

**5 years on:
The White Flag Incident
2009 — 2014**

Introduction

This is the story of the killing or disappearance of several groups of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who surrendered to the Sri Lankan army on or about 18 May 2009 at the end of Sri Lanka's civil war. They were told by the government if they carried a white flag they would be safe crossing the frontline. But when they

surrendered it became apparent they had been lured into a trap. Several were executed in cold blood - others have never been seen since.

The surrender of the political leaders of the LTTE - Pulidevan and Nadesan - is commonly known as "the white flag incident". It involved approximately twelve people surrendering, including the leaders. Photographs of their dead bodies later appeared.

There was however more than one white flag incident. At least 103 other LTTE leaders and those associated with them were seen later that day surrendering while unarmed. Some were led by an elderly Catholic priest called Father Francis Joseph; witnesses saw them loaded onto a bus under army guard. They have not been seen since and are presumed to have been disappeared by the Sri Lanka security forces.

An analysis of the available evidence points to an organised government plan at the highest level not to accept the surrender of the top civilian, administrative and political leadership of the LTTE - but rather to execute them. In the immediate aftermath of the surrenders, the Sri Lankan government presented a number of contradictory explanations for the killings of the political wing leaders but none for the other people who disappeared.

Five years on, the families of the disappeared and dead desperately need to know what happened to their loved ones and why.

The white flag incident allegedly involved several very high level Sri Lankan officials.

The President's brother, Basil Rajapaksa, allegedly took the lead in the negotiation of the surrender of the political leaders. He reportedly had the surrender deal approved by his siblings - President Mahinda Rajapaksa and the defence secretary, Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The Permanent Representative to the UN mission, Palitha Kohona, who was then foreign secretary, is alleged to have played a key role, sending text messages to the LTTE with instructions on how to surrender safely.

An eyewitness saw Shavendra Silva (seen in the next photo pointing at the corpses) accepting the surrender of the political leaders. Silva is now Mr Kohona's deputy at the United Nations.

Shavendra Silva pointing at the bodies of other dead LTTE fighters,



standing next to Army Commander, Jagath Jayasuriya in camouflage and on his other side Major General Jagath Dias (later to be deputy Ambassador to Germany).



May 2009

This report is compiled based on new evidence in addition to existing evidence gathered from a range of sources including the UN Panel of Experts, ICEP and media reports.





The last months of Sri Lanka's long running civil war saw an unprecedented slaughter of minority Tamil civilians. The United Nations now estimates between 40-70,000 people died in five months in a tiny corner of the north-east of the island. That makes Sri Lanka one of the bloodiest wars this century and yet the least reported of mass atrocities.

The fighting took place around a series of shrinking "no fire zones" declared by the Sri Lankan government. These were designated areas where civilians were told to gather to avoid being harmed. However these three "no fire zones" where tens of thousands of civilians congregated were repeatedly shelled and bombed by government forces.

Hundreds of thousands of people were constantly on the move for months, trying to

escape the fighting. They finally gathered on a tiny spit of land along the coast. They camped out on the hot sand beaches, digging trenches and chopping up their best wedding saris to make sand bags.

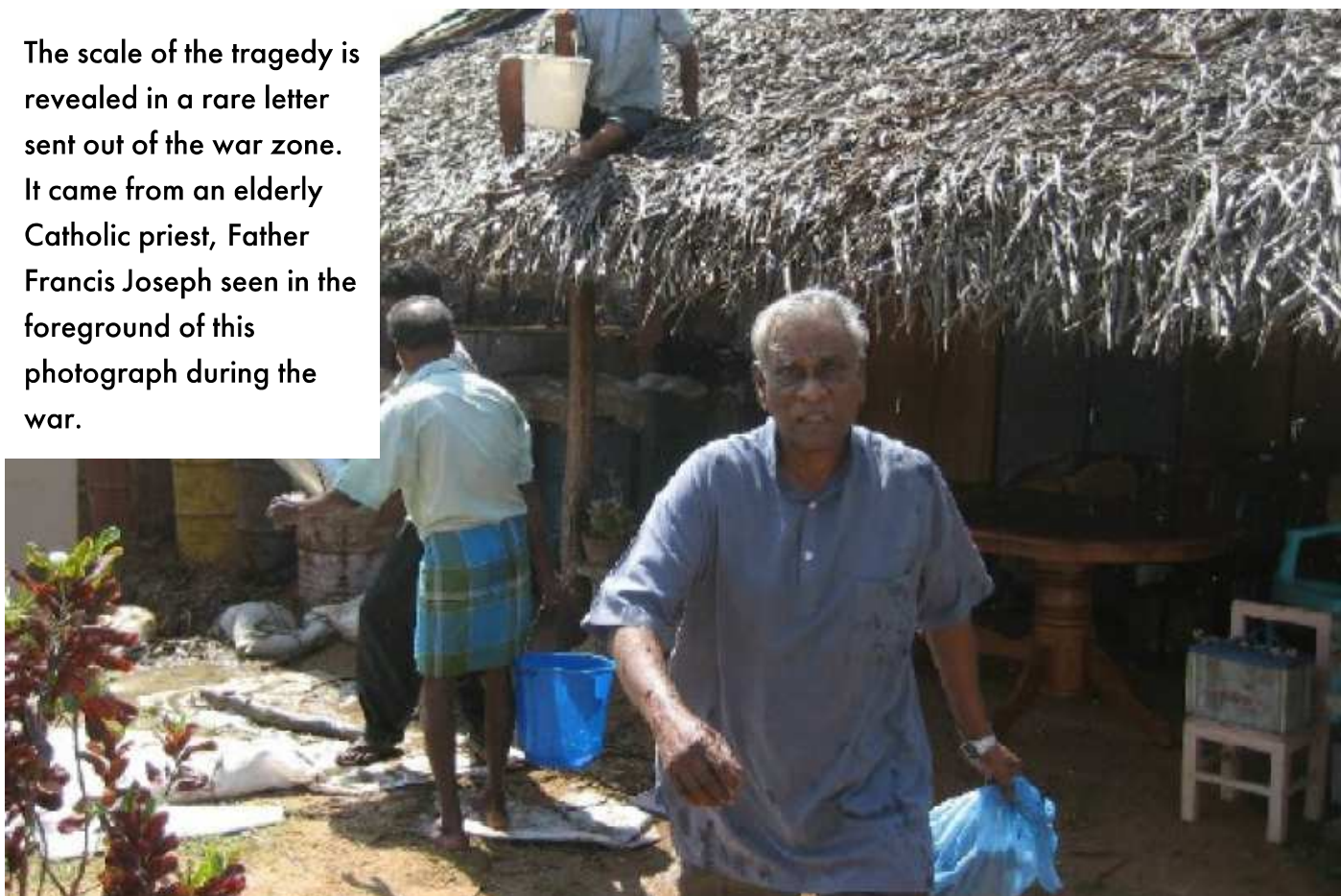
By May 2009 the situation in the conflict zone had become utterly desperate.

