

SINHALA COLONISATION

**IN THE HEREDITARY TAMIL REGIONS
OF THE ISLAND OF**

SRI LANKA

**An appeal to the United Nations
Commission on Human Rights**



**Fifty-sixth Session
20 March - 28 April 2000**



**TAMIL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - TCHR
(Established in 1990)**

SRI LANKA

Hereditary Tamil Regions



**This is a brief history of how the
Sri Lankan Government and its destructive
agents plundered and robbed
50% of the ancestral lands of the Tamils on the
Island of Sri Lanka**

By K. Sachithanandan

***Research officer - Colombo Fisheries Corporation,
Lecturer at the University of Jaffna,
Adviser to the United Nations on Food and Agriculture
in twenty-three countries.***

**TAMIL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - TCHR
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THE ISLAND OF CEYLON

Sri Lanka - Ceylon is a beautiful island. It lies on the southern side of the Sub-Continent of India. The island is in the shape of a mango.

This island is separated from India by Palk Strait in the North and Mannar Kuda in the South.

The island of Rameshwaram, Eramer Dam and Mannar Island separate Palk Strait and Mannar Kuda.

To the south of the island is the Indian Ocean. The southern point is surrounded by sea and nothing else. The Bay of Bengal is on the eastern side and stretches as far as Sumatra.

At forty kilometres from the island of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) is Thamilaham (Tamil Nadu).

The Central region of Ceylon enjoys a high rainfall and has many mountains. The land here is fertile. The island's Eastern, Northern and North-Western regions are open flat lands with rocks scattered all over.

Long before man wrote history, this island (Ilankai, as it was known then) was inhabited by hunters and cowherds. These were stone-age and iron-age people according to research. There is proof of this on the island.

The ancient instruments of this period and those used by people in Tamil Nadu are similar according to research on [Ancient History](#).

Later, the discovery of ancient scripts and stone carvings have indicated that the inhabitants of Ilankai and Thamilaham were originally Tamil people.

Sivan and Elder Sivan were the kings who ruled the island then. This is recorded in the island's history. That the Princes of Bengal and Kalingam and their subjects came to this island and married Pandian women is recorded in the island's history.

In Tamil Nadu and in the island of Ceylon there were originally Tamil people. When Prince Vijaya came to the island, a dialect emerged. Many people speaking a new language were flooding into the island. This is the period when history was reversed, (1000 BC).

During the reign of King Asoka, 400 BC, Thamilaham and Ceylon had become lands where the Buddhist religion was being spread. King Asoka's son Mahinthan came to Ilankai and converted the King of the island to Buddhism. This is shown in the island's history. Later, King Asoka's daughter Sangamitta brought a white Bo branch from Goa and planted it in Anuradhapura, when she came to Ilankai. These were historical events. This Bo tree is in Anuradhapura to this day.

During the time of King Asoka, a new language developed in Ceylon by combining, Sanskrit, Pali, Kalingam and Tamil, and thus a new language was born. This language was then introduced to Prince Vijaya and later became the Sinhalese language.

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During the time of Karikala Cholan (300 BC) in Thamilaham, he declared war on Ceylon. Karikalan wanted to build a dam by blocking the Kaveri River. To achieve this project Karikalan brought experts and labourers from Ceylon to Thamilaham. History states that Karikalan built a dam across the Kaveri River. After the invasion by Karikalan, Chola kings ruled Ceylon. One of the kings who ruled Ceylon was Ellalan. He ruled the entire island from 161 BC – 117 BC.

"To the South is the sea, to the North are Tamils. How can I stretch myself and sleep?" asked the Sinhalese Prince Dutugemunu. From the description of this notorious prince, it is evident that he was a thug from the prefix to his name (Dutu).

This notorious Sinhalese prince called Ellalan to battle. The elder Ellalan was unable to defeat the young and strong Dutugemunu. The Sinhalese thug murdered Ellalan - the Tamil king and captured the Tamil Kingdom. This was the beginning of the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict. The Sinhalese captured the Tamil capital Anuradhapura and made it their capital. This was the first occurrence where the Sinhalese took possession of Tamil lands by battle, making it their own, newly acquired.

