

29th June '85

PRESS RELEASE

EELAM LIBERATION ORGANISATIONS NOT TO PARTICIPATE
IN PEACE TALKS WITH SRI LANKA.

A JOINT STATEMENT

We, the United Front of four major liberation organisations, have made a collective decision not to participate in the proposed peace conference to be held in Bhutan in protest against serious violations of the ceasefire agreement by the Sri Lankan armed forces. While the Government of Sri Lanka has failed to implement the set of conditions stipulated by us to bring about a congenial condition of normality, the armed forces are continuously committing atrocities against the Tamil civilian population in the Northern and Eastern provinces. We have resolved not to participate in peace talks with Sri Lanka while our people are continuously subjected to military violence, while there is tension, terror and insecurity in our traditional homeland. We wish to point out that by perpetuating these hostile acts against the Tamil civilians, Sri Lanka has failed to honour the pledges given to the Government of India to bring about a cessation of hostilities and conditions of normality as a prelude to negotiations.

Appreciating the mediatory role and the good offices provided by the Government of India and accepting the assurances offered to us, we agreed to suspend all hostilities and to observe ceasefire for a stipulated time to help to create a congenial atmosphere and to facilitate the Government of Sri Lanka to put forward a concrete package of proposals for our consideration. We have also stipulated a set of pre-conditions for ceasefire aimed to create a condition of normality. We demanded that Sri Lanka should:

I. Withdraw the armed forces to the barracks.

2. Lift the restrictions on the movement of vehicles.
3. Withdraw the Emergency and Curfew Laws.
4. Lift the sea surveillance and prohibited zones.
5. Suspend the proposed aggressive colonisation with armed Sinhala settlers in the North and East.
6. Release all the political prisoners.

We have also demanded that the Sri Lankan Government should present a comprehensive programme for a political settlement following the declaration of ceasefire between the 10th and 12th week. We have stated categorically that the resumption of negotiations is conditional upon our acceptance of the proposed framework. We have taken this position as a consequence of a long and bitter historical experience of deceptions and betrayals by successive Sri Lankan Governments who have consistently resisted a fair and honourable settlement to the Tamil problem. It is also well known that Sri Lanka had abrogated several pacts and proposals and had failed to implement agreements.

Through the mediation of India, the Government of Sri Lanka had agreed to abide by our conditions and unilaterally proclaimed a ceasefire on the 18th of June '85 without mutual agreement on the date of commencement of ceasefire. We responded positively by suspending all hostilities anticipating that Sri Lanka would systematically implement the pre-conditions for ceasefire. While we have been observing ceasefire in the true spirit of the truce agreement Sri Lankan armed forces are continuing military atrocities by harrasing and slaughtering innocent Tamil civilians.

The armed forces are not confined to barracks but rather carry on with cordon, search and arrest operations, particularly in the Eastern province. Tension and terror prevails in Trincomalee

and several areas of Batticaloa District as Army, Navy and police commandos carry out midnight raids plundering Tamil houses, assaulting people and raping women. Several unarmed innocent youths have been killed in cold blood in Mannar, Murunkan and Muthur areas and their dead bodies burnt to erase all identity.

Tamil refugees from Trincomalee district are shot at and chased away when they attempt to re-settle in their burnt out villages. Tamil farmers were fired at when they attempted to enter their rice fields to reap their harvest.

Though the Government formally declared the suspension of the naval surveillance zone and the prohibited zone the Tamil fishermen are continuously harrassed, assaulted and fired at. The Tamil fishermen are terrorised to venture out in the sea.

Though the Sri Lankan government has pledged to lift all restrictions on the movement of people and to withdraw emergency regulations, the Security Forces continue road blocks and search operations and curfew hours are still in force. The Government has also not taken any measures to release nearly 2000 innocent Tamil youths who are kept in custody in various military camps.

The most outrageous of all is the belligerent statement issued by Mr. Lalith Athulathmuthali, Minister of National Security over the Sri Lankan radio that Sri Lankan government will not implement the conditions laid down by Tamil liberation organisations towards cessation of hostilities. Such a statement clearly indicates that the Government of Sri Lanka has no sincere intention to observe ceasefire to create a congenial atmosphere.

The Sri Lankan Government has also rejected our major demand that a comprehensive package of proposals have to be submitted for our consideration. Instead their strategy seems to be to en

us into a futile exercise of exchanging ideas and exploring problems at a round table conference.

The Front also wishes to place on record its reservations on the self-proclaimed role of the T.U.L.F as the political force which would give leadership and guidance to the 'militants' in the proposed peace talks. We have taken a firm position that since the T.U.L.F. does not enjoy the confidence of our people and have lost all credibility as a political organisation, it must abdicate its assumed role as the legitimate representative of the Eelam people. This is also manifest in the fact that the T.U.L.F. had chosen to remain silent on instances of atrocities meted out to our people by the armed forces after the so-called 'cessation of hostilities'. This raises serious doubts regarding the T.U.L.F's capacity to adhere to strict principles and to employ correct tactics during the course of the proposed peace talks.

As the Front has repeatedly stated in its earlier joint statements on the proposed peace talks, we wish to once again reiterate our utmost confidence in the initiatives taken by the government of India to bring about a negotiated settlement that would guarantee the honour and dignity of our people. We earnestly request the government of India to pressurise the Sri Lankan government to adhere to the ceasefire agreement to create a conducive atmosphere of peace and normality.

Political Committee
Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam



Eelam People's Revolutionary
Liberation Front.

Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation

Executive Revolutionary
Committee

Eelam Revolutionary
Organisation