54 persons on the spot. Among other victims were the Leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress and a senior minister of the government who was assassinated along with 22 others in Colombo.⁴⁰

During the 1995 – 2000 period the government forces were able to recapture Jaffna after seven years. In 1997 they launched an operation to regain the territory between Vavuniya and Jaffna but it failed. Unfortunately, during these operations the civilians underwent severe hardships, with artillery and aerial attacks aimed at war affected areas. Due to this a large number of people were rendered homeless and moved to welfare camps in the Vanni. Human rights violations were reported from both sides during the third Eelam war. Disappearances, gang rapes, tortures, murders, unreported disposal of bodies, and recruitment of child soldiers were highlighted by the international human rights organizations. Therefore, Human Rights organizations and the international

³⁷See R. Gunaratne (1998) *op cit.*

³⁸See Asoka Bandarage (2009) *op cit.*

³⁹See K. Rupasinghe (2006) *op cit.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

community pressured the Sri Lankan government to recommence peace negotiations with the LTTE.⁴¹

As usual, the collapse of peace negotiations was used as a strategy to restart the war by both parties. The “Eelam War IV” was a significant phase in the history of the war with the LTTE as it would go on until the very end of the 26 years of war in Sri Lanka. The beginning of “Eelam War IV” started with the recapture of the “Mavil Aru” irrigation system. With that began the collapse of the LTTE as a military force. On 20th July 2006, the LTTE launched a hostile operation by blocking the irrigation system at Mavil Aru in the Southern part of Trincomalee district. The LTTE had closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru anicut and suddenly took over control of the area; this resulted in the blockade of the flow of water to 20 villages.⁴² That hostile act of the LTTE grievously affected the entire population of the area, as they depended solely on water from this source for domestic use and for cultivation. All peaceful efforts made by the government to persuade the LTTE to open the flow of water ended in failure.⁴³ Therefore, the government had no option but to order the forces to launch military operations to recapture the Mavil Aru irrigation system, restore the water supply and take full control over the area. The government then officially announced that it will withdraw from the ceasefire agreement with the LTTE that began in February 2002 and declared it will launch military operations to liberate the LTTE controlled areas in the East and the North.⁴⁴ The government stressed that its military exercise would be aimed as a humanitarian operation against LTTE terrorism in the country.⁴⁵ Gradually, the government forces were able to recapture lost territory little by little and eventually wrested full control of the entire Eastern Province that was under the LTTE over the last 20 years. The government forces then felt encouraged to recapture the North including the LTTE’s de facto capital Kilinochchi, by opening the main highway from the South to the North. After many war weary days, the government forces eventually trapped the LTTE in a narrow strip of land

⁴¹See K. Rupasinghe (2006) *op cit*.

⁴²The Mavil Aru irrigation system provided water to 9,510 Muslims, 8,013 Sinhalese and 4,439 Tamils living in 20 villages in Trincomalee district. Further, the irrigation system was supplying water to 36000 acres of paddy fields and other farming activities. See *Humanitarian Operation - Factual analysis* (Colombo, Ministry of Defense, 2011)

⁴³The matter was reported to the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and other relevant authorities, but it was fruitless. The entire cultivation of the area had been ruined. See *ibid*.

⁴⁴See, The Humanitarian Operation Against Terrorism. <<http://www.defence.lk>>

⁴⁵See, *ibid*.

by the “Nandikadal lagoon” where the LTTE finally admitted defeat on the 17th of May, 2009.⁴⁶

As mentioned earlier, the civil war ended at a heavy cost to all, with much damage and disturbances to the civilians and to public property. Thousands of deaths occurred, with many more permanently disabled or seriously injured, together with mass displacements of civilians and extensive destruction of civilian property.⁴⁷ All this was accompanied by wide ranging, large scale human rights violations, too. A report of the UN in connection with the conduct of the war in Sri Lanka noted,

“.....the panel found credible allegations, which if proven, would indicate that a wide range of serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law was committed both by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, some of which would amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.”⁴⁸

The above UN report documents credible allegations against the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in respect of the final stages of the war. The report found five core categories of misdeeds committed by the Government of Sri Lanka: (i) killing of civilians through widespread shelling, (ii) shelling of hospitals and humanitarian objects, (iii) denial of humanitarian assistance, (iv) human rights violations suffered by victims and survivors of the conflict, including both IDPs and suspected LTTE cadres, (v) human rights violations outside the conflict zone.⁴⁹ In addition, the report discloses six core categories of potential violations committed by the LTTE during the final stages of the civil war: (i) using civilians as a human buffer, (ii) killing civilians who attempted to flee from LTTE control, (iii) using military equipment in the proximity of civilians, (iv) forced recruitment of children, (v) forced labour, (vi) killing of civilians through suicide attacks.⁵⁰ After the war ended, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) passed three resolutions against the Sri Lankan Government, demanding that it hold a credible investigation on alleged violations.

⁴⁶See C.A. Chandraprema, *Gota's War: The Crushing of Tamil Tiger Terrorism in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Author's publication, 2013) ; K.M. de Silva (2012) *op cit.*; *Humanitarian Operation Factual analysis* (2011)

⁴⁷See the LLRC report (2011)

⁴⁸United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-Generals's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka*, (New York: United Nations, 2011) p. ii.

http://www.un.org/news/dh/infocous/Sri_Lanka/POE_report_full.pdf [Accessed 02 January 2014]

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. iii . However, Sri Lankan government denied some of these allegations. See the LLRC report (2011).

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. iv

Conclusion

Although the government finally resorted to military operations as a solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka, it is worth mentioning that many attempts were made to reach a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem through negotiations. The government peace processes were attempted in Sri Lanka to arrive at some mutually acceptable solution to restore long lasting peace in the country. However, it was clear the LTTE violent activities were mostly influenced to expand the civil war in the country.