The Tamils kept the rest of their land and the Sinhalese kept their land. The areas closer to Tamil Nadu, sea shores and open land, belonged to the Tamils. The mountainous, central parts, far away from Tamil Nadu, and the southern parts belonged to the Sinhalese people.

The Aalvaars and Nayanmaars (Saiva saints) started spreading the Saivaite and Vaisnavite (in English - "Hindu") religions in Thamilaham, amongst the Tamil people. This happened during AD 550-800. In the island of Ilankai the Saivaite religion was being spread.

During the time of Raja Cholan and Rajendra Cholan 993-1070 AD, the entire island was brought under Tamil rule.

With the re-introduction of Saivism the Tamils who lived in the island of Ilankai again became Saivaites. Those who became Buddhists disregarded Tamil and spread the Sinhalese language in order to promote Buddhism.

In Polonnarawa the Chola capital was established and the Sinhalese moved southwards. The island's mountainous region and the south became the homeland of the Sinhalese. The Eastern, Northern and North-Western regions were inhabited by Tamils. The Sinhala Buddhist occupied the mountainous and southern areas, while the Saivaite Tamils occupied the East, North and North West regions.

Although there was a string Sinhalese administration, it was unable to control the areas occupied by the Tamil people. In 1215 AD the Tamil Pandian rulers in South India declared war on the island. The Sinhalese rulers retreated to the south. Kandy and Kotte became Sinhala capitals. Polonnaruwa was the Chola capital. After the Pandian invasion Jaffna (Jaffna) became the Chola capital.

Three Kingdoms

Now there were three kingdoms in the island of Ilankai. The South Western seashore and Southern seashore were administered by the Sinhalese Kingdom of Kotte. The central mountain area was taken care of by the Sinhalese Kingdom Udarata (Kandy). The East, North and North-West were administered by the Tamil Kingdom.

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This situation remained during the arrival of the Europeans in 1505 and even after that. Kotte was the capital of the Sinhala Kingdom, which later fell to the Portuguese in 1505. Nallur was the capital of the Tamil Kingdom. This also fell to the Portuguese in 1619. The Udarata Kingdom made Kandy its capital. In AD 1815 this was taken by the British. The last ruler of this Sinhalese Kingdom - Kandy was a Tamil, Sri Wickrama Raja Singhan.

When the Portuguese and the Dutch took over the island's coastal areas, they ruled the Tamils and Sinhalese separately.

The Greek explorer Ptolemy and the British who came later demarcated separately the Tamil and the Sinhala regions. They recorded this separation of the two regions.

The Sinhalese termed their administration "Rata". The Tamils named their administration "Vannimai". Rajarata, Mayarata, Udarata and Ruhunurata were the areas controlled by the Sinhalese, in their respective administrations.

The Tamils controlled and administered the following areas, Jaffna, Vanni, Kottiyaru, Palukamam, Paanamai and Muthusilapam. These are large administrative areas. Within these large areas there are smaller areas called "Koralai" by the Sinhalese, and "Pattu" by the Tamils.

The maps and drawings from the time of Ptolemy the Greek explorer and later from the period when the British came to the island, show how they recorded the areas of ***the Tamils and the Sinhalese separately.***