Every makeshift hospital had been shelled. A handful of doctors were left, doing amputations without anaesthetic or antibiotics which the government refused to allow in. People were starving because the government would not allow enough food in. Civilians were being pounded by supersonic jets and heavy artillery including multi-barrelled rocket launchers. Everyone had witnessed death and few thought they'd survive the carnage.





The scale of the tragedy is revealed in a rare letter sent out of the war zone. It came from an elderly Catholic priest, Father Francis Joseph seen in the foreground of this photograph during the war.



“Last night’s toll of the dead is 3318 and of the injured more than 4000. It was a barrage of artillery, mortar, multi-barrel shelling and cluster bombs, weapons which Sri Lankan government denies using on the civilians in the no fire zone. The cries, woes and agony of the babies and children,

the women and the elderly fill the air that was polluted by poisonous and unhealthy gases and pierced the hearts of fathers and mothers, of elders and peasants of old men and women of all walks of life. I am not unaware that this letter would arouse the wrath of the Sri Lankan government which will resort to the revenge by killing me.”

On 10th May 2009, a Catholic priest inside the war zone, Father Francis, wrote to the Pope in Rome describing what he was experiencing.

By the time Father Francis wrote his letter to the Pope on 10 May it was already clear that the LTTE were defeated. From once having controlled nearly a third of the island, they now were crammed into an area little more than 3 kilometres square. The LTTE were reportedly running out of ammunition and manpower and were forcibly recruiting civilians who didn't want to fight. The war only had a week to go.

By 14th May discussions began on a possible surrender. A day later, fighters report the LTTE leader sent a message to his cadres saying they could if they wanted try and escape. Some fighters took off their uniforms, laid down their weapons, and mixed with their families and the fleeing civilians hoping they'd pass undetected.

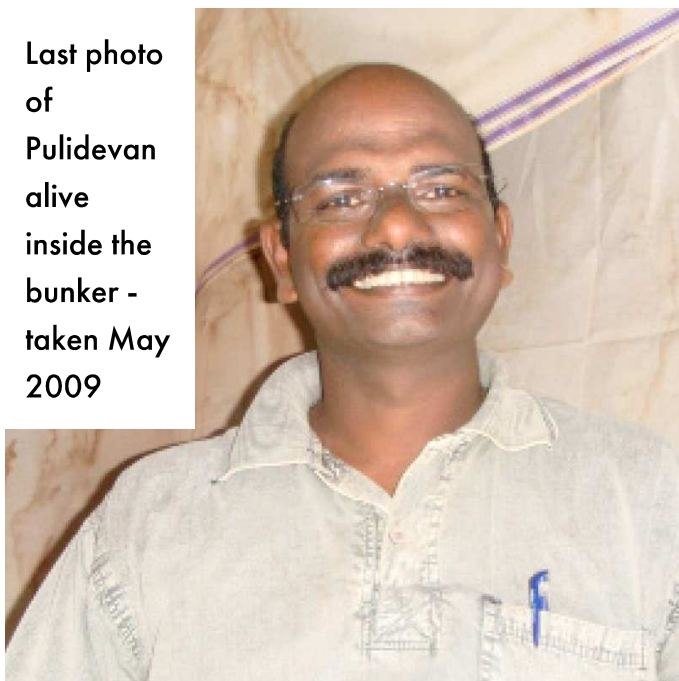
The LTTE leadership had to make a choice whether to fight to the end or surrender. They decided that

the political wing leader, Nadesan, and his deputy, Pulidevan, should negotiate a surrender and take with them the injured and others who wanted to lay down their arms.

In the course of the negotiations for surrender, the two men started sending out messages back and forth to a range of Sri Lankan politicians and diplomats and a journalist.

They sought and received guarantees that they would not be harmed.

Last photo of Pulidevan alive inside the bunker - taken May 2009



Nadesan



Location of Bunker of Pulidevan and Nadesan as confirmed by survivors.



Survivors say the political wing leaders were sheltering in a bunker under this large tree.



One of the intermediaries was a Tamil MP known to both the LTTE and government officials. His name is Rohan Chandra Nehru.

On 14 May 2009 Nehru informed Basil Rajapaksa to be on standby for an LTTE message on a possible surrender. But Basil Rajapaksa sounded disinterested and then didn't call the MP back for three days.

Nehru also tried for two days to contact the UN Secretary General's special envoy, Vijay Nambiar. He says Mr Nambiar never called him back.

Sunday Times Journalist, Marie Colvin, did eventually speak to Mr Nambiar who told her that there wasn't much interest on the part of the Sri Lankan government in a surrender because, "They seem to want to go all the way."

Below is a chronological record of some of the phone calls made back and forth to the

war zone as well as text messages sent by the Sri Lankan Foreign Secretary as the LTTE leaders negotiated their surrender.

At this point the LTTE still had access to a centralised Internet service working off a satellite base station until at least 14 May 2009; then they appear to have relied on Thuraya satellite phones.

Their phone communications reveal mounting desperation and panic. Interlocutors outside the war zone report hearing shelling, gunfire and screaming in the background during the calls.

From the 48 hours of communications documented here it is clear the LTTE informed a wide range of officials that they were about to surrender. It's also clear that the top echelons of the Sri Lankan government agreed to the surrender and provided details on how the surrender should be made.

The agreement on the surrender came from three of the Rajapaksa brothers, Mahinda, Basil and Gotabaya Rajapaksa, as well as the Foreign Secretary, Palitha Kohona.

Mr Kohona later denied any involvement in the incident despite sending four text

messages about the details to the LTTE through an intermediary in Europe.

At one point Basil Rajapaksa reportedly spoke directly on the telephone to Nadesan of the LTTE about the surrender just before it took place.

The LTTE political wing leader Nadesan told those he contacted that there were still 22,000 civilians still trapped inside the war zone and 3000 rebels, many of them injured.



