

# SAVING SAMPUR சம்பூர்

ETHNIC CLEANSING OF TAMILS IN SRI LANKA  
WITH INDIAN COMPLICITY



## **Pictures (from left to right)**

**Row 1: (a)** 5/9/11 - Mr Arup Roy Choudhuri (right), Chairman and MD, NTPC, and Prof Wimaladharm Abeywickrema, CEB Chairman, after signing the joint venture agreement in Colombo regarding the proposed Coal power plant in Sampur<sup>1</sup>. The Tamils who were ethnic cleansed from their ancestral lands in Sampur were never consulted.

**(b)** An image of Murugan desecrated by Sinhalese in Muthur, 2010<sup>2</sup>. Many Hindu temples have been destroyed by Sinhalese after the government took control of areas formerly under the LTTE. In many cases Buddhist temples have been built in their place<sup>3</sup>.

**Row 2: (a)** A coal power station emitting large amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases which cause environmentally hazardous acid-rain (1 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per 100MW). Poisonous mercury is also released to the air. Neighbouring Tamil areas will be affected with micro-particle dust from burning coal. Furthermore, boiling water from the cooling pipes will be discharged into the sea, consequently depleting the fish stock along the coast. The livelihood of Tamil fisher families will be endangered.

**(b)** A victim of Sri Lankan air force (SLAF) bombing being treated in Sampur hospital in April 2006.

**Row 3: (a)** The remains of a mother and child in Sampur following SLAF bombing in April 2006.

**(b)** Another young victim of the indiscriminate bombing and shelling of Sampur in 2006.

**(c)** 2500 members of 794 uprooted families from Sampur have been suffering without sufficient water for drinking and bathing purposes in temporary shelters in Trincomalee district. The Sri Lankan government has prevented them from returning home.

“In Sampoor 16, 000 people were shelled out from a very fertile area, killing 350 persons, to grab 700 acres for a power plant. It was so simple. They were Tamils!”

- ***Rajan Hoole, Martin Ennals award winning rights activist - June 7, 2004<sup>4</sup>***

“Our armed forces have captured Sampur for the welfare and benefit of the people living there.”

- ***President Mahinda Rajapakse, on September 4 2006***

“There are over one hundred tanks and thousands of villagers’ lands in the area. We have our kovils numbering over twenty. It is even difficult to think of leaving our villages and settle in a different place. We humbly beg the government to give back our lands and resettle all of us. If not we are prepared to sacrifice anything in the struggle for our rights”

- ***Sampur Refugee to the BBC, 20 June, 2007<sup>5</sup>***

## Introduction

This week the Indian government announced with much fanfare the bilateral agreement between itself and the Sri Lankan government to build a \$700 million coal power plant in Sampur in eastern Sri Lanka<sup>6</sup> (Muthur, Trincomalee district):

“Representatives of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) on Tuesday signed a Joint Venture and share holder agreement in Colombo to set up the plant, the second coal power plant in the country. This will be NTPC’s first overseas venture. This will also be India’s largest project with Sri Lanka.”<sup>6</sup>

One fact that was completely omitted by the Indian media coverage that quickly followed the announcement was that the proposed power plant would be built over contested land. Land that had for centuries been inhabited by Tamil people. Land that had been ethnic cleansed of these Tamil inhabitants just five years ago.

In September 2006 the Sri Lankan army captured the Tamil area of Sampur in Trincomalee district from the LTTE. In the process they indiscriminately bombed and shelled over 40,000 civilians from southern Trincomalee forcing them away from their homes and villages<sup>7-8</sup>. Over 300 civilians were killed in this onslaught and scores were injured<sup>4</sup>.



Some of the children from Muthur East who were injured by Sri Lankan army bombing in 2007

In December 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the governments of Sri Lanka and India agreeing to build a power plant in Sampur.

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 President Mahinda Rajapaska issued a gazette notification declaring Sampur and Muthur East as a high security zone (HSZ), an area barred for Tamil civilians.



President Mahinda Rajapaska with Sonia Gandhi, the president of the ruling Congress Party, which was a key ally in Sri Lanka's [war effort](#).

The Sampur refugees at first were displaced south to transit camps in Batticaloa in 2006. Two and a half years on, the government forcibly relocated (sometimes at gunpoint) thousands of the Sampur refugees from Batticaloa to overpopulated transit centres elsewhere in Trincomalee:

