



## Sinhalicisation of Chu'ndik-ku'lam to permanently choke Jaffna Peninsula

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**The Eezham Tamil fishermen's efforts to reconstruct their war-torn lives face fresh threats from the occupying Sri Lanka's rampant Sinhalicisation of the North. During the last two weeks, hundreds of Sinhala fishermen are being settled at Chu'ndikku'lam, a coastal village situated in Vadamaradchi East of the Jaffna district. By employing banned methods of fishing, the invading Sinhala fishermen have been posing a grave threat not only to the resettlement of the uprooted Tamils in the village, but also to the livelihood of the Tamil fishermen of Vadamaradchi East. However, the worst threat is Sinhala military and fishermen permanently choking the one and only natural entry point into the Jaffna Peninsula, as Chu'ndik-ku'lam is the sandbar that links the peninsula with the main island. 1000 houses are planned for colonizing Sinhala fishermen at this location, says TNA-MP Sritharan.**

Though the Sinhala fishermen initially made an advent from Kokku'laay to Puthumaaththa'lan in Mullaiththeevu district of Vanni, they have now been advancing into Jaffna district.

Immediately after the war ended, the Sinhala fishermen were brought down to Chu'ndikku'lam during fishing seasons. But, now the SL military forces are scheming permanent settlement of Sinhala fishermen families.

Reports suggest that steps are being taken for a massive Sinhalicisation around the mangroves of Chu'ndik-ku'lam, which is adjacent to Elephant Pass, the entrance into the Jaffna Peninsula.

Permanently choking the entry points into the Jaffna Peninsula not only by the Sinhala military cantonments but also demographically by Sinhala settlements is the agenda behind the move.

Already, hundreds of Sinhala fishermen have settled in the area with their fishing merchandise with the presence of the occupying SL military.

Tamil National Alliance (TNA) parliamentarian S. Sritharan alleges that Colombo was setting out a plan of constructing around 1000 houses for the Sinhala occupants at Chu'ndikku'lam.

Sometime back, three companies from the South had visited Chu'ndik-ku'lam after obtaining 'official permission' for fishing sea cucumber. However, following the protests by the Tamil fishermen, the SL military was forced to assure them that the companies would fish for sea cucumber only on the touching sandbar of Chu'ndikku'lam. The people had also given up the protests following the assurance.

But, now the SL military is providing security to the Sinhalicisation and is scheming a permanent colonization of the coastal village.

Besides, the Sinhala fishermen have been using dynamite – a legally prohibited method – to kill fish and scoop the dead fish floating on the surface of the sea.

Though legally banned, the occupying SL military, which has brought in the Sinhala fishermen, turns a blind eye to the blatant violation.

The illegal practice of dynamite-explosion induced fishing poses a huge threat to marine life and the livelihood of the Tamil fishermen.

The excesses committed by the fishermen from South in Chu'ndikku'lam are

largely seen as a continuing process that follows similar excesses in the nearby villages including Mukaththuvaaram and Katkova'lam.

It is also reported that the Sinhala fishermen have been indulging in excesses in the neighbouring Tamil fishing hamlets of Thaazhaiyadi and Kaddaik-kaadu.

Tamil fishermen express concerns over the lack of action on their complaints about such illegal methods to the officials of the Sri Lankan Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DFAR), which comes under the SL Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development.

While the Tamil fishermen have desisted from using such illegal methods of fishing, the encroaching Sinhala fishermen's activities have instilled fears about endangered livelihood of the fishermen in the country of Eezham Tamils.

In the meantime, the Eezham Tamil fishermen seeking to resettle in Chu'ndikku'lam have been consistently refused access to their village. The refusal has adversely affected the fishermen from Jaffna and Vadamaraadchi East.

Meanwhile, a BJP-RSS-Shiv Sena journalist Swapan Dasgupta, who recently visited Jaffna, defended the presence of the Sinhala military in Jaffna to the readers in India and the world that the military "operates well below the radar."

"Logistically, the army wants to insulate itself in the security zones, build strategically located cantonments and operate as a rapid response force just in case insurgency resurfaces," Swapan Dasgupta said.

Swapan Dasgupta is criminally shielding the structural and demographic genocide the Sinhala military actively conducts in Jaffna itself. The BJP-RSS-Shiv Sena lot is answerable to this genocidal interference in the affairs of Eezham Tamils, commented political activists in Jaffna.

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