Communication (Sunday 17 May 2009 – All times Sri Lankan):

0846: Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona to Nadesan via a European intermediary: SMS: “Just walk across to the troops, slowly! And comply with instructions carefully. The soldiers are nervous about suicide bombers.”

1529: Another SMS from Palitha Kohona: “white flag, hand over weapons slowly”.

Midday approx: Nadesan calls Rohan Chandra Nehru MP in Colombo: “I will give you an answer around the evening, or anytime, my leader is instructing

me, keep your phone free so I can call you". [Shelling heard in background].

1830: Nadesan calls Nehru. "We are ready to surrender under the leadership instruction". The rebel leader, Prabhakaran had given Nadesan and the LTTE permission to surrender. Nadesan tells Nehru to speak to Basil Rajapaksa to arrange, "full security and ceasefire for when we come out." Nadesan reports heavy shelling in their location with many casualties.

1900: Nehru calls Basil Rajapaksa. He tells him that Nadesan said there were 3000 LTTE cadres (including the political wing) and 22,000 civilians who wanted to surrender as soon as possible. Nehru tells him that the LTTE political wing and others want a ceasefire and security guarantees to surrender.

Basil Rajapaksa: "I am happy to hear this, it is anyway too late...I told you to tell them to surrender in those days but I will speak to the President and I will call you back."

Nehru calls a number of embassies to tell them an agreement has been reached, including Norway, Britain, US. He calls Nadesan's brother abroad.

1930 approx: Nadesan calls Nehru. Nehru tells him that Basil informed him that the President has accepted their surrender conditions. The conversation is very difficult because of loud shelling. Nadesan says he will prepare everyone to surrender.

Nehru tries to call Basil back but his phone is switched off. He tries the President without success.

1930: Nehru receives a call from Basil Rajapaksa who says, "we are taking the necessary steps and the President has accepted the conditions."

Nadesan calls Sunday Times journalist Maire Colvin in London (the call patched via South Africa). Nadesan says: "We are putting down our arms...We are looking for a guarantee of security from the Obama administration and the British government. Is there a guarantee of security?". Nadesan asks Marie Colvin to call UN Special Envoy, Vijay Nambiar who is traveling. The first time Nadesan tells Marie Colvin that it will be difficult to persuade the Sri Lankan government to accept a surrender.

Monday 18 May 2009

0130: Nadesan calls Nehru. He says the army is very close. In the background is shelling and small arms fire and screaming. Nadesan again confirms there are 3000 LTTE and 22,000 civilians who want to surrender.

Nadesan: "Why are they shelling?" He asks if the government has really agreed to the terms of the surrender. Nehru assures him they have. Pulidevan takes the phone and is shouting in panic, "Why haven't you stopped the shelling; there are people dying and bleeding to death?"

Nehru: "Please don't shout at me, I am not the one shelling you!"

Pulidevan: "You said they were going to stop the shelling. Are you sure they are going to accept the surrender?"

Nehru: "Yes!"

Pulidevan: "We will call you back."

0145: Nadesan calls Nehru to see if there's any news from the government which there is not. Nadesan says he is in direct contact with Washington.

0156: Basil phones Nehru: "We have arranged everything. How do we identify those surrendering?"

Nehru suggests a white flag.

Basil: "Ok. I will mention this to the President."

Nehru: "Please arrange a ceasefire and they would like me to attend there when they surrender."

Basil: "Ok we will see."

0330: Pulidevan calls Tomas Stangland in Oslo to ask for help (at midnight Norwegian time). He also calls Tore Hattrem, the Norwegian Ambassador to Sri Lanka. [Press reports that Pulidevan spoke to Erik Solheim that night are incorrect.] Nadesan calls his brother in London to say he's surrendering; he says there are 1000 injured rebels stranded with him.

0409: Palitha Kohona is informed by SMS that Pulidevan and Nadesan want to surrender together with approximately 40 LTTE cadres.

0436: Nadesan calls Nehru who relays what Basil said to him at 0156 and instructs Nadesan to hoist a white flag. Nadesan asks if Nehru will be there when he surrenders and he says yes.

Pulidevan calls Tomas Stangland in Oslo again - late night Norway time.

0500: Nadesan calls Nehru back to say they are taking heavy casualties.

0511: Nadesan calls Nehru again hoping for news. Shelling and gunfire is still audible.

0528: Nehru calls the US Embassy who tell him the Americans are working on the surrender and are deeply concerned.

0530: Marie Colvin wakes up Vijay Nambiar. He tells Colvin that he's received assurances from the Sri Lankan President that the surrendering Tigers will be safe and there's therefore no need for him to go to oversee the surrender. She questions him on the wisdom of this decision.

0551: The UK Embassy's second secretary calls Nehru who explains the situation. The diplomat says, "We have urged the government to accept the surrender and there is huge international attention on the conflict. It is vital that the civilians get out so we would encourage them to raise the white flag."

0545: Marie Colvin calls Nehru. She agrees to call Nambiar again.

0556: SMS from Palitha Kohona to European intermediary: "Thanks." in reply to 0409 SMS.

0602: Nadesan calls Nehru for news. There is none. He says the casualties are very heavy. Nehru gives Nadesan the telephone number of Basil Rajapaksa to call directly. They can speak to each other in English.

0609: Pulidevan calls his European intermediary to say he's about to set off for the bridge. He keeps the line open for a couple of minutes and then the satellite connection cuts off. This was most probably his last call though he also reportedly spoke to his sister in law in Canada around this time.

0610: Nehru speaks to President Mahinda Rajapaksa who says he has consulted the defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa and all the plans are in place for the surrender which the government is willing to accept. Nehru offers to go and supervise the surrender but the President says, "No our army is very generous and disciplined. There is no need for you to go to a war zone. You don't need to put your life at risk". Mahinda Rajapaksa tells Nadesan to call his brother Gotabaya on his direct number. Nehru is reluctant. The President says: "Ok, speak to Basil". Mahinda is clear he has given the order to his brother Gotabaya to accept the surrender and protect their lives.

0620: Basil calls Nehru and says he has spoke to Nadesan and told him everything will be ok and his surrender will be accepted. "Waive a white flag and hold it very high" he tells him. Basil gives instructions on the route to take. He says the 3000 LTTE are to come separately from the civilians.

0620-30 approx: Nehru calls Nadesan and hears gunfire in the background. He tells them to keep the line open but it drops off.