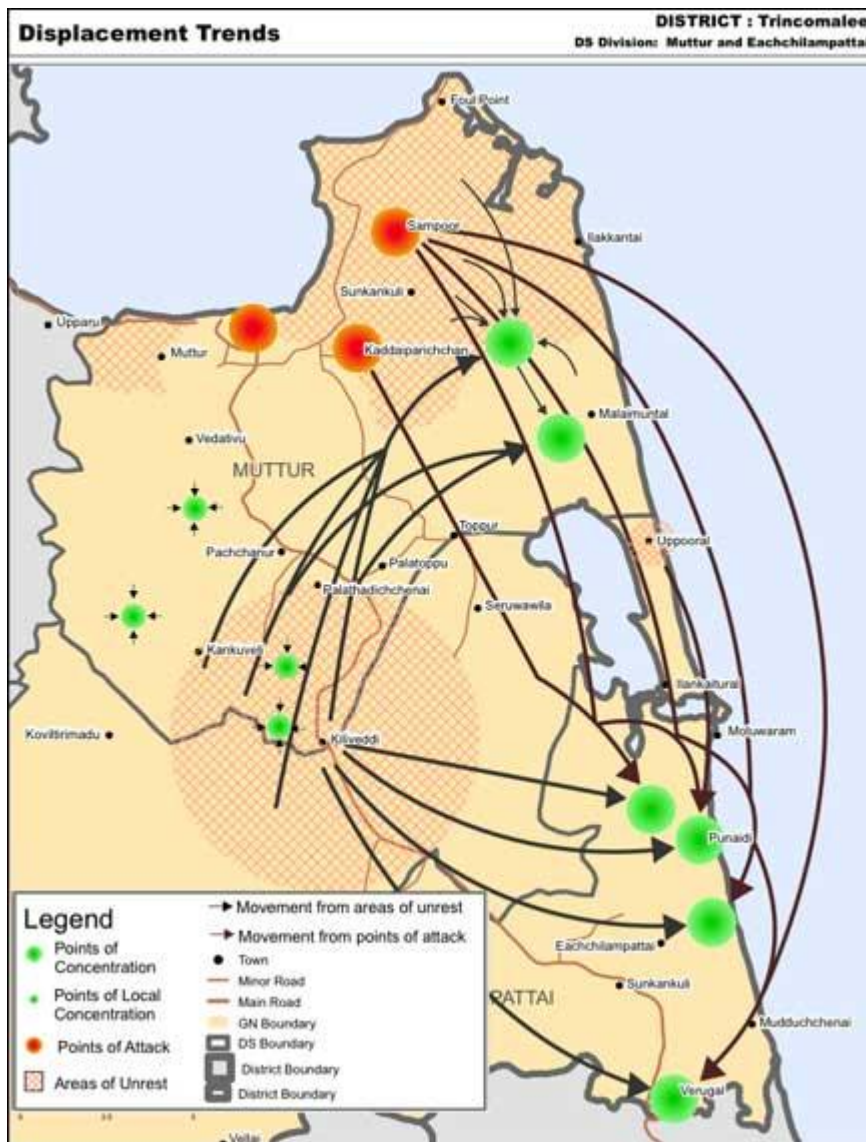
“We were brought here by force and through cunning, the man says angrily. Forty buses arrived with boards stating Sampur. Therefore we thought we were being taken back to our villages and our homes. But we were brought here to this transit centre instead, he laments.

"We can't go out. We are like prisoners. We like to at least go to Batticaloa but we can't. We are forced to stay here," - Sampur IDP<sup>9</sup>



“It is the despair in the eyes of the mothers as they clutched their new born babies - babies born under a dirty tent, on a mattress of sand, flies and mud”<sup>9</sup>  
*Sonali Samarasinghe's [description](#) of a Sampur IDP camp in 2007*

These transit centres were often in uninhabitable areas plagued by jungle, poor sanitation and inadequate water supplies. Even now families frequently fail to find sufficient water for drinking as well as for bathing. Shelter is little more than tin sheets. Due to these prevailing conditions the families living here are prone to disease especially during times of cold and hot weather. Medical facilities are virtually non-existent.



UN map displaying the displacement trends in 2006 following SLA bombardment of Muttur.

The Sri Lankan government has consistently blocked any attempt for the Tamil refugees to return to their ancestral lands and is instead preoccupied with settling Sinhala colonists and workers in to what it has now designated a 'special economic zone'.

This government drive to deprive Tamils of their ancestral lands is also based on the ideological belief that Tamils are foreign invaders who stole land that

belongs to Sinhala Buddhists. Thus the desire for land anywhere in the North-East to create new Sinhala colonies becomes a birthright in Sinhala eyes.



Morris Fernando, chief of Sinhala fishermen settled by the government on lands ethnic cleansed of Tamils in Muthur. [France 24 report](#) (27/3/2010)

The people of Sampur have constantly protested their eviction. At first a fundamental rights petition was directed at Sri Lanka's Supreme Court requesting it to order the authorities to allow them to resettle in their ancestral land. This was dismissed outright by the chief Justice Sarath Silva<sup>10</sup>.



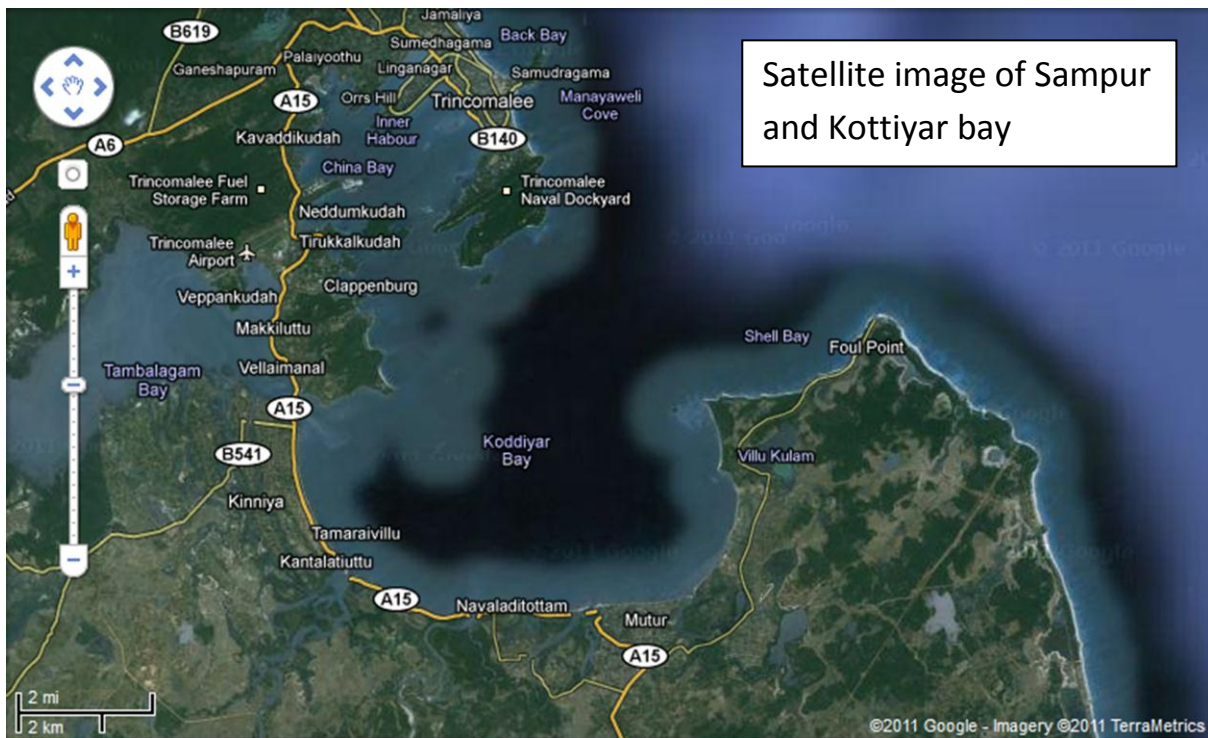
A petition was also handed over to the UNHCR Batticaloa office with over 1000 signatures to be handed over to the head of the UNHCR in Geneva<sup>5</sup>