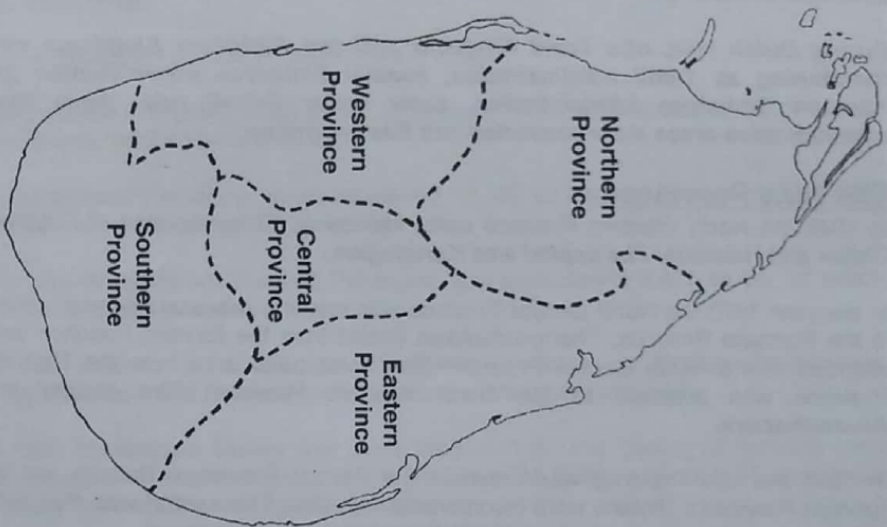
In 1796 the British took over control of the entire island, after the fall of the Kandian Kingdom. In 1815 the entire island came under British rule. On October 1st 1833 the Colebrook-Cameron reformation was introduced in the island's Administration. After the reforms in the administration, it came into being five Provinces under one administration.

Five Provinces

1. **The Northern Province** - Nuvarekalvi, Anuradhpura, Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar remained in the Northern Province. ***The capital was Jaffna (Jaffna).***
2. **The Eastern Province** - Thampankadawa, Bintana, Kottiyaru, Palukamam Paanamai. All these were as Tamil zones. Trincomalee, Mutur, Batticaloa, Wekande, Kumana and Yala remained in this province. ***The capital was Batticaloa.***
3. **The Upper Province.** Katpiddi, Puttalam, Chilaw, Negombo, Kotte, Panadura, Kalutara, spreading as far as Kurunegala. ***The capital was Colombo.***
4. **The Southern Province.** Galle, Thangalle, Matara and Hambantota, stretching as far as Ratnapura. ***The capital was Galle.***
5. **The Central Province.** Kandy, Udunuwara and Uva, which were mountain regions, came under the Central Province. ***Kandy was the capital.***

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ISLAND OF SRI LANKA (CEYLON)



Five Provinces (1833)



Nine Provinces (1896)

Each of these five provinces had government officials who were answerable to British governors in Colombo.

During Dutch rule, one Tamil Kingdom and two Sinhalese Kingdoms were functioning as Tamil administration, coastal Sinhalese administration and Kandian Sinhalese administration. Later under British rule, these three administrative areas were converted into five provinces.

The Nine Provinces

In 1845 the North Western Province came into being. This consisted of Puttalam, Chilaw and Hakorale. **The capital was Kurunegala.**

In the year 1873 the North Central Province was created. Nuwarakalawewa district in the Northern Province; Thampankadawa district from the Eastern Province were included in the North Central Province. The Tamil pattu area from the Northern Province was annexed to the North Western Province. **The capital was Anuradhapura.**

In 1896 the Uva Province was created. The Central Province's Badulla and the Eastern Province's Bintana were incorporated with Uva. **The capital was Baddulla.** Sabragamuva Province was created and **the capital was Ratnapura.**

The nine provinces were ruled from Colombo which was the capital, bringing all the provinces under one rule. This went on from 1833 to 1896. **In this process of re-adjustment, the British did not take into account the ancestral heritage and the original homelands of the different ethnic people in the island. As a result of this blunder, the ethnic conflict came into being in the island.**

Even though Anuradhapura was a Sinhalese area, this was annexed to Tamil capital Jaffna. Thampankadawa was a Tamil area but later it was taken away from the Eastern Province and added to the North Central Province. In the Northern Province Tamil Pottu area incorporated into the North Western Province. In the Eastern Province, Bintana Vannimai was added to the Uva Province.

In these nine Provinces there were twenty districts.

Since 1827 - Tamil and Sinhala populations in the Eastern province

(Table is shown on a language basis)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tamil Speaking</u>	<u>Sinhala Speaking</u>
1827	99.24%	0.53%
1881	93.82%	4.66%
1891	93.89%	5.06%
1901	91.8%	5.05%
1911	93.4%	3.76%
1921	93.95%	4.53%
1946	87.8%	9.87%
1953	85.5%	13.11%
1963	79.25%	19.9%
1971	78.61%	20.7%
1981	74.4%	24.92%

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25 Districts

New changes were made to the borders in 1955.

