Issues of Peace and Human Security
In relation with the people caught up in the conflict:
From Mavil Aru to Thoppigala – Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

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Abstract
The paper is conducted within the conceptual framework of human Security and focuses on Post Conflict-Human Security Situation in the Eastern Province. The main purpose of this paper is to study issues of peace and human security in relation to the people caught up in the conflict in Eastern province of Sri Lanka in the period of 2006 -2008. Further, this study explores the measures taken by the government of Sri Lanka and other agencies to promote peace and human security in the Eastern province aftermath of the military operation. The paper also investigates the limitations and threats in making peace and human security in the Eastern Province. The paper concludes that large amount of economic development project has been launched successfully under the program called Negenahira Navodaya (Awakening of the East), and the local government elections have been conducted with a view to restoring democracy in the Eastern Province in the year 2008. Meanwhile, the research identifies some weaknesses in the current democratic structure of the province and the threats posed by paramilitary groups to the democratic process and institutions in the province.
Introduction

Sri Lanka is one of the inter-political conflict regions in South Asia. Due to its severe war phenomenon, it encounters a massive amount of human threat situations and economic destabilization. This paper is significant because it explores the limitations in establishing human security in the Eastern Province in the aftermath of the liberation of the province from the LTTE. Although local government elections have been conducted with a view to restoring democracy in the Eastern Province in the year 2008, my research focuses on the weaknesses in the current democratic structure of the province and the threats posed by paramilitary groups to the existence of democracy in the province. My paper is structured in such a way that the first part is devoted to define the concepts of peace and human security and locates these concepts are understood in relation to the Sri Lankan context. The Eastern Province of the country, known as one of the most sensitive space in Sri Lanka, is the spotlight of my study. This study focuses on the current political scenario in the Eastern Province and the challenges which hamper the objective in achieving peace and human security in the province. The main arguments of the research are based on the secondary data analysis, weekly news papers covering defense situation, the statements of the president and other Ministers and Members of the Parliament. Web site articles provide necessary data and to the Eastern province of Sri Lanka for the period concerned.

Peace and Human Security

To outline the objectives of this research, it is necessary to briefly mention what is meant by the concepts of “peace” and “human security.” Human security and peace are clearly dealt with the people from various human insecure phenomenon. As far as we understand the history of human society, it has been mostly composed of various man-created-bloody wars and conflicts. Meanwhile, the purpose of creating wars and conflicts, it has been found, is to gain some ideal solutions and goals in a long human world history. Ever since the occurrences of wars and conflicts, people are being directly or indirectly involved in both the negative and positive aspects of the nature of war and conflict. Therefore, one could put forward the view that the concepts of “war” and
“conflict” have their solutions or alternatives in the concepts of “peace” and “human security.”

Moreover, the concept of human security can be lodged within a larger framework which includes many aspects vital for the survival of the people such as protection from violence, malnutrition, disease and natural and man-made disasters. Furthermore, the concept of “human security” emphasizes the complex relationships and often ignored linkages between disarmament, human rights and development.\(^1\) However, the understanding of human security is tied with various relevant definitions, and the context of human security can be pointed out as an overlapping part of human development and positive peace. This is because the purpose human security is to achieve both the development of the individual capabilities and the absence of violence within society.

Peace is a positive approach to protect human society from its threats. Peace means safeguarding human security from various man-made and natural disasters. Peace could also been as existing in one’s inner self and as being realized by a person. On the other hand, it exists in the outside environment which includes human society and nature. Then the purpose of peace making also is to protect humanity when it faces hostilities. Therefore the success of peace making is one of the positive aspects for keeping human security when symptoms of war and violence appear in it.

The purpose of engaging in war and violence is, perhaps, to achieve certain goals or victory. Mostly, it may be motivated as one of the ways to achieve the highest human interested for the certain community or the state those who willingly involve in war and create violence all over the world. As a result of making hostility particularly at the community or the state level, the key issue of human security and peace are ultimately carried out at the domestic level. Meanwhile, as a result of threats to humans, people within one state have destructive divergences and perceive each other in negative ways.

Thus it let each community that they are forced together into a particular group or feel to make separate identity which they need to identify their social solidarity against threat to them. Therefore the issue of human security comes basically from this manner, and then it spreads throughout the entire community, state, and the world for various purposes. Due to threats on the human security of some groups, those groups engage in violent activities to protect their rights and freedom. Therefore, we need to understand the concept of “peace” in the larger context of violence, war, rights and freedom.