Nadesan: "We are ready. I'm going to walk out and hoist the white flag."

Nehru: "Hoist it high, brother - they need to see it I will see you in the evening."

0646: Kohona has been informed that Pulidevan and Nadesan are on their way to the bridge and replies by SMS: "That is very good news. Now let us rebuild the country and the shattered lives of all our people."

0656-0700: Basil phones Nehru from his mobile phone. He tells Nehru to ask Nadesan why some LTTE are firing at the army. The implication is Nadesan and group are caught in crossfire. Basil orders Nehru to keep his mouth shut and not to talk to anyone about what has happened, especially internationals. Nehru gives Basil Nadesan's satellite phone number and suggests he calls him directly.

0800: Johnston Fernando MP tells Nehru that Nadesan and the others are all dead. The source is a friend who is a commando in the security forces. Fernando calls his friend on speaker phone who says the LTTE leaders surrendered, accepted tea and were then beaten. Nadesan's wife begged them to stop as they had surrendered however they were all shot by the commandos.

Wadduvakal Bridge,
May 2009



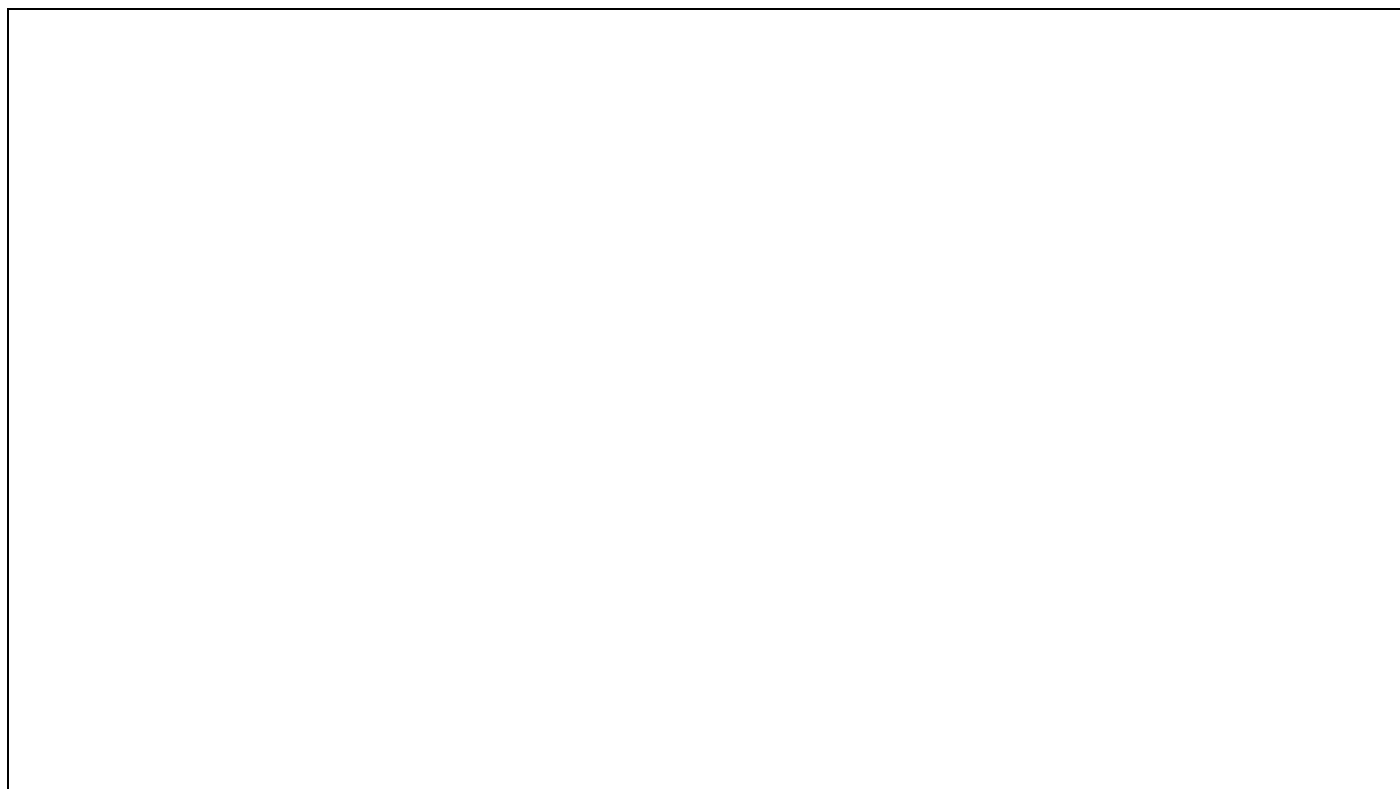
Location for Surrender

For days, tens of thousands of exhausted frightened survivors of the war had been

pouring over the Wadduvakal Bridge - a long narrow earthen walkway over the

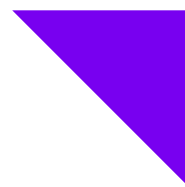
lagoon. The army controlled the bridge and detained all those who surrendered on the southern side. In the aftermath of the intense fighting there were still corpses lying around.

One survivor said, "I crossed the bridge at 0130 on 18 May. The Sri Lankan army put up beams of light in the sky to help us see. There were dead bodies on both sides of the road and in the middle and I saw a great number of bodies floating in the water."



Eyewitness 1

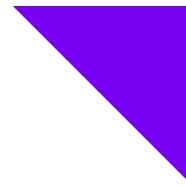
At 0430 on the 18th May, Witness 1 tried to cross the frontline in the dark. He was detained on the northern side of the bridge with a group of fighters and civilians and kept in a destroyed building.



Eyewitness 2

Witness 2 watched the surrender from another vantage point. He was behind an earthen defensive embankment (about 2 metres high and 25-30 metres north of the bridge). Witness 2 says several white jeeps arrived and army officers got out of them. He says no gunshots were fired by the LTTE towards the army.

