

Ill/Elusive Peace:



Minority Politics in Post-War Sri Lanka and the Canadian Tamil Diaspora

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**Burghers &
Eurasians**
0.3%

Malays
0.3%

Others
0.3%

SL Muslims
9%

**Indian
Tamils**
4%

**Sri Lankan
Tamils**
11%

Sinhalese
75%

Population of Sri Lanka by Ethnic Group, 2012



Conflict in Sri Lanka

- **Ethnic Tensions:** 1956(?) - 1983
- **Civil War:** 1983 - 2009
- **Main rebel group:** Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
 - Led by Velupillai Prabhakaran
 - Fighting for separate state known as “Tamil Eelam”
 - Overtly and officially a secular group
- **Tamil Diaspora:**
 - **Canada:** around 200,000
 - **United Kingdom:** around 120,000
 - **United States:** under 50,000
- Diaspora leaders accused of fundraising, engaging in sophisticated propaganda campaigns, radicalizing the youth of the community, and political lobbying on behalf of the Tigers.



From Post-War to Post-Conflict?



“Whilst we are in a post-war situation- the guns having fallen silent following the military defeat of the LTTE – I do not think we are in a post-conflict one, defined in terms of one in which the roots of conflict are not being sustained and certainly not being reproduced”

-Pakiasothy Saravanamuttu,
Centre for Policy Alternatives
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Post-War Sri Lanka

- Civil War comes to end in May 2009
- 40,000-70,000 Tamil civilians killed
- LTTE defeated
- President Mahinda Rajapaksa's agenda to "create a Sinhala Buddhist hegemonic state."



[1] Livelihood Issues

Virtually no permanent structures in the resettled areas in the Killinochchi, Mannar, and Mullaitivu Districts



A large number of households are now headed by women – 89,000 war widows

[2] Ex-LTTE Combatants



Forced Conscription



- LTTE's "one family, one person" policy - 2006
- "We shot them, threw away our guns, and ran." Niroshan's statement hung in the air for a while. He reflected on it, and then smiled.
- **Forcibly recruited** by the LTTE at age 16
- Hours after being taken to the front lines, he hatched a scheme with another like-minded youth, deciding to flee when the opportunity presented itself. The Tiger leadership, accustomed to having many of these new recruits vanish from their clutches, had installed "watchers" to ensure that they continued fighting. **Niroshan and his friend waited until two of these watchers became distracted, and then shot them dead.**

[3] Islamophobia

facebook.com/retajethya.lk

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 සිවුන්වම විනාශයට
 පත්කරනු ලබයි!

RED NOTICE

මෙතෙම ගියෙන් තව
 නොබෝ කලකින්...

සිංහල 61%
භයානක නොවේද?

පසුගිය 2011 ජන සංගණනය බෙහෙවින් අනතුරුදායකය!
 එහි මුස්ලිම් ජනගහණය පෙරට සාපේක්ෂව සීඝ්‍රයෙන් වැඩි වෙමින් ඇති අතර
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 ඇත... තවද එම කෝට් ගණනක් වියදම් කර සිදු කළ ජන සංගණනයෙහි
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 කාගරක/ගම්බද ආදී වශයෙන්වත් කිසිදු වස්තූන්මක ගතකැඩ දෙයක් නොමැත.
 මේ වන විටත් මුස්ලිම් මහමොළුකාරයින් මුදල් බලයට හිචිරෙදී සංවිකල්වණ
 සහ රටක පැවැත්මට අත්‍යවශ්‍ය තොරතුරු රටටම රහස්ව සැකවා ඇත!

රටට අවශ්‍ය විටදී පමණ ඉක්මවා ඉවසීම, හිටව කමයි! සිංහලයිනි, නිපු නොසිට නැතිවියවි...
 රටෙහිදී කැමැත්තට මුදා හරින ලද සාමාන්‍ය මනා මුස්ලිම්වරුන්ට මෙහිදී රටේ බහුමුහුණතක් මෙන්ම මෙය ඉතා ඉතා වැදගත් නොවේද?

රට ජාතියට ආදරේ ඇති සිංහල ඔබට හැකි පමණින්, මුද්‍රණය කර මේය බෙදා හරින්න.

"If it goes on like this, the Sinhalese 61% is in danger, is it not? The census is 2011 is extremely dangerous. In it, the Muslim population in comparison to the past is rapidly increasing and their average rate of growth already exceeds 75%."

"Even now, Muslim conspirators using money and power have hidden the correct census data as well as information vital for the country's existence!"



Buddhists Questioning Bodu Bala Sena

5,688 likes · 22 talking about this

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Community

A place to discuss the Bodu Bala Sena's actions, techniques, motives, and goals, and question whether they are in line with the Dhamma.

About – Suggest an Edit



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Events



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STAND AGAINST RACISM

SPEAK AGAINST HATE SPEECH

STAND AGAINST RACISM

Anti Bodu Bala Sena

6,718 likes · 68 talking about this

👍 Like Message ⚙️ ▼

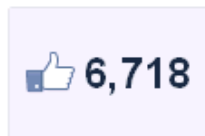
Community

This Group is not against Buddhism. We love our Sri Lanka and the culture. LIKE US IF U SUPPORT FOR PEACEFUL SRI LANKA "WE WANT ONE SRI LANKA. SUPPORT FOR PEACE"

About – Suggest an Edit



Photos



Likes



Twitter

Tamil-Muslim Relations?



- **Islamophobic upsurge:**

- Dambulla
- Fashion Bug attack
- Grand Pass mosque attack

Luke Browne | April 22, 2012 17:54

Sri Lanka orders controversial Dambulla mosque to relocate

Government says mosque lies in area sacred to Buddhism and must be removed.

Muslim Owned Fashion Bug Is Attacked By A Mob Led By Buddhist Monks

March 28, 2013 | Filed under: Colombo Telegraph, Most Popular, News, STORIES | Posted by: COLOMBO_TELEGRAPH



By [Colombo Telegraph](#) -

Grandpass Muslim Prayer Centre Attacked, Armed Forces Deployed

August 10, 2013 | Filed under: Colombo Telegraph, Most Popular, News, Popular Stories, STORIES | Posted by: COLOMBO_TELEGRAPH



Diaspora Debates and Responses

Is the Diaspora into Development?



- There is of course some diaspora involvement with issues of development post-war, but not enough.
- Why?
- [1] Leadership rivalries between a variety of organizations has precluded joint development ventures in Sri Lanka.
- [2] Debate about whether it is *ethically defensible* to help the people in the country, particularly when providing this help requires, on some level, *working with* the Rajapaksa government and the military presence in the North and East of Sri Lanka.

- Argument that Tamil struggle is being criminalized in Canada, just as in Sri Lanka.
- Not a new conversation in the community, but has increased following the end of the war.

FROM TS·PETEN TO TAMIL EELAM: LIBERATION STRUGGLES ARE NOT TERRORISM!

Criminalizing People's Liberation Movements:

SCRAP THE SO-CALLED TERRORIST LIST!



'TERRORIST'?

Tamil Rally in Ottawa, Monday, Oct. 28, 2013

Updated on Tuesday · Taken at Parliament Hill, Ottawa. 🌐

Tamil Canadians gathered at the Parliament Hill, Ottawa to thank the Government of Canada and all major political parties for their stand with respect to CHOGM Commonwealth conference due to be held in Sri Lanka, in November 2013. PM Steven Harper has announced that he will not be attending the conference.



So while the problem of government policies affecting minorities is one important side of the coin, the other is to make sure that the government, and government representatives, don't become pawns in the chess matches taking place between diaspora organizations.

Thank You!

Questions?

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