When humans face threats, the issue of human security becomes vital. Meanwhile the phenomena of the human threats need to be addressed and solutions need to be found. Hence the concept of peace and making peace process clearly deal with various situations, which are shaped by our understanding of the threats on human security, improving capacity of the state power to deal with those issues, making capacity of opposition groups those who ask some demands for their ideal goals, and seeking the views of international donor communities those who mediate the issue and helping financial aid to make peace process a success.

**Sri Lankan context**

Sri Lanka has almost two and half decades of civil war experiences. The cause of civil war is an ongoing conflict on the island nation of Sri Lanka. Since 23 July 1983, the civil war, predominantly between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a separatist armed organization who fight for the creation of an independent state named Tamil Eelam in the North and the East of the Sri Lanka, has intensified. Meanwhile, perhaps, the civil war may be identified between the majority and the minority of the island too. As a result of civil war, it is estimated over 70,000 have been officially listed as killed in the war since 1983.²

The last attempt to bring a peaceful solution to the ongoing conflict was initiated in December 2001. This resulted in the Ceasefire Agreement signed between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the LTTE in February 2002. However hostilities

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² Sri Lankan Civil War, (2008), Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.p.1
renewed in late 2005 and the conflict has continued to escalate, resulting in the deaths of over 4500 people since November 2005.³

Since July 2006, both the government and the LTTE have heavily launched a number of military offensives, the most important of which is the attack on Mavil Aru in Eastern province of the country. Due to continued military victories, the LTTE has been driven out of the entire Eastern Province of Sri Lanka in 2007. Five years after the signing of the agreement, the LTTE declared they would resume their freedom struggle to achieve the ideal statehood. Thereafter the government military also officially claimed that in recent time it has demolished all the massive arm dealing groups that are well-known to the LTTE. After clearing the entire Eastern province in 2007, the government has started an offensive against the LTTE in the Northern Province and claims that it has already secured several victories. As a result of the recent military victories, the government’s military commanders have expressed hope that they could win the war in the near future. With this end in mind, the government formally announced its withdrawal from the ceasefire agreement on January 2. 2008.

As a result of continuous fighting since April 2006, there have been more than 200,000 internally displaced persons in the country.⁴ Meanwhile due to the ongoing war in the North and some parts of the East of Sri Lanka, both deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians (including abductions and disappearances of the people, killings during aerial bombardment, shelling, unidentified gunman shot and claymore mine attacks) are taking place in violation of human rights and international humanitarian laws. On December 7, 2007 the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International in a joint letter asked the UN Human Rights council to take urgent action in order to end abuses in Sri Lanka, both by the government and LTTE.

Because of the ongoing military victories, the government and most of the citizens of the island have strongly accepted that war is an easier and more convenient

³ Ibid. P.1
⁴ Ibid p.1
way to end the ethnic conflict in the near future than peace processes. Thus the idea of peace process has temporarily vanished from Sri Lanka. As the war has intensified in the Northern Province, humanitarian assistance should be provided to the people living that area. At the same time, although the Eastern province was liberated in 2007 from the LTTE, it continues to remain as an area where deaths and abductions are frequent. The day-to-day life of the people in this province is under threat. According to the report issued by the Human Rights Watch in November 2008, which deals with the current situation in the Eastern Province, there have been increased deaths, abductions and disappearances in this area after its capture by the Government forces.

**Eastern Province: the sensitive theatre**

The Eastern province consists of three administrative districts— Batticaloa, Ampara, and Trincomalee— and the province covers 15 percent of the total land area of the country and has around 7 percent of the population of Sri Lanka. The province is predominantly an agricultural area where the majority of its people are engaged in paddy cultivation and other minor crops. Fishing industry contributes a main role here because of the length of the coastal belt. Animal husbandry is also one of the major sectors in the region.\(^5\)

As far as we understated the situation of the Eastern province, it is viewed as being ethnically intricate and has occurred at the place of current – conflicts regain in Sri Lanka. It features a Tamil-speaking majority fissure equally between ethnic Tamils and Muslims, as well as a fairly large size Sinhala minority who certainly moved there from the south under state irrigation and resettlement schemes. Being at the intersection of competing Tamil, Muslim, and Sinhala nationalisms, the Eastern province has been seeing the worst of Sri Lanka’s inter-ethnic violence place. The nature of the province for Tamil nationalist is that it is an absolute part of the Tamil homeland. For Sinhala nationalists, the Eastern Province should be equally open to all Sri Lankans and its many of ancient Buddhist places and high Sinhala cultural heritage should be guarded and preserved. The east is also home to Muslim nationalism, and they feel that they need to

\(^5\) Kumar Rupesingahe, Enhancing human security in the eastern province of Sri Lanka. p. 5
protect of the rights of the Muslims insecure value from Tamil armed groups and the Sinhala government.  