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Eyewitness 3

Witness 3 was part of the second batch of cadres who surrendered during the white flag incident. He had stayed in a bunker close to the political wing leaders Pulidevan and Nadesan and was not privy to the full details of their surrender negotiations though he knew these discussions were going on on 6th May. He was later briefed by Pulidevan on 11th



details of the surrender plan:

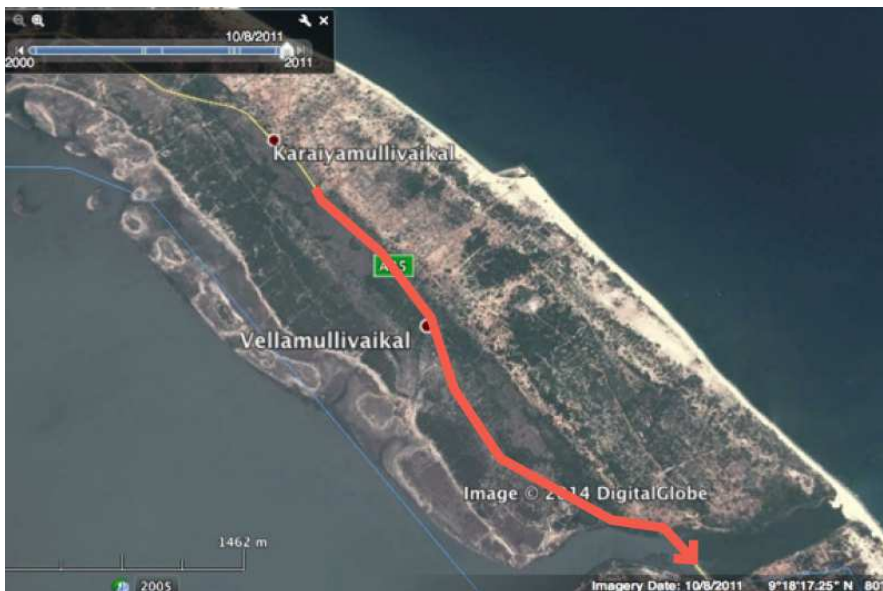
“We were told that we would have to surrender unarmed and raise a white flag. We were told to throw away all military equipment...Pulidevan told us our security had been guaranteed by the security forces.”

Eyewitness 4

This witness saw Pulidevan and Nadesan and others walking towards the bridge at dawn on 18 May 2009. He later met Col. Ramesh (from Batticaloa) who was in civilian dress and moving towards the bridge. As they crossed the bridge in a crowd of people, Col. Ramesh told Witness 4 that the political leaders including Pulidevan and Nadesan had already crossed the bridge carrying a white flag. He said he didn't think there would be any problems because everyone had surrendered.

“The sound of crying and pleading and the smells of explosives, blood and dead bodies was... endurance. There was no one at this time to... by the

corpses. I had to overcome my normal reactions and emotions and exhaustion and simply try to focus on saving my family. As I tried to escape south towards Wadduvakal, I saw dead bodies and blood spread everywhere. I had to step over the corpses as I walked.”



Route to Surrender

The LTTE political wing leaders surrendered in three batches - sending one group first to ensure the surrender was accepted and the rest following. They were:

Group One: Pulidevan, Nadesan, Nadesan's Sinhala wife Vineetha, Kangan (Nadesan's head of security). In this group Nadesan held the white flag.

Group Two: Illango (police, aka as Ramesh), Witness 3 & 2 men, all in sarongs and shirt. IN this group Illango held the white flag.

Group Three: four LTTE cadres.

At 0630 am on 18 May 2009, approximately twelve people left the bunkers carrying at least two white flags. All wore civilian clothing - the men were in white sarongs and shirts.

Witness 2 was lying on the embankment watching the surrender. He saw that the man carrying the white flag was Nadesan and he also identified Nadesan's wife and Puidevan in this group.

The first batch to cross were met by two different teams of soldiers, including according to an eyewitness, the 58th Division Commander, Shavendra Silva (currently Sri Lanka's deputy Permanent Representative at the UN in New York), who went up to greet them.

Several witnesses heard Nadesan's wife shouting in Sinhala to the soldiers. One witness saw the men in the group had their

hands held behind their backs by the soldiers though he couldn't see if they were tied or handcuffed.

About twenty metres behind the first group, was the second one led by the police chief Illango (also known as Ramesh) who was also carrying a white flag. Witness 3 was in this group. They passed many dead bodies and could hardly see the lagoon through the dense bushes. Witness 3 saw about 200 troops in the bushes. He then noticed the destroyed building surrounded by about 100 soldiers where Witness 1 was being detained. He confirmed seeing civilians inside this building.

The second group watched the first group approach the security forces. Witness 3 saw about 20-5 soldiers in uniform and armed with AK47 rifles surround the first group. He observed Pulidevan and Nadesan's group being escorted across the bridge surrounded by soldiers.

Then his group was surrounded by armed soldiers. The police chief Illango spoke to the troops in Sinhala. Their group was surrounded and escorted in the same fashion across the bridge. Witness 3 was separated from the others and taken to a sentry post, interrogated and slapped and then loaded onto a bus and taken to a detention camp for former LTTE cadres.

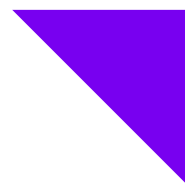
May 18th 2009



Eyewitness 2

Witness 2 says about an hour or so after the surrender, he was on a dirt road parallel to the A35 highway and spotted the corpses of Pulidevan and Nadesan lying in a ditch by the roadside with soldiers standing around taking photographs. (see map)

“I instantly recognised the bodies of Pulideevan and Nadesan. I knew as soon as I looked at their bodies that they were dead. Both men were lying on their backs in the ditch.



These photographs of the corpses of Pulidevan and Nadesan appeared online much later. It is not clear exactly when they were taken.

It is reported that a witness inquired after the bodies once he or she heard they were dead and was told the corpses had



been burnt.

It is unlikely that an autopsy was conducted as the government would no doubt have produced the evidence.

Nadesan on the left appears to have burn marks on his chest and Pulidevan also appears to have burn marks as well as a cut on his stomach. In their extensive conversation before surrender neither men reported having any injuries.

The Sri Lankan government has produced a number of contradictory explanations for what happened that morning at the bridge.

The then foreign secretary Palitha Kohona denied there was any surrender deal and yet he sent at least 4 unambiguous text messages to the LTTE that confirmed the surrender deal - SMS that are produced for the first time in this report.

Mr Kohona claimed the LTTE shot their own leaders in the back for daring to surrender against orders. The extensive negotiations about surrender do not indicate a furtive attempt to defy LTTE orders. Three eyewitnesses did not report any firing - indeed one was with the people surrendering and was not shot. Furthermore the government never produced the leaders' bodies to prove the entry wounds were in the back. In other instances they have been quick to demonstrate evidence of

LTTE perfidy but not in this case. In addition, other witnesses say that the LTTE leader sanctioned surrender after 15th May for all his fighters who wanted to take their chances and cross over to the army.

