

# Human Rights and Recent Trends: A Special Reference to Sri Lankan Genocide and India's Diplomatic Failure in the Indian Ocean Region - Geostrategic Politics

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## **Abstract**

*This article explores the history of the Sri Lankan Tamils genocide and its international response. It also focuses the China factor in the internal dynamics of Sri Lanka, and how India lost its sphere of influence in Sri Lankan geopolitics and the Indian Ocean Region. It has studied the implication of the civil war (Eelam war IV) in Sri Lanka and final phase of war, in which the Sri Lankan armed forces have violated the Human Rights. It examines the present situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka whom are facing psychological warfare under the Sri Lankan government. This paper evaluates the failure of India's diplomacy in the Indian Ocean Regions and entry of China's domination in the Indian Ocean Region and its control the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) by the help of the Sri Lankan government.*

**Key Words:** *India, Sri Lanka, Geopolitics, Indian Ocean Region, Human Rights, Diplomacy, genocide and Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs)*

## **I. Introduction**

The Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated during the general election campaign in Tamil Nadu in 1991. That incident has changed the Indian Government's approach toward the LTTE, which later recognized it as a terrorist organization. Nevertheless, in 1990s the LTTE organization became the most influential prototypical terrorist organization in the state as well as the Indian Ocean Region (De Voorde, 2005). In this connection, India has shown antagonistic approach toward the Sri Lankan Tamils issue.

The long ethnic clash between Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) came to an end in May 2009. Eventually, India has supported the right of the Government of Sri Lanka to

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operate against ethnic forces. Meanwhile, it expressed its deep worry at the difficulty of the regular Tamil civilian population, highlighting that their civil and political rights and welfare should not get entangled in conflict against the LTTE.

The demand for a separate state for Eelam through a political resolution of the ethnic problem has been reiterated by India. India's stable situation was in favour of a negotiated, diplomatic and political resolution, which was agreeable to both ethnic groups within the schedule of an integrated Sri Lanka and which is trustworthy with democracy, pluralism and admiration for human rights.

India has unquestionably the external power with the supreme role to take part in Sri Lankan domestic politics which is predominated by ethnic issues. Eelam issue is deeply connected to the heritage historical relationship with southern Indian periphery. In pre-colonial period of Sri Lanka, there were circumstances while British Indian law did include northern Sri Lanka. Although the British colonial government assured that Sri Lanka was not swallowed up by Indian government; a lot of Tamil citizens on two sides of the narrow Palk Straits preferential to emphasize the cultural relation that connect India's southern state of Tamil Nadu with the northern and eastern region of Sri Lanka (De Silva, 1981).

In May 17, 2009 the civil war in Sri Lanka came to an end after defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by the Sri Lankan armed forces. India is consistently entangled throughout the Eelam wars because Tamil refugees and the formation of an LTTE groups in southern India. Most remarkably, the vast interest of the Indian Tamils in the state of Tamil Nadu has given influence to Tamil ethnics fellows in Sri Lanka.

The years from 2006 to 2009, negotiation process initiated by Norway has crumpled for cease fire in Sri Lanka which escalated the ethnic war, till the armed forces defeated of the LTTE in May 2009. These actions went along with a huge amount of civilian deaths and material losses; war crimes and human rights violations committed by sides. This crime against humanity has done by the Sri Lankan government. After war, it has displaced tens of thousands civilians which are mainly Tamils similar to the Nazi camps in Germany (Destradi, 2012).

Knowing that, India has kept silence and did not interference the reconciliation of the Tamil ethnic crisis after the war. Moreover, the political parties representing the Tamils in Tamil Nadu State were dominated under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition in India (Destradi, 2012). The anticipation of a productive Indian commitment in the Eelam war would have reinforced India's longstanding significance in its peaceful pledge. India had, actually, been strongly concerned in Sri Lanka's ethnic issues since the 1980s and had frequently highlighted its preference for a political arrangement in the island's cruel disagreement. Still, it turned out that India ultimately did not act as a peacekeeper and did not sincerely engage to prevent the massacres in Sri Lanka. Instead, from 2007 onwards, the Indian governments silently supported the Sri Lankan government's military offense and war crimes against the Tamil speaking citizens and LTTE, even primarily against and opposing the investigation of war crimes by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) after hostilities finished (Destradi, 2012).

India's primary interest in the ethnic civil war and the most significant event in the final years of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka subsequently assessed India's strategy during the Eelam war IV, from July 2006 to May 2009.

As seen, India's disconnection from 1991 to 2006 can essentially be explained by chronological and internal reasons. Regarding the former, the disappointment of India's IPKFs prohibited the LTTE entry in India after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991. Despite the pressure put by the regional political parties in Tamil Nadu, the central government of India has indirectly supported to the Sri Lankan government.

Sri Lanka has emerged as a self confident nation after the failure of LTTE in the Eelam genocide and war crime under the Mahinda Rajapaksa's rule. He was very popular at the time of Eelam genocide, and there was no worthwhile leader to challenge him in the near future. This let him make all key important decisions including those strategic and security related issues regarding Eelam genocide (Hariharan, 2013)

## **II. Human Rights Violations and War Crimes**

After the end of Eelam War IV, Sri Lankan defense force had become a strong force which has capable of preparing and performing multifaceted operations involving many formations and military forces on multiple axes. Their military personal strength is about 170,000 personnel which categorized in 19 divisions and some independent brigades. The divisions are lesser than Indian infantry divisions in terms of number and weapons.