Most of the Tamil villages including the vast paddy land areas in the three administrative districts of the Eastern province were controlled by the LTTE for nearly a couple of decades. When it was running under the LTTE administration, the people of under control area were fully predominated by the LTTE. During the time of the LTTE even claimed those to protect its people from the human insecure situations there especially by the military forces, but on the other hand there were various human threats by the LTTE too.

People who were at the LTTE territory had been forced get into various human threats from both the LTTE and Sri Lankan military forces. Particularly during the time of colonel Karuna who was the former LTTE Eastern leader, more children both from the LTTE and the government control territories had been forcibly recruited to the LTTE as warriors, for the time of the recruitment the children were used same as like adulthood among the LTTE and they did not allow even to see their family members, whereas most of the civilians had been caught to make heavy training and fight with the government forces the forces those who have been brainwashed as an enemy of the Tamil people particularly in the LTTE territory. Further the people from under the tiger’s territory did not enjoy properly their life when they were with tigers, they were discriminated from human security, human rights and proper livelihood developments. Most of them including women were unemployed; children could not receive proper education, people were suffering from lack of health facilities, malnutrition, and most of the time they spent their life in fear and frustration. And also Tamil people from unclear and cleared territories were threatened by the government forces because they were viewed that they might belonging to the LTTE. Particularly people in the LTTE controlled areas could not receive proper food supply and humanitarian aid due to certain economic barriers by the government. Meanwhile, the state of human insecurity and human rights violation were totally outstanding. During the LTTE control period people have been involved into

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6 Sri Lanka’s eastern province: land, development, conflict (15. October 2008) the international crisis group
various war experiences by both the LTTE and the military forces. While carrying out heavy fighting between the LTTE and the military forces over there the civilians also were being involved into severe human threats, thus they used to displace several times and some of them had lost most of their family members and had faced heavy injuries due to aerial bombardment, shelling which were taking place at the civilian territory. Due to involvement of people into severe war threats such as loosing their family members, and getting disabled, particularly there was arising certain an amount of widows and women running families. Thus most of the families’ livelihood lied under the poorest condition. As a result of war and human threats, during the LTTE territory its people were voiceless to even think about their future that they would able to live happy at their territory with out threats of the military forces and with out predominant from the LTTE. When the ceasefire agreement was singed by both the government and the LTTE in 2002, the nature of the primary state of peace and human security symptoms had been felt the Sri Lankan. Particularly people of the north and the Eastern parts of the island the places where were heavy war and human rights violence took place were really happy and could enter to enjoy another life (peaceful life) in the first time of their life.

Meanwhile the east remained tense throughout the 2002- 2006 peace process and it has particularly been the stage for continued local level conflict due to its multiethnic nature in the entire Eastern province. All three communities, Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese, continue to face severe threats to their human security such as loss of livelihood, internal displacement, killing, abductions many dissenting Tamils, forcibly recruiting children to the LTTE, and continuing their harassment of Muslims. Especially during the Karuna’s split with the LTTE in March 2004, human rights violations were highly carried out in the entire Eastern province by the Kruna faction (TMVP), the north tigers ( LTTE ) and the military ( SL Army). According the statement of the Lars Solvberg, who was the chief of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM) pointed out since July 22, 2006 when the conflict over the Mavil Aru waterway broke out, over 200 civilians had been killed and several thousand internally displaced over there. Whilst having the ceasefire agreement, not only the people those who were under the Kruna, and the LTTE predominance, but also people from the rest of the government controlled
areas in the Eastern province again began to feel the issues of peace and human security among them and entire the Eastern province.