“Since the declaration of the area as High Security Zone [HSZ], the Board of Investment declared Sampur are as a designated Free Trade Zone [FTZ].

The petitioners say that they are intrigued by the decision where the area is declared unsafe to inhabit, it is going to be used for business activities.”<sup>11</sup>

Five years on the people are Sampur are once again being let down by the international community to which their repeated appeals have been falling on

deaf ears. To this very day they languish in abysmal conditions in transit camps with little hope for the future.



India's duplicitous role in preaching reconciliation and rehabilitation of Tamils whilst at the same time being complicit in ethnic cleansing makes this sordid affair all the more despicable.



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa after the signing of agreements between the two countries at Hyderabad House in New Delhi ([10/6/10](#))



## Demographic history of the region

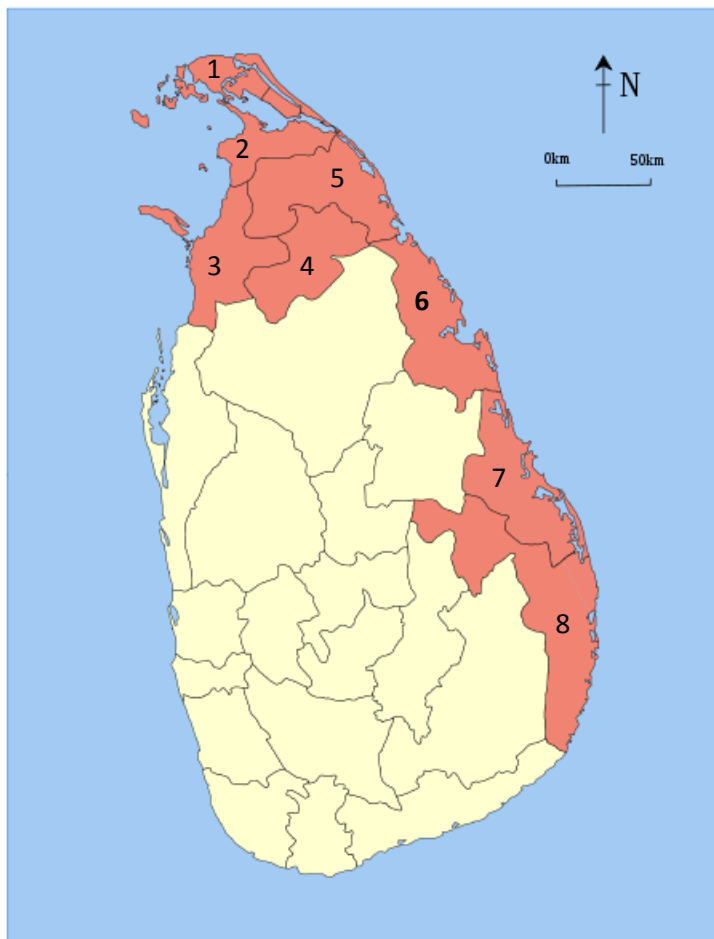


Fig 1:

The North-Eastern districts of Sri Lanka (highlighted in red)

### DISTRICT KEY

1. Jaffna
2. Kilinochchi
3. Mannar
4. Vavuniya
5. Mullaitivu
- 6. Trincomalee\***
7. Batticaloa
8. Amparai

Sampur is located in the Muthur division (part of the historical Kottiyar Pattu region) in Trincomalee (6).

### Trincomalee District

Trincomalee district is noted for the ancient Koneswaram temple from which it derives its name, Thirukonamalai (திருகோணமலை). This exact name is first attested to a 10<sup>th</sup> century Tamil inscription found in Nilaveli in the district<sup>13</sup>. The temple is also mentioned in the hymms of Tamil Saiva saints such as Sampanthan in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed it was venerated by both Tamil and Sinhala kings alike, most notably the 11<sup>th</sup> century monarch Gajabahu II who was clearly a staunch devotee of Siva:

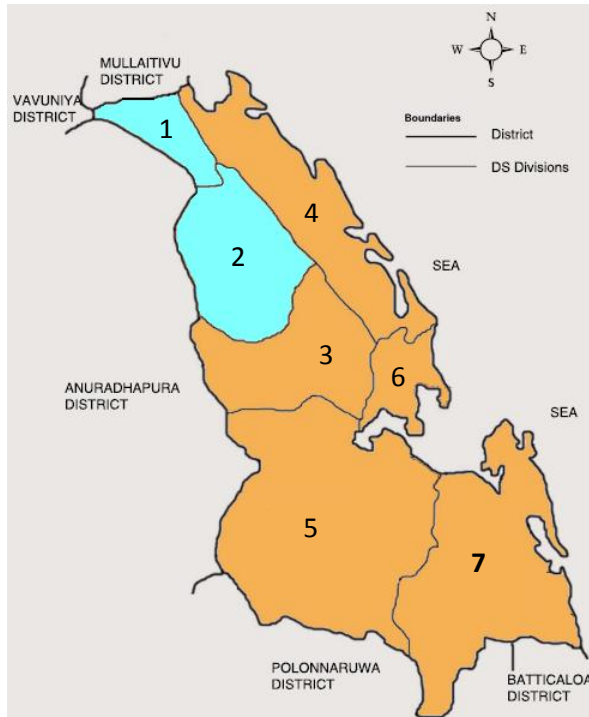
“He performed Brahmanical sacrifices, worshipped at the Saiva shrine of Koneswaram in Trincomalee and spent his last days in the Brahmana settlement at Kantalay.” (Indrapala 2005)<sup>13</sup>

In 1622 Portuguese iconoclasts destroyed the temple and used its materials to build a fort:

“The Koneswaram temple, around which the religious, political and economic organisation of society in the district revolved, was destroyed and re-used as building material for the fort that was built right next to it. By doing so, De Sa cut the ritual heart out of the vanniya-ship of Trincomalee. As the constituent vanniya-ships of Kottiyar Pattu, Kattukulam Pattu and Thampalakamam Pattu had no more obligations to the temple, the political connectedness of the district disintegrated. Not long afterwards, the Kantale tank and its paddy fields in Kantale and Thampalakamam were abandoned, and the population fled to Kottiyar Pattu.” (Gaasbeek 2010)<sup>14</sup>

The census of 1827 suggests that the Tamil speaking population of Trincomalee exceeded over 18,000, whilst there was only 250 Buddhists present at the time<sup>15</sup>. From 1827-1921 the Sinhala population of the district never exceeded 5% of the total population<sup>15-19</sup>.

According to the censuses of 1911 & 1921 the only division of Trincomalee district that had a Sinhala majority was Kaddukulam West<sup>18, 19</sup>. Here in this sparsely populated dry zone area of the interior were small Kandyan villages with a Sinhala population of 754<sup>18</sup>. The boundary between these traditional Sinhala settlements in Kaddukulam West and the traditional Tamil & Muslim settlements of the coast in Kaddukulam East (with a Tamil speaking population of 3132)<sup>18</sup> can be clearly visualised in the maps below.



Linguistic distribution of Trincomalee district in 1911 (Source: census 1911<sup>18</sup>)

1. Padaviya DS (One village: Eramadu)
2. Gomarankadawala DS
3. Morawewa/Muthalikulam DS
4. Kuchachaveli DS (Kaddukulam East)  
(Divisions 1-4 formed Kaddukulam Pattu)
5. Thambalakamam Pattu
6. Trincomalee Town
7. **Kottiyar Pattu**

Divisions 4, 5, 6, 7 – over 98% Tamil speaking

Division 3 – over 92% Tamil speaking

The remaining divisions in Trincomalee District including Thambalakamam Pattu, Trincomalee Town & Kottiyar Pattu were over 98% Tamil speaking and had no significant Sinhala villages of note in 1911 (The Tamil speaking population exceeded over 23,000 in these divisions)<sup>18</sup>. The one exception was Muddichchenai in Kottiyar Pattu where 94 migrant low country Sinhala fishermen were settled on the coast. In 1814 however, there is no mention of Sinhala settlements in this region:

“Cottiar (Cottiarum), a small province of Trincomalee, extending along the east coast of the Island from the north bank of the Virgel ganga to the frontiers of Tambalagam. It is about 27 miles long from north east to south west, and 15 miles broad from east to west. It contains 28 villages, and according to the census of 1814, a population of 1757 souls; of which two thirds are Malabars (Tamils), and the remainder Moors (Muslims).” (Cordiner 1814)<sup>20</sup>

It is apparent from these colonial documents that Trincomalee district excluding Kaddukulam West was an almost exclusively Tamil speaking region in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Sinhala colonisation of Trincomalee

After independence in 1948 consecutive Sinhala rulers made it state policy to settle thousands of Sinhala colonists in lands that had been traditionally inhabited by Tamils for centuries (among which was Kottiyar Pattu).

The process was ideologically motivated by Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism:

“The claim of Sinhalese nationalism in its extreme form held that the whole country is sacred to Buddhism and belonged to its vanguard, the Sinhalese.

All other inhabitants of Ceylon were aliens who had to be subjugated, lest they exceed their rights as guests living at the sufferance of the Sinhalese.

Whatever the original intentions of the colonisation programme, from its early times the aim that there should be no territory that could be called Tamil, became a part of its conscious agenda.”<sup>21</sup>

The following speech by Ceylon’s first Prime Minister, D.S.Senanayake, addressed to colonists in Padaviya (an area linking the Northern and Eastern provinces in Trincomalee) clearly demonstrates this thinking:



“Today you are brought here and given a plot of land. You have been uprooted from your village. You are like a piece of driftwood in the ocean; but remember that one day the whole country will look up to you.

**The final battle for the Sinhala people will be fought on the plains of Padaviya.**

You are men and women who will carry this island’s destiny on your shoulders.