The Sri Lankan military put online a web page claiming responsibility for killing of Pulidevan and Nadesan (by the 58th Brigade of Shavendra Silva whom eyewitnesses place at the spot) but then removed it offline.

The defence secretary suggested a young recruit might have shot the leaders in the dark by accident as there was still fighting going on elsewhere. However the communications records and witness testimony show the surrender did not occur in the dark but after dawn. Eyewitnesses say there was no shot fired by either side at the surrender.

Sri Lankan Government Accounts of Events in the White Flag Incident.

1) Claimed
Responsibility in Web
Page Subsequently
Removed Offline

**LTTE leaders who were killed on 18 May 2009 by 58
ops :**

Sri.	RANK	Name	Appointment
01.	--	Jenathan	Intelligence Leader
02.	Lieutenant Colonel	Thanga	Pottuamman's Son
03.	Lieutenant Colonel	Malarawan Master	Intelligence
04.	--	Nadeshana	Intelligence
05.	--	Illango	Sea Tiger
06.	Lieutenant Colonel	Selvam	
07.	--	Pulithevan	Intelligence

2) Denies Bloodshed of Civilians



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'All Tamil civilians have been rescued without shedding a drop of blood' says Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe
(By: Walter Jayawardhane)

Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe said in Colombo that Sri Lanka was able to save all Tamil civilians trapped inside the war zone without shedding a drop of blood.

He said in recent history Sri Lanka was the country which was able to rescue the largest number of civilian hostages. He said these civilians have been trapped by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

He said this great task was possible because the care shown regarding this by President Mahinda Rajapaksa. He said he was ready to congratulate the President on this great humanitarian endeavour.

He said this great task could not have been possible without the dedication shown by thousands of soldiers of the

3) Shot from Behind

“I told them to follow the widely accepted procedure — take a white flag and walk slowly towards the army lines in an unthreatening manner. What I learnt subsequently is that the two of them were shot from behind as they tried to come out...They had been killed by the LTTE.”

Palitha Kohona

Foreign Secretary; now Sri Lankan Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York

4) Shot in Battle

“It is late at night, past midnight. Make a mental picture of this. Can you see them coming out with white flags in this dense jungle in pitch darkness? The situation was that some terrorist cadres counter-attacked. Prabhakaran was trying to break out and escape to the lagoon, his son went in another direction. At the same time 10,000 surrendered cadres came down from one side. In this kind of situation in the thick of battle, can you expect a young recruit, barely a month into battle, to recognise a senior LTTE cadre and make a decision as to shoot him selectively or spare him?”

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Defence Secretary



5) No Surrender Deal

TV Reporter SBS: Was there a deal?

Palitha Kohona: “In my view, there was absolutely no deal. In fact, it would have been impossible to have done a deal at that time.”

Palitha Kohona

Foreign Secretary; now Sri Lankan Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York



The former Army Commander, General Sarath Fonseka, in an interview with the Sunday Leader newspaper in Sri Lanka in December 2009, reportedly alleged that the Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa had ordered the 58 Division Commander, Shavendra Silva, to kill any LTTE leaders attempting to surrender.

General Fonseka backtracked on this allegation, reportedly saying there had been an illegal order from the Defence Secretary to kill LTTE leaders surrendering but it hadn't been carried out: “Two days after the war ended I learnt through some journalists who were entrenched at the time

with then Brigadier Shavendra Silva that an illegal order had been conveyed to General Shavendra Silva by Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa. This illegal order was however not carried out at ground level. I take full responsibility for what happened on the ground.”

In court General Fonseka later denied telling the journalist that the Defence Secretary had ordered the executions of the LTTE leaders surrendering.

However in July 2010, General Fonseka reportedly implied in a speech that the army was after all responsible for the killings:

“I got messages not to shoot those who are carrying white flags. A war is fought by soldiers. They do so by putting their lives on the line. Therefore, the decisions about war should be taken by the soldiers in the battlefield. Not the people in air-conditioned rooms in Colombo. Our soldiers have seen in life the kind of destruction carried out by those people before they decided to come carrying a white flag. Therefore, they carried out their duties. We destroyed any one connected with the LTTE. That is how we won the war.”

In 2011 General Fonseka was sentenced to three years in prison and fined Rs.5000 by a court for “propagating a false rumour’ in connection with the original Sunday Leader story.



More White Flag Incidents



Eyewitnesses say it was not just the LTTE political wing leaders who were targeted, but at least 102 other administrative, financial, political, humanitarian leaders of the LTTE, in addition to unarmed military wing cadres and non-combatants such as children who also surrendered later the same day. There were also other LTTE figures who surrendered in the days before and after 18 May who have disappeared or been killed in the custody of the Sri Lankan security forces.

It appears to have been part of a coldblooded plan to wipe out any future Tamil representatives. The names collated in this report are by no means an exhaustive list. Almost all of those who were seen