The Eastern Province, which was 10,440 square kms, was reduced to 9,931 square kms. It was reduced by 509 sq.km.

North Central Province, which measured 10,352 sq.km. was increased by adding 356 sq.km. now totalling 10,709 sq.km.

The Uva Province which was 8,160 sq.km. was increased to 8,478 sq.km. by adding another 318 sq.km. to this province.

In this process of **chop and change**, the district of Chilaw disappeared. **Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa Districts were newly created.**

In 1959 Moneragala District was introduced. In 1963 the District of Amparai came into being. In 1978 the districts of Gampaha and Mullaitivu and in 1984 Kilinochchi, totalling five districts were newly created.

Not only the district borders but also the administrative borders were redemarcated. This happened many times.

The total extent of the island is 65,525 sq.km. Of this, 71% of the land is Sinhalese homeland. **The Tamils have 29% of the land as their homeland (1901).**

The island's coastal area measures a total of 1,770 sq.km. 35% of this area is Sinhalese and 65% belongs to the Tamils (1901).

The total population of the island is approximately 180 lakhs, according to the 1995 census. 74% is Sinhalese, 25% Tamil and 1% who speak other languages (1981).

In 1981, there were 68.5% Buddhists, 16% Hindus, 7.9% Christians and 7.6% Muslims. The island's total population is 18,000,000.

The fertile areas where the rainfall is plentiful and where there are many mountains, rivers and lakes is land that the **Sinhalese claim to be their ancestral homeland.** Tea, rubber, coffee and coconut palms grow very well in these regions.

The people in the Tamil homeland have to rely on rain brought by the rare winds to cultivate their dry land. There are very few rivers and dams. **65% of the sea-coast is the ancestral possession of the Tamil people.**

Muthusilapam

Muthusilapam Vannimai stretches south of Mannar. It starts from Chilavaththurai as far as Munnesvaram Temple, and extends to the seashore. The border is a river. In this area there are small villages which are inhabited by Tamil pearl divers. They traded and bartered with the Tamils of Thamilaham. The Tamil kings of Jaffna also did pearl diving in these beaches.

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In the early days Tamil kings camped in these coastal areas and dived for pearls. This is recorded in the travel memories of the **Arab traveller Ibn Batuta** in 1345.

This region incorporated with seven Korale was annexed to North Western Province. Thus it was added to the ancestral land of the Sinhala people.

The Tamil area that was in the Northern Province in 1833 was taken away. In 1873, **it was added to the Sinhala land.**

Bintana

In 1833, a map published by the Colebrook-Cameron Committee was shown Bintana, Panama area, the plains of Pattipola River as part of the Eastern Province. Eastern branch of Mahaweli River was indicated as its western border.

Later in the resettlement and demarcation plan, the Eastern Province lands were annexed to the Uva Province and North Central Province.

The Pattipolai River plains were almost touching the borders of the province of Matale. The annexing of Bintana to Uva was a mistake, as was pointed out by the 1976 Provincial Electoral Committee.

Sinhala settlements

After Independence from the British in 1948, the Colombo government started implementing new legislation to requisition land and settle the Sinhala population. **The government put into place a scheme so as to reduce the land of the Tamils and increase the land of the Sinhalese.**

In its plan was the demarcation of borders intended to reclaim Tamil land in order to benefit the Sinhala people.

Since 1827 - Tamil and Sinhala populations in Batticaloa district
Table is shown on language basiss
(Until 1963 it includes Amparai district)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tamil Speaking</u>	<u>Sinhala Speaking</u>
1827	99.62%	0.00%
1881	93.27%	4.75%
1891	93.2%	5.21%
1901	92.34%	5.21%
1911	92.95%	3.74%
1921	93.12%	4.56%
1946	92.55%	5.83%
1953	87.64%	11.52%
1963*	95.6%	3.35%*
1971	94.49%	4.49%
1981	95.95%	3.21%

* Creation of Amparai district

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The Gal Oya Project

In the year 1952 the Pattipola River was renamed "Gal Oya" which is a Sinhalese name. A dam was built across the river. The water pumped from this dam was used by the Sinhalese who settled there. This was another master plan to stifle the progress of the Tamil people.

