



2ND LEAD

Third instance of Australia accepting alleged SL war criminal as ambassador

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Australia has accepted as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner former Navy commander Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe, according to some press reports. Admiral Samarasinghe was commander of the Navy during the final phase of Sri Lanka's war, including the final months in which tens of thousands of Tamil civilians were slaughtered. The recently released UN panel's report states that "[f]rom as early as Feb 6 [2009], the SLA continuously shelled within the area that became the second NFZ from all directions, including air, land and sea."

A former member of Australian Permanent Mission in Geneva, Palitha Kohana, a dual citizen, whose role in concealing the starvation and killings of civilians appears in the UN report, and who is accused of complicity in the killings of LTTE political leaders attempting to surrender.

Former Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Australia was retired General Janaka Perera, under whose command hundreds of Tamil civilians in Jaffna disappeared after being abducted or taken into custody by his troops.

An investigation by Amnesty International in 1997 concluded that "nearly all of them [missing civilians] are likely to have died under torture or to have been deliberately killed by [Sri Lankan security forces]".

Over 540 people 'disappeared' in the Jaffna peninsula within the middle six months of 1996 alone, Amnesty said, adding "hundreds of others were victims of torture at the hands of the security forces" and it has received "several reports of rape by members of the army."

Amongst the victims whose gruesome cases gained international attention were schoolgirl Krishanti Kumaraswamy, who was raped and murdered in September 1996, and her mother, brother and a neighbour who were killed when they went to the local military camp looking for her.

Despite the international attention, after retiring from the Army, Perera was accepted by Australia as Sri Lanka's High Commissioner. He was killed by an LTTE suicide attack on Oct 6, 2008, whilst campaigning as an electoral candidate for the United National Party.

Chronology:

- 19.10.11 [Sri Lanka in war crimes quagmire before CHOGM](#)
- 18.10.11 [Sri Lanka's Ex-Navy diplomat accused of war-crimes](#)
- 07.05.11 [Third instance of Australia accepting alleged SL w..](#)
- 25.02.11 [Tamils say Sri Lanka's new envoy to Australia, a w..](#)

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