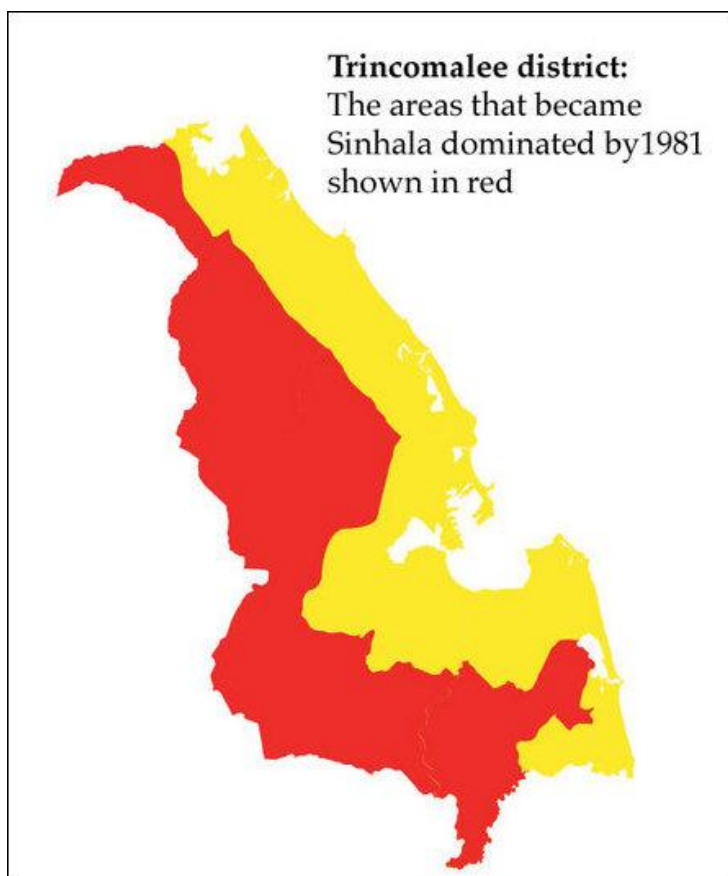
**Those who are attempting to divide this country will have to reckon with you.**

The country may forget you for a few years, but one day very soon they will look up to you as the last bastion of the Sinhala.”<sup>22</sup>

Trincomalee has been a prime target for Sinhala colonisation because of its position in linking the Tamil north and east.

The below map from the 2007 census clearly shows the radical changes that decades of Sinhala colonisation has enacted on the district. New Sinhala divisions have been created out of previously Tamil areas such as Kanthalai and Seruvila (Kottiyar Pattu), the latter breaking the contiguity of the Tamil coastline. By 1981 the Sinhala population of the district had rocketed to 33% from a mere 4% in 1911.

The expected census of 2011 will no doubt demonstrate the full extent of ethnic cleansing in the Tamil north-east, especially after the elimination of the LTTE, the only force that stood in the way of Sinhala supremacy.



## Ethnic cleansing

“Ethnic cleansing is a well-defined policy of a particular group of persons to systematically eliminate another group from a given territory on the basis of religious, ethnic or national origin. Such a policy involves violence and is very often connected with military operations. It is to be achieved by all possible means, from discrimination to extermination, and entails violations of human rights and international humanitarian law ... Most ethnic cleansing methods are grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Additional Protocols.”<sup>12</sup>

**Drazen Petrovic, 'Ethnic Cleansing - An Attempt at Methodology', *European Journal of International Law*, 5/3 (1994), pp.342-60.**

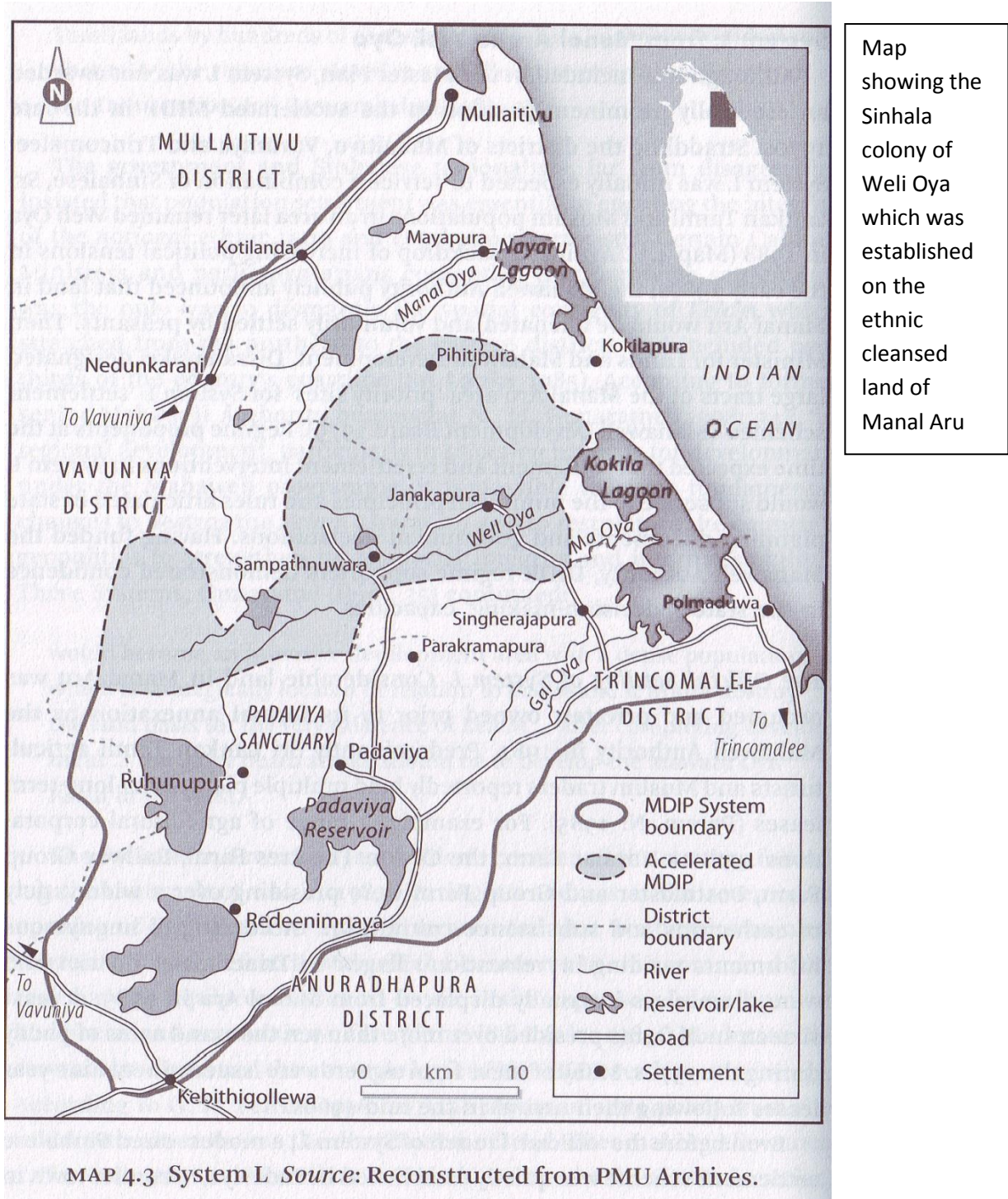
The ethnic cleansing of Tamils in Sri Lanka goes back many decades to the first anti-Tamil pogrom in 1956 where recently settled Sinhalese colonists in the Gal Oya scheme chased away the native Tamil inhabitants of Paddipalai in Batticaloa<sup>23</sup>.