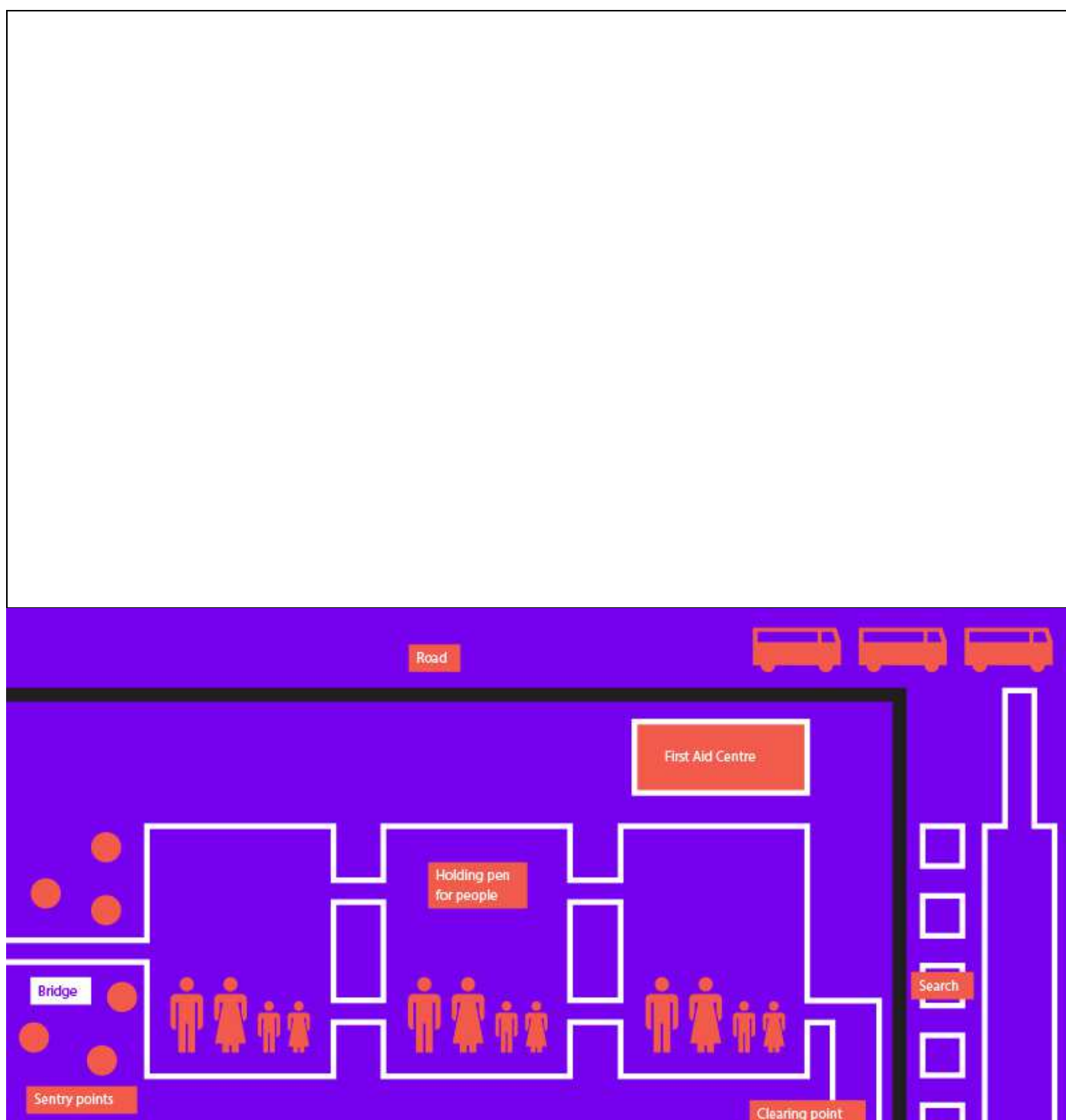
unarmed and in the custody of the security forces have never been heard of again after surrendering on 18 May 2009. The onus is on the Sri Lankan government to explain what happened to these people.

Father Francis, the priest who wrote to the Pope in desperation, disappeared without trace on 18 May 2009 when he escorted a group of about 40 LTTE members to surrender. He was a well known figure in LTTE areas and several eyewitnesses now out of the country saw him getting on a bus under the custody of the Sri Lankan military.

Even the influential Catholic Church has been unable to get any word of what happened to their priest.

Later the same day

Once people crossed the bridge they were herded into pens, secured with barbed wire, to be searched and screened. Suspected LTTE fighters were separated like these women fighters identifiable by their short hair which marked them out.



Once people crossed the bridge they were herded into pens, secured with barbed wire, to be searched and screened. Suspected LTTE fighters were separated like these women fighters identifiable by their short hair which marked them out:

(Exact date and place unknown)



Displaced people in tents camped on the beach in the "No Fire Zone" in March 2009 as seen on Google Earth.





The aftermath of the war as seen by Google Earth in June 2009.

Photos of Disappeared Alive

in Army Custody

There are several photographs now available that show prominent LTTE figures or their family members alive and in Sri Lankan army custody at the end of the war. Those same people have either been photographed dead or have disappeared subsequently.

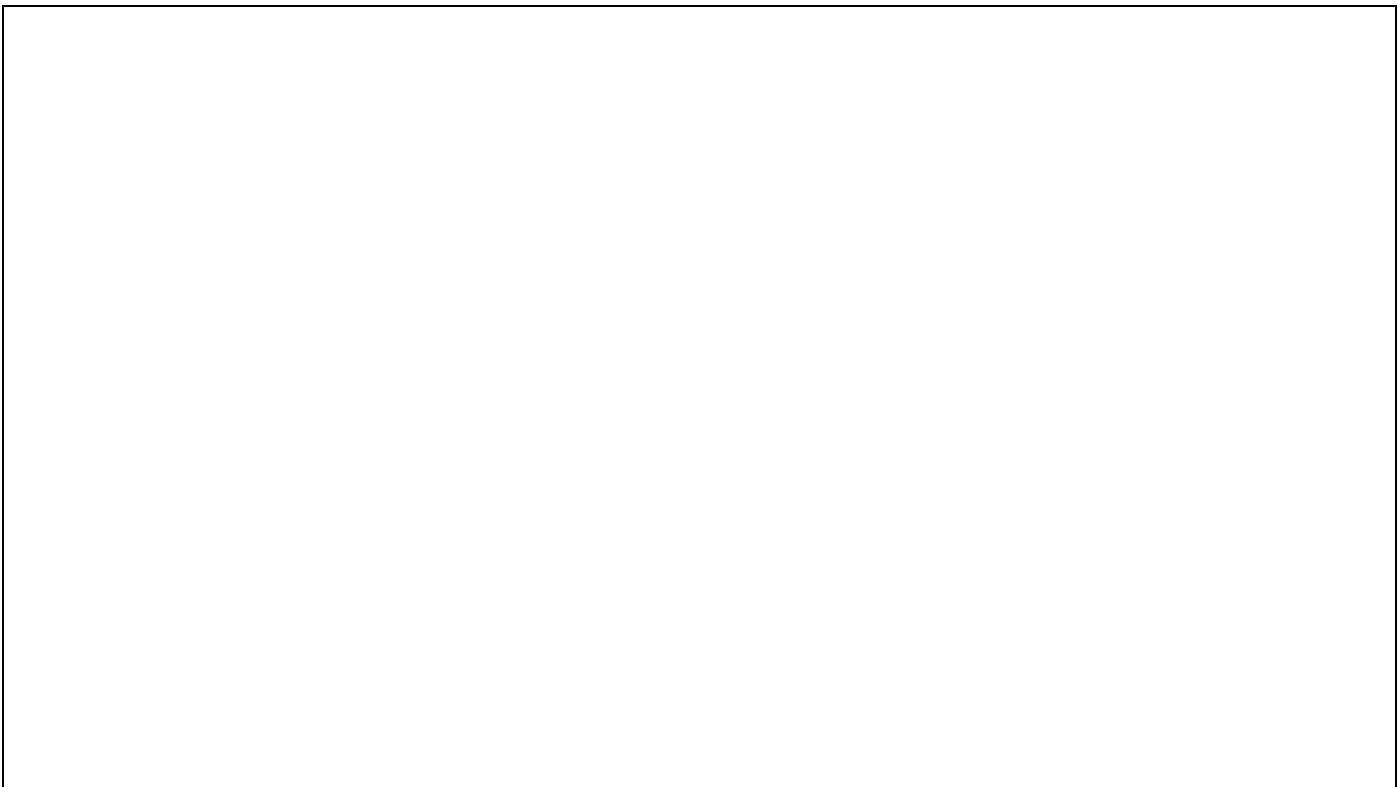
NOTE on Photographs: Most of the photographs and videos used have not been forensically authenticated by this project. However the pictures of 12 year old Balachandran and some of the pictures of Isaipriya were independently authenticated in the past by Channel 4.