During the war, the entire operation was pointed out as an organized genocide of the Tamil ethnic minority community in Sri Lanka, accomplished in the name of counter-terrorism. There was a small reality in the statement by the Government of Sri Lanka that it would hold back from the exercise of heavy weapons including cluster bombs. Almost immediately following the declaration by the Government of Sri Lanka gained help of a hundred crore Indian rupees at rehabilitation work in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka was given by the Indian Government, Sri Lankan armed forces began to use grave arsenal including KFIR jets and cluster bombs from the same day of April 27, 2009 resulting in the death casualty of above one hundred civilians (Manivannan, Human Rights situation in Sri Lankan and Indian response: Narrative Refugees/Survivors, 2010).

The 'war for peace' (Eelam war IV) has been reasoned for huge amount of civilian casualties and dislocation. For example, many of them from Killinochchi and Mullaitivu have been dislocated and presently, there are in excess of 2.8 Lakh Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government has deployed 29 impermanent military camps in the districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Jaffna (Mayilvaganan, 2009). Nevertheless, the bulk of IDPs, projected at 230,000 people, exist in Manik Farms IDPs rehabilitation camp in Vavuniya District. Unexpectedly, many of them are positioning up in provisional welfare centers or camps, upright quickly to residence the fleeing civilians from the insurgent controlled region at the boundaries of the conflict or war zone. Furthermore, those 100,000 individuals, who were dislocated during 2008, are still stuck in welfare campground in Vavuniya and some other places in a depressed status with no good resettlement and gathering of their family members (Kumar, 2010).

In return to the humanitarian crisis, the Rajapaksa government had manipulated the situation and received worldwide supports. His government misused these funds rather to provide fundamental facilities to dislocated people residing in different camps, IDPs revisit packages that have been commenced including shelter material, cash

grants comparable to US\$220 with supplementary subsidies for farmers. And a six-month food contribution, counting USAID/FFP supplies, distributed by the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) (USAID Report, Sri Lanka: Complex Emergency, 2009).

The United Nations ordered Sri Lanka's support with efforts to visit the war affected regions and called for the Red Cross society to investigate in the war affected regions. The Government of Sri Lanka cleanly brushed off these calls for peace and civilian safety. An UN representative, John Holmes, briefed the circumstances, on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009, "...continues to be critical, civilian casualties have been tragically high and their suffering horrendous..." (Manivannan, Sri Lanka Hiding the Elephant: Documenting Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, 2014).

The 1996 Genocide Law has categorized the cases into four and this classification particularly adds property crimes to those sketched in the 1948 Genocide Convention. We may scrutinize here that the Government of Sri Lanka has committed war crimes. Since May 2009, Sri Lankan government has forcefully annexed the private properties and community based common lands.

Given the current situation and response of the Government of Sri Lanka, it is hard to imagine a circumstance where the Sri Lankan government came ahead on its own or under pressure from the international community to constitute a court of the State for open a trial against the war crimes and crimes against humanity which were committed by the Sri Lankan defence force. Human Rights activists stated that the resources and methods used by the Sri Lankan government in the name of counter-terrorism and war against terrorism accounted more than the war crimes and crimes against mankind and humanity.

The process of ethnic termination has been pursued by the Sri Lankan government with the responsibility of military and political institutions like what the Nazis have done during the World War II. The genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka has taken place for sixty years. There need the enforcement of the international punishing committee to inspect the violent which is committed against the Tamils in Sri Lanka. All liable to be punished by acts enclosed under Article III of the Genocide Convention can be practiced in the case of the Sri Lankan condition.

### **III. Tamils in Sri Lanka Current Situation**

According to the report of the 'Eezha Tamizhar Vazhvurimai Kootamaippu' which had visited four districts in the northern region and two districts in the eastern region between 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The seven member team has talked to the media. They were interviewed above 300 people, which consist of a huge number of women and superior officials of the Sri Lankan government whom are connected to a 'structural genocide' of the Tamil People.

Henri Tiphagne, a well-known activist, said: "The Lankan government has launched a planned attack on the Tamil community by destroying their identities. Tamils living in Sri Lanka are under the constant threat of harassment and have lost their livelihood." (Thanthi, 2018) Approximately 97,000 widows in the Northern region

and above 37,000 widows in the eastern region survive in the continuous fear of sexual harassment. Each woman stated that they were secured before 2009 when LTTE was there. However now they are absorbed with fright.

Professor RamuManivannan said, “The drugs are targeted at Tamil youth to destroy them culturally. While people can’t take a book inside the area but drugs are freely distributed to the youngsters with the aid of the Sri Lankan government and Military.”(Thanthi, 2018)Professor Ramu Manivannan is one of the fact finding group. For each 10 kilometers in Jaffna, there are six army camps apart from camps set up by the Navy, Special Task Forces and Air Force. People could not see outside their houses either in the morning or in the evenings after their work. It is because of the intense military existence(Thanthi, 2018). The failure of India’s diplomatic intervention in the Sri Lankan conflicts has given strategic advantage to China’s entry in the Indian Ocean Regions. It has created a strategic vulnerable toward India through Indian Ocean Region.

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