1963 saw the creation of a new district known as Amparai (beautiful rock). Later a separate area was created for Sinhala voters. This new area was called "Digamadulla" in the Sinhala language.

Tamil and Sinhala population in Amparai district
Table is shown language basis
(Amparai district was created in 1963)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tamil Speaking</u>	<u>Sinhala Speaking</u>
1963	70.22%	29.34%
1971	69.47%	30.18%
1981	62.03%	37.64%

Those who were resettled under the government plan were looked after by the Sri Lankan government. These Sinhala settlers were the troublemakers during the ethnic conflicts and the government did nothing to control them.

During ethnic conflicts the Sinhalese brought armed thugs to chase the Tamils away from their villages and the Sinhalese came and settled in these Tamil areas.

Recently in the District of Amparai more than 300 Saivaite (in British - "Hindu") temples were damaged. *The priest of the well-known Murugan Temple was driven out and replaced by a Buddhist priest.* Buddhists also control the nearby Buddhist Temple.

In the Eastern Province in 1948 the Sinhala population was only 5% but by 1995 it had increased to 24%. This is the result of the Sinhala government's planned resettlement of Tamil areas by Sinhalese colonists.

According to the government Resettlement and Border Demarcation plan, Digamadulla electorate will be annexed to Uva Province.

Allai – Kantalai Project

Gal Oya was planned to resettle Sinhala colonists. The same plan was used to resettle Sinhalese in Kantalai and Allai in 1952. Here also the Sinhalese are in the majority. This zone is in the District of Trincomalee.

Medirigiriya and Lankapura are areas that were inhabited by Tamils in the past. When Thumpankadawa was annexed to the North Central Province, it had been taken from the Eastern Province.

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During ethnic conflicts Tamils were driven out of these areas and were replaced by Sinhalese. Now the Sinhalese are in the majority.

In the Eastern areas of Kandhanai and Allai, the government settled the Sinhala people, creating a new Kandhanai administration block. Through this resettlement plan the northern parts; Marvel, Kumaran and Kadavai were given to the Sinhalese.

This resettlement plan stretched as far as Seruwila. A story was fabricated saying that in Seruwila there was an ancient Buddhist temple. The government encouraged the Sinhala people to promote their cultural heritage in this so-called sacred place.

**Since 1827 - Tamil and Sinhala populations in Trincomalee district
Table is shown on language basis**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tamil Speaking</u>	<u>Sinhala Speaking</u>
1827	98.45%	1.53%
1881	90.72%	4.21%
1891	91.44%	4.3%
1901	89.04%	4.22%
1911	90.54%	3.82%
1921	92.13%	4.38%
1946	75.09%	20.68%
1953	78.8%	18.22%
1963	79.25%	19.9%
1971	70.2%	28.8%
1981	65.38%	33.62%

Padawiya Settlement

Padawiya is in the north of Thumpankadawa in the North Central Province. The government in its plan settled Sinhalese here also. Trincomalee's northern area is Kokkilai. In the south of Kokkilai lagoon lies Pulmoddai, a coastal town where Tamils lived. There was an abundance of corals in this region. The government wanted to export this coral and it settled Sinhalese in this area, so as to enable them to profit from the sale of the coral. The Sinhala government by means of its colonisation policy, settled many Sinhalese here. Padawiya Sripura administration came into being here.

On the borders of the District of Trincomalee, to the south there is Seruwila, to the west lies Kantalai, Morawewa, Kumarankadawa. To the north is Padawiya-Sripura became Sinhala settlements.

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Horse-Shoe settlement

Around Trincomalee the Sinhalese government created a Sinhala settlement in the shape of a horse-shoe.

In 1976 this horse-shoe shaped settlement became Seruwila, a separate constituency with a Sinhalese majority.

Musali-Manalaru

In the seventies the Sinhalese government planned to settle Sinhala colonists in the Northern Province.

In the southern Mannar District is Musali, the administration cleared the forests and resettled Sinhalese people.