Present scenarios in the Eastern Province
From Mavil Aru to Thoppigala

The Sri Lankan Army, which commenced their military operations in July 2006 in Mavil Aru, and the result of military confidence, had let continuously to capture the rest of the LTTE controlled territories in the Eastern province. In the continuing large scale military offence, the SL Army captured Vakarai Town in Batticaloa district on January 19. 2007. Further, President Mahinda Rajapakse declared that the military had captured Thoppigala, the last remaining place of importance to the LTTE in the Eastern province, which had placed under effective LTTE territory since 1994. ⁷

The recent ongoing war in Sri Lanka the ground crisis situation began from the Mavil Aru incident which deprived life sustaining supply of water from the canals to 15,000 families and 30,000 acres of paddy land due to the closure the sluice gates of Mavil Aru by the LTTE in 2006. As a result of closed the sluice gates, it forced the government to make immediate solution for a humanitarian crisis over there. It was clearly said that when negotiations, mediated by the Monitoring Mission and Buddhist monks, commenced on 26 July, there was a crisis situation in the Trincomalee district of the eastern province, and the Sri Lankan Army launched “operation watershed” to address the “urgent humanitarian need”. And the target was to open the reservoir by Army personnel, supported by aerial bombardment. The LTTE immediately withdrew from the negations and launched, what it termed, “defensive actions” to “neutralize the Sri Lankan military’s attacks on civilian targets”. Even the Mavil Aru incident was obviously viewed as one of the important factors that led to the break away of the cease fire agreement and barrier of the peace process. Meanwhile, there were many minor activities behind the screen to break way the cease fire and peace process by the LTTE as well as the Sri Lankan government. Perhaps, the purpose of the cease fire agreement

might have not given the political benefits to the parties those involved and mediated the peace process in Sri Lanka recent years. On the other hand the benefits of the cease fire and peace during that time reached not only people of Sri Lanka but also the international communities. The latter felt very enthusiastically the civil war would finish soon and sustainable peace and human security in Sri Lanka would be achieved.

**Human security situation in 2007**

Because of the heavy military operation and its relative activities in the East the government of Sri Lanka had successfully liberated the entire east from the LTTE as declared by President Mahinda Rajapakse on January 19, 2007. Meanwhile even after the liberation of the East, there were large-scale human rights violations in 2007 by many armed groups in both the North and especially in the East of the island. According to the Minority Rights Group International 2007 report, human rights in Sri Lanka had become a ‘crisis point’ in 2007, with various amounts of reports of extra-judicial killings, disappearances, and abductions particularly in the Eastern province where the issues were taking place highly even after the so-called “liberation.” The Sri Lankan human rights group clearly stated that some 662 people had been killed and 540 people have disappeared between January – August 2007. A vast majority of them were Tamils, whilst some were Muslims. The UNHCR office in Sri Lanka reported, on October 26 that 190,669 individuals of 51,908 families had been displaced in 2007 due to the ethnic conflict. The highest number of displacements was reported from the Kilinochi district – 48,512 persons. Another 38,230 individuals displaced in the Batticaloa district and 32,323 individuals displaced in the Mullaitivu district. Also, the South Asian Watch group on the use of small arms revealed, on October 28, that there were over 1.3 million illegal weapons in use in Sri Lanka, adding that the availability of illegal small arms had let to the escalation of the rate of violence in the island. Eventually the issues of human security have been highly created in 2008 by escalating ongoing war and human rights violation in future in the North and the East of the island.

Sri Lanka Army commander Lt. Gen. Sarath Fonseka’s January 2, 2007 asserted that the Army would liberate the Eastern province from LTTE dominance. He also said
that after eradicating the LTTE from the East, full strength would be used to capture the North which was still under the LTTE’s control. After some months later, on July 11, President Mahinda Rajapakse declared the military victory in the Eastern province, after the fall of Thoppigala, which was the LTTE’s last important place in the East. After a year-long campaign in the East, the government immediately promised restoration of democracy, devolution of powers to local and provincial politicians and development for the province. The military victory in the Eastern province not only had liberated from the LTTE predomination but also had given the power to the government to deal further political affairs independently. Whereas, the military victory in the East both had liberated the people who had been caught up in the LTTE territory and had provided them access to democracy. Therefore, the military and political balance in the Eastern province was used to make the people accept government body.

Meanwhile, there were some political issues regarding power sharing in the Eastern province. Particularly when certain amount of the areas of the East was under the LTTE territory before 2007, the territory was dominated by some of key tiger leaders who had broken away from the LTTE in 2004 and then formed a separate movement to represent the Eastern Tamil. After the liberation of the East from the LTTE, the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) wanted a power sharing in the Eastern province. They would be involved as a political wing in the Eastern province. The government, however, will have to strengthen its hold in the Eastern province where, according to media reports, Colonel Karuna was attempting to consolidate power in Batticaloa and surrounding areas. Thus the government made decision immediately to bring the benefits to