

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS INC.

P.O.Box 215 Enfield NSW 2136
Email:tamand@ozemail.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

14th June 2005

Little hope for the Tamils within a united Sri Lanka

The Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations joins the International Federation of Tamils in alerting the Australian Government and the Australian people to the current situation in the Island of Sri Lanka, which do not augur too well for a negotiated political solution.

- In Colombo and in Kandy, the Buddhist clergy and the ultra Sinhala nationalists are up in arms in a sustained attempt to thwart the establishment of a joint mechanism to deliver aid to the survivors of tsunami in the Tamil Homeland. The protests are reminiscent of the 1950's and 1960's, which led Sinhalese leaders to abrogate pacts with the Tamil leadership for limited autonomy.
- In Trincomalee in the East, statues of the Buddha have been erected in a blatant attempt to provoke the people. The Government has defied the order of the Supreme Court to remove the statues in a continuing attempt to provoke unrest.
- The court on 27 May 2005 has freed all the accused on charges of mass murder of 28 Tamil inmates and attempted murder of 14 others at the Bindunuwewa Rehabilitation Centre on 25 October 2000, in a decision strongly condemned by the Asian Centre of Human Rights in its report of 2nd June 2005 as follows: "***The ethnic biases have plagued the administration of justice in Sri Lanka. It has been almost impossible for the ethnic minority Tamils to obtain justice. The impunity accorded by the Sri Lankan government to the perpetrators of racial violence has increased the alienation of the ethnic minority Tamils.***"
- In the East in general, the situation is ominous with Tamil academics, journalists, civilians and members of the LTTE being killed almost on a daily basis. A situation that has prompted commentators to describe this situation a 'shadow war'.
- The abduction and murder, just a month ago of, Dharmaratnam Sivaram, a Tamil journalist has been described by a New York based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) as a chilling message to the Tamil people and a blatant attempt to silence their voice.

It is abundantly clear that there is little chance of the Sinhala political establishment accepting the Tamil people's right to self determination. The Tamil people who have paid dearly in the course of their war of liberation call on the international community to heed our call to live in freedom and dignity.

We call on the Australian people and the Australian Government to take into account the advice given by the International League for the Rights of Peoples at the 61st Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights earlier this year "that time is running out; that there is no hope for the Tamils within a united Sri Lanka, that their only chance lies in fighting for external self-determination."

Ana Pararajasingham 0402 904 032 & Soma Somasundaram 0411 872 819