With the advent of civil war in 1983 the process was accelerated most notably in Manal Aru (a region that spans parts of Mullaithivu and Trincomalee districts). This area was first selected for ethnic cleansing due to its geographical significance in linking the Tamil speaking Northern and Eastern provinces and maintaining the territorial contiguity of the Tamil homeland.

In 1984 the Sri Lankan army ethnic cleansed thousands of Tamils from the region:

“Depopulation of Tamil villages to ensure the security of Sinhala colonists became a matter of policy. On Christmas Eve 1984, following a series of landmine explosions that killed soldiers, the army through loudspeakers ordered residents of Kokkilai, Kokkuthoduvai, Karunartu kerni, Kayadikulam and Koddai Kerni to leave within 24 hours. By the end of 1984, the army had forcibly evicted nearly 2,700 Tamil families from five grama sevaka divisions in Mullaitivu District and Tennemaravady in Trincomalee District.”<sup>23</sup>

The area was subsequently repopulated with tens of thousands of Sinhala colonists under armed guard, and was renamed Weli Oya (a Sinhala translation of the Tamil Manal Aru – or ‘sand river’)<sup>25</sup>.



By 1985 Sri Lanka’s campaign of ethnic cleansing extended to all Tamil areas of Trincomalee including Kottiyar Pattu:

“An orgy of violence and destruction broke out in Kottiyar Pattu on June 3rd and 4th. The end result was that every single Tamil village within walking distance from a Sinhala settlement was destroyed. The villages of Kilivetti, Menkamam, Sivapuram, Kankuveli, Pattitidal, Palaththadichenai, Arippu, Poonagar, Mallikaithivu, Peruveli, Munnampodivattai, Manalchenai, Bharatipuram, Lingapuram, Eechchilampattai, Karukkamunai, Mavadichchenai, Muttuchenai and Valaithottam were razed to the ground by a looting and plundering mob of Sinhala soldiers, policemen, home guards, and ordinary civilians. Over 80 people were reportedly killed, and 200 disappeared.” (Gaasbeek 2010)<sup>14</sup>

This anti-Tamil conflagration was clearly well-orchestrated and premeditated, as demonstrated by the sheer scale and logistics involved. The violence during this period was also completely one-sided:

“Without exception, all those who died or disappeared, and all those whose houses were destroyed, were Tamils.” (Gaasbeek 2010)<sup>14</sup>

This trend in violence continued until its climax in September 1985, when Sinhalese attacked and destroyed the Tamil neighbourhoods around Trincomalee Town:

“The last of the large-scale attacks intended to cause destruction was a marathon which went on uninterrupted from 4th to 9th September along the northern coastal suburb of Trincomalee. It covered the town’s main shopping area in Central Road and Main Street, through Ehambaram Road, Veeranagar, Thirukadaloor, Manthottam, Uppuveli Navalar Road, up to the 3rd Mile Post, Uppuveli Junction. It was an operation involving Sinhalese home guards ably assisted by the national armed forces from land, sea and air. All premises, private and commercial, were looted before being committed to the flames. It was a grand carnival of light, sound and screams. The Air Force fired from airborne helicopters, the Navy’s gunboats shelled from the sea and the Army, armed to the teeth, took up positions to the north of the isthmus so that the good work could go on without being spoilt by intruders.” (Hoole 2001: 336)<sup>24</sup>



In April 2006 just prior to the breakout of Eelam war IV the Sri Lankan government unleashed another anti-Tamil pogrom in Trincomlee with the connivance of the Sri Lankan armed forces<sup>26, 27</sup>:

“The Sinhala-speaking violent elements were now gathering in full force in Trinco town. Liquour was being consumed. The plan seemed to be that of launching a systematic anti-Tamil campaign at night. Many rogue elements among security personnel were expected to join the mobs by night. The idea was to attack and drive the Tamils away from Trincomalee town and suburban areas. The plan was to disperse Tamils from Trinco and herd them in refugee camps elsewhere. Trinco was to be “ethnically cleansed “. It was widely suspected that several “higher ups” were supportive of this plot.”<sup>27</sup>

This pogrom foreshadowed the subsequent ethnic cleansing carried out against Tamils in Sampur and Muthur East later that month.