Balakumaran
and his son.



LTTE Military
Commander,
Colonel Thambirasa
Thuraiasingam
(Ramesh) also
surrendered on 18
May 2009. On 22
May 2009 he was
questioned, and died
later that day.





Twelve year old Balachandran who was the son of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran, was taken into army custody and then shot five times at close-range on or about 19 May 2009.





Tamil TV newsreader Isaipriya was taken into army custody on 18 May 2009. First pictures of her dead body emerged . Then several photographs and a videos emerged showing her alive and in army custody.

New exclusive photo of Isaipriya alive





Naked standing man is Col. Vasanthan, A LTTE commander from Trincomalee who fought in the Vanni in 2009.

Photos courtesy of British Tamil Forum





Today





You can still see how desperate people were in the final weeks of the war, huddled in the open with the last remaining belongings.

May 2009



Following photos and quotes from Passion Parade website

Mothers of the Disappeared



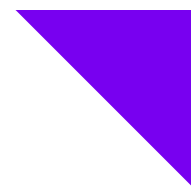
Families in Sri Lanka have spent the last 5 years searching for their loved ones who disappeared on 18 May 2009. They deserve some closure.

“My son Vijayapaskaran (32) surrendered on 18 May 2009, in Wadduvakal, along with many senior combatants, who were accompanied by a Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Francis Joseph. I witnessed my son’s surrender as well as others’. The military took the surrendered combatants in a bus, and promised me, as I continued to stay there, that they will inform about their whereabouts, once they are taken to safety. In the past four years, I have visited all the detention centres in the country, but I did not find my son anywhere. I have waited for far too long and I am getting old. I want justice for my son before I die.”

Pushpaambal Thanabalasingham (53)

“My son-in-law, Nadesu Muralitharan (37), served in the LTTE’s Intelligence Unit, until the end of the war. My daughter, Krishnakumari (30) and their children Saariyan (5) and Abitha (3) surrendered to the military together with Nadesu, on 18 May 2009. I visited all the detention centres and I could not find my family members. They surrendered along with several senior combatants of the LTTE, accompanied by Rev. Fr. Francis Joseph. The surrender took place in Wadduvakal in the Mullaithivu District and I witnessed their collective surrender. I have searched everywhere for my son-in-law, my daughter and my two grandchildren.”

Ponnamma Kanthasamy (60)



This list of 103 names represents people believed to have surrendered on or about the 18th May 2009. It is by no means a definitive or complete list of those subjected to enforced disappearance in those final days of the war; it's quite probable there are 100's more we have not captured here, including the 41 additional names we list whom we believe surrendered in the immediate days before and after 18 May 2009.

The list is colour coded according to the sources:

Those in BLACK were witnessed surrendering or were last seen in the custody of the Sri Lankan security forces by a witness or about 18 May 2009 who has given us a sworn statement to that effect.

In addition those in BLUE are 55 cases where surviving family members have lodged formal complaints regarding the disappearance of people they say surrendered on or about 18 May 2009 and were last seen in the custody of the security forces.

Those names listed in GREY are based on reports we've received from individuals but without sworn statements.

Those listed in green represent additional

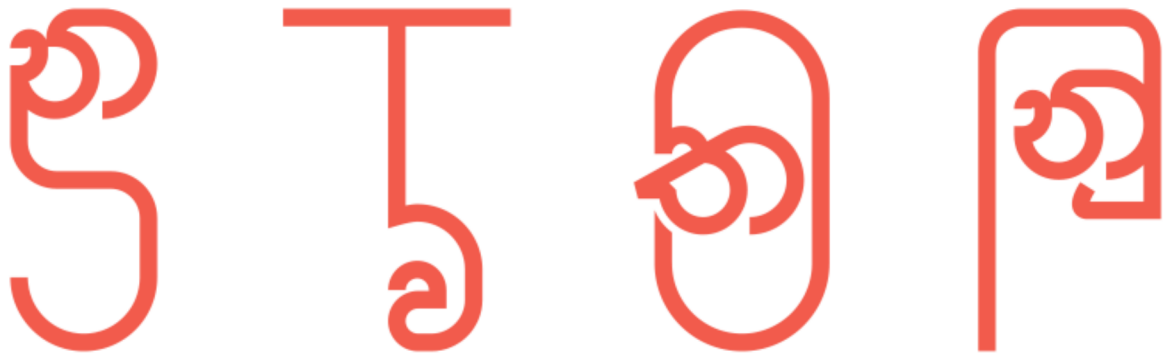
names mentioned in media reports.

Those listed as dead are people who were seen surrendering and where (a) credible photographs of their corpses have appeared or (b) the Government of Sri Lanka has itself announced they are dead.

Those listed as fate unknown are people who were witnessed or reported by family members as surrendering and/or were last seen in the custody of the Sri Lankan security forces and whose current whereabouts are unknown.

In addition Sri Lanka's own Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission stated it received complaints from family members regarding 22 people who had disappeared after surrendering on 18 May 2009 and an additional 23 people in the couple of days before and after 18 May 2009.

**Click here to
download list
of names**



For more information please
visit www.stop-torture.com

#StopTorture

If you have information to
share please email
itjpsl@gmail.com