On the coasts of Mullaitivu in the Vavuniya District lies Manalaru. ***This name is now changed to Weli Oya, a Sinhalese name.*** The government cleared the forests and settled Sinhalese prisoners and their families.

Fishermen settlements

The Sri Lankan Government encouraged Sinhalese fishing families from the south to come to the eastern coast and trouble the Tamil families who lived there. In the areas where the Sinhala people live the sea is deep. There are about 200 such places. In the Tamil areas the sea deepens step by step. The sea deepens after a few kilometres.

The Tamils carry out their cultivation all the months except during the months of October-December. Initially, the Sinhala fishermen worked closely with the Tamil fishermen. However, the Sinhalese fishermen slowly drove the Tamils away and took control of Musali, Chilavaturai, and Talaimannar in the west and Nayaru and Kalmunai which is a long stretch of sea coast in the east.

As time went, on the Sinhalese fishermen drove the Tamils away and occupied the following places; Nayaru, Kokkilai, Kuchaveli, the town of Trincomalee, Elakande, Verugal Panichankerni, Manokerni Punnaikuda Eravur, Batticaloa Chinna Mugathuvaaram, Kumari, Thirukovil. These places were all taken by the Sinhalese with the help of the government, which wanted to drive away the Tamil people from the places they had always inhabited.

The Five Point Plan

The Sinhala government's five-point plan to settle the Sinhala population was implemented as follows:

- (1) **Point One.** Along the Pattipola River, to Amparai and Kumanai.
- (2) **Point Two.** Allai, Kantalai, Seruwila.
- (3) **Point Three.** Padawiya, Manalaru.
- (4) **Point Four.** Wilpattu, Musali.
- (5) The **fifth Point** was to chase away the Tamil fishermen's families.

This was a step by step plan of encroachment to reduce Tamil lands.

In 1833 the Colebrook-Cameron Commission allocated approximately 26,500 sq.km as the Tamil People's Ancestral homeland.

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In 1901 when the nine provinces came into being, the Tamil administration of the Northern and Eastern Provinces measured approximately 19,100 sq.km. Due to some of the area being incorporated into the Sinhalese provinces, the Tamil area had been reduced by approximately 7,500 sq.km.

After 1948 the government's settlement plan deprived the Tamils of 7,000 sq.km. in the Eastern Province and 500 sq.km. in the Northern Province. Although the Tamils protested, the Colombo administration ignored the Tamils and settled Sinhalese in these regions.

Approximately 7,500 sq.km of Tamil land was plundered by the Sinhala Government's Demarcation and Resettlement Plan, when it came into operation. This has been taking place over the past fifty years.

Before 1833, 25% of Tamil speaking people occupied 35% of land, which was in their administration as Tamil ancestral homeland. In 1901 this area shrunk from 35% to 29%.

Within 162 years the Sinhalese have plundered 50% of the Tamil ancestral homeland and are still attempting to colonise more and more Tamil lands!

(The original text was produced in Tamil by the Author in 1980)

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The Island of Sri Lanka - 25 Districts



TAMIL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - TCHR

Le Centre Tamoul pour les Droits de l'Homme - CTCH

(Established in 1990)

Head Office

9, rue des Peupliers
95140 - Garges les Gonesse
FRANCE

E-mail : tchrgs@hotmail.com

Fax : 33 - 1- 40 38 28 74

Branches



Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
88, College Road
Manchester - M16 8FH
UNITED KINGDOM
E-mail : tchrdip@hotmail.com

Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
P.o. Box : 3174
Noble Park 3174
Victoria
AUSTRALIA
Fax: 61 - 3 - 95 46 63 48

Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
422F, Moodie Drive
Nepean
Ontario - K2H 8A6
CANADA

Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
Steelingmolen 43
1703 TE Heerhugowaard
THE NETHERLANDS
Tel/Fax : 31 - 72 - 57 15 801

Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
P.o.Box : 319
8172 - Niederglatt
SWITZERLAND

Tamil Centre for Human Rights - TCHR
homeschr Str-16
41189 - Monchengladbach
GERMANY