

AUSTRALASIAN FEDERATION OF TAMIL ASSOCIATIONS INC.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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TAMIL TIGERS DENY CHILD SOLDIER RECRUITMENT CHARGE

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have rejected the charge by the University Teachers For Human Rights - UTHR(J) as a deliberate ploy by Sri Lanka's President Kumaratunge. The Australasian Federation of Tamil Associations (AFTA) refers to the LTTE's spokesman Anton Balasingham's outright rejection of this charge by stating that: *"President Kumaratunga has consistently sought to undermine Norway's peace initiative, seeking a military confrontation instead of reasoned dialogue, It was her fanatical opposition to peace which led to her government being thrown out by the people last December"*

According to Mr. Balasingham, the Tamil Tigers are indeed actively recruiting young men and women, but above the age of seventeen to expand the movement's political and administrative wings. He said this recruitment drive was to meet the inevitable political and administrative needs when peace and normalcy are restored due to the efforts now being spearheaded by the Norwegian government.

The UTHR(J) is an organization frequently quoted by Chandrika Kumaratunge in her attempts to demonise the LTTE and thus deflect criticisms leveled at her own atrocious record as a perpetrator of gross human rights violations. At a recent interview on CNN. Mrs. Kumaratunge sought to deflect reports by the State Department of the USA and The Human Rights Watch (a US based NGO) by citing the UTHR(J) reports in her defence. Although the Jaffna University has disassociated itself with UTHR(J), it continues to masquerade as representing the Jaffna University teachers.

UTHR(J) is a Colombo based organization run by two former University lecturers of the Jaffna University whose own prejudices and personal bias form the basis of the Organization's report. The organization is not an independent body. We call upon the international media to contact the Jaffna University authorities to ascertain for itself the creditability of this organization so that not only facts may be distinguished from malicious propaganda, but also the axis of evil that is attempting to derail the peace process in Sri Lanka is exposed.

Truth is always the first casualty in war and particularly so in Sri Lanka's war without witnesses.

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