Tamil names have been replaced by new Sinhala names in an attempt to erase the Tamil character of Vanni

Since the defeat of the LTTE in 2009 large swathes of land in the northern Vanni region have also been ethnic cleansed of Tamils. In these regions Sinhala colonisation has been accelerating at a feverish pace, especially in Manal Aru.

Ominous reports of Sinhala colonies being initiated with funds from the World Bank have also emerged<sup>28</sup>. The International community has so far maintained a deafening silence to these crimes against humanity.

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## Appendix I: Excerpts from related articles

### **University Teachers For Human Rights (Jaffna) – Excerpts from Special Report No. 26 (3/8/07) - Can the East be won through Human Culling?**

President Rajapakse's gazette declaration of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 establishing the Mutur East/ Sampoor High Security Zone, implicitly affirmed that the Tamil civilians displaced from the area would be deprived of their land. The new HSZ covers an area of 35 square miles touching Foul Point, Illankanthai, Uppural, Thoppur, Kattaiparichchan and Mutur. The population here had been predominantly Tamil. 15 000 civilians in 12 villages with arable farmlands, water resources and fishing facilities were turned into beggars, who were moved from one ill-provided refugee camp to another with state-sponsored vigilante groups let loose in their surroundings.

Also significantly, the Mutur East area from which Tamils are now being excluded is one of the few remaining areas where Tamils in Trincomalee District have been secure from state-backed communal violence (most recently in April 2006) that is a constant threat resulting from decades of planned Sinhalese colonisation. It is a place to which a large number of Tamils affected by reprisal violence in the Allai Scheme fled from April 2006.

The first exclusive Sinhalese zone, Weli Oya (Manal Aru), was carved out north of Trincomalee in the South of Mullaitivu District in October 1984 after driving out Tamils from Kent and Dollar Farms and moving in selected Sinhalese prisoners from Anuradhapura Prison, 62 of whom were massacred by the LTTE on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1984.

The Army accomplished the next step in driving out Tamils from the surroundings by brute violence starting early in December 1984. From several directions, beginning in the south with Amarivayal and Thennamaravady in Trincomalee District, the Army moved into villages in the South of Mullaitivu District leaving dozens dead or disappeared in several villages (e.g. 15 dead in Thennamaravady and 27 in Othiyamalai).

In February 1985 displaced farmers who went south from their refugee camps in Mullaitivu town to harvest their paddy fields were fired upon from the air, and the Government itself admitted to killing 52 Tamil 'separatists'. The number of persons missing compiled in refugee camps numbered 131. The result left about 3 000 Tamil families permanently deprived of their homes.

Any notion that the sovereignty of a state must be preserved through massacring and chasing minorities from their homes to create Special Zones is to deny them their birthright to their environment and render them aliens who must seek their own protection. Such an attitude is necessarily founded on violence and invites spiralling violence.

The current trend in Trincomalee District, from the execution of 5 students early last year, is comparable with that in 1985 – 1987 based on plans set in motion in 1983. What we see are variations of the same methods, but with the same objective – Sinhalisation of the East.

### Details of Villages coming under the HSZ

#### Mutur East

No.	G.N Division	No	Villages	Families	Members
1	Sampoor – East	1	Sampoor	338	1352
2	Sampoor – West	2	Sampoor	398	1582
<b>Sampoor</b>				<b>736</b>	<b>2934</b>
3	Koonithivu	3	Koonithivu	97	487
		4	Soodaikudha	95	465
				<b>192</b>	<b>952</b>
4	Navaratnapuram	5	Navaratnapuram	114	455
		6	Illankanthai	126	417
				<b>240</b>	<b>872</b>
5	Paddalipuram	7	Paddalipuram	223	824
		8	Veerama Nagar	177	636
				<b>400</b>	<b>1460</b>
6	Nallur	9	Nallur	112	387
		10	Malaimunthal	125	406

				<b>237</b>	<b>793</b>
7	Kadatkaraichchenai	11	Kadatkaraichchenai	276	989
		12	Sampukkali	168	631
		13	Santhosapuram	151	568
				<b>595</b>	<b>2188</b>
8	Kaddaiparichchan North	14	Kaddaiparichchan North	259	964
		15	Saliyoor	84	303
				<b>343</b>	<b>1267</b>
9	Kaddaiparichchan South	16	Kaddaiparichchan South	190	618
		17	Amman Nagar	86	300
		18	Santhanaveddai	48	185
		19	Ganeshapuram	50	182
				<b>374</b>	<b>1285</b>
10	Chenaiyoor	20	Chenaiyoor	425	1232
				<b>425</b>	<b>1232</b>
11	Pallikudiyeruppu	21	Pallikudiyeruppu	138	507
		22	Thangapuram	168	610
		23	Srinivasapuram	86	312
		24	Sinnakkulam	73	318
		25	Maravattakulam	26	95
		26	Inththiikakulam	48	178

			<b>539</b>	<b>2020</b>	
12	<b>Uppural</b>	27	Uppural	107	391
		28	Seenanweli	61	254
				<b>168</b>	<b>645</b>
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4249</b>	<b>15648</b>	

### **Details of Schools**

1. T/ Chenaiyoor Central College
2. T/ Sampoor Maha Vid.
3. T/ Sampoor Sri Murugan Vid.
4. T/ Pallikudiyiruppu Kalaimagal Hindu College
5. T/ Kaddaiparichchan Vipulananda Vid.
6. T/ Kadaikaraichchani GTMS
7. T/ Koonithivu Navalar Vid.
8. T/ Soodikudha Bharathi Vid.
9. T/ Illakkanthai GTMS
10. T/ Paddalipuram GTMS
11. T/ Nallur GTMS
12. T/ Malaimuthal Malaimagal Vid.
13. T/ Amman Nagar Ambal Vid.
14. T/ Santhanaveddai Inharan Vid.
15. T/ Sinnakulam GTMS
16. T/ Santhosapuram Sivasakthy Vid.
17. T/ Thangapuram Sri Ganesha Vid.
18. T/ Uppural Sivasakthy Vid.
19. T/ Seenanveli Athavan Vid.

### **Details of Temples**

1. Sampoor Sri Pathirakali Ambal Kovil
2. Chenaiyoor Varnakula Vinayakar Kovil.
3. Chenaiyoor Sri Nagammal
4. Sampoor Pilliyar Kovil
5. Sampoor Nagathampiran Kovil

6. Kaddaiparichchan Katpaha Vinayakar Kovil
7. Koonithuvu Veda Pathirakali Kovil
8. Koonithuvu Pilliyar Kovil
9. Soodaikudha Mari Amman Kovil
- 10.Kaddkkaraichenai Pilliyar Kovil
- 11.Kaddaikaraichenai Paththini Amman Kovil
- 12.Amman Nagar Amman Kovil
- 13.Pallikudiyeruppu Pillaiyar Kovil
- 14.Thanganagar Nagathampiran Kovil
- 15.Malaimunthal Malaineeli Amman Kovil
- 16.Malaimunthal Sri Murugan Kovil
- 17.Nallur Pilliyar Kovil
- 18.Illakanthai Vairavar Kovil
  
- 19.Methodist Church - Paddalipuram

**Total Temples – 27**

Against this backdrop, the secretive building of about 200 houses for soldiers' families in Kappalthurai south of Trincomalee that the Government designated a Special Economic Zone in January 2007, comes as a disturbing development.

Full article available online:

<http://www.uthr.org/SpecialReports/spreport26.htm>



## UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION OF STATE LANDS

**The Hon. R. Sampanthan (TNA M.P.) – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009 Parliamentary address**



“Members of the minority Tamil community comprising of 1,486 families lawfully owning residential, paddy and other plantation land within the Grama Sevakas' Divisions of Sampur East, Sampur West, Koonutheevu, Navarathnapuram, Soodaikuda, Kadatkarachenai and Sampurkali, and who were displaced have been prevented from returning to their residential and other properties, and resuming their normal lives, apparently for the reason that this area has been declared a High Security Zone.

There were several schools, Hindu Temples and other buildings within this area. All buildings within this area apparently have been destroyed.

These families have lived on and utilized these lands owned by them for generations. Civilians live within High Security Zones in other parts of the country.

The denial of the right to resume occupation of the lands possessed and owned by them, and from which they were displaced is a violation of the fundamental and human rights of these people, and these families should be restored to possession of their residential and other properties so that they can carry on their normal lives as before.

Similar such illegal occupation pertaining to State land is taking place in other parts of the Eastern Province.”

## Sampur displaced - where will they go from here?

*Text and pix by Namini Wijedasa in Trincomalee 29/8/10*

A tall, forbidding fence stands between Kumaraswamy Nageswaran and the three acres of fertile land he had once cultivated in the hope of spending his retirement farming. The government now wants to build a power station in Sampur and his cultivation is gone -- but Nageswaran holds on to the dwindling hope that he can return home.



In 2006, as the army moved in for a pitched battle with the LTTE, thousands of families fled Sampur and its adjoining villages. The Tigers were chased from Muttur East that year but, nervous about fresh infiltration into a militarily sensitive area, the government established a high security zone (HSZ) that swallowed eleven grama niladhari divisions and threatened to keep 4,000 families away from their homes and lands.



In October 2008, the HSZ was revised to cover four grama niladhari divisions -- Sampur East, Sampur West, Koonativu and Kadarkaraichenai. This allowed a large number of families to resettle in their original villages but Sampur was not one of them. Today, 6,000 men, women and children continue to live in transit camps and with host families in the anticipation that the government

would some day allow them back.

## Relocation not an option



The 56-year-old Nageswaran sits under a mango tree at a transit camp in Kattaiparichchan North, his blue shirt crisp and ironed. He pressed it at a nearby house, he said, because there was no electricity at the camp. The temporary shelters stand on private land. The owners want the property back by January and Nageswaran -- who is president of the Mutur East Displaced Persons Welfare Association -- doesn't know where the Sampur displaced will shift to next.

There are 400 families in Kattaiparichchan North; 500 in Kiliveddy, 160 in Paddithadal and 66 in Manachchenai. None of them want to relocate to the alternate property identified for them by the government at Sinnakulam in Raalkuli. A road has been constructed and electricity provided but nobody is budging (apart from 52 families that had willingly relocated earlier).

“What can we do with just lights and houses?” asked M. Nadaraja, 70. “There is no water. There are huge rocks and boulders. What about jobs and livelihoods? In Sampur, we had everything. There were farms, jobs, ample water for cultivation and the fishing was good. The school, hospital, banks, everything was easily accessible. No other place in the Trincomalee district can match Sampur.”

Nadaraja has six children and nine grandchildren. He owned a grocery and vegetable shop in Sampur. Now, nothing is standing, he said. Bulldozers had flattened everything to the ground. Not even the foundation stones of their homes could be found. There were no landmarks that could be used to identify their properties.

“Within the 10,000 acres of land taken over by the state, there were 51 irrigation tanks, 2,500 acres of paddy and more than 560 acres of coconut,” Nageswaran explained. “The coal power plant will take up only 1,632 acres. That affects around 300 families. Why not release the rest back to the people?”

Full article available online:

[http://www.lakbimanews.lk/archvi/lakbimanews\\_10\\_08\\_29/special/spe3.htm](http://www.lakbimanews.lk/archvi/lakbimanews_10_08_29/special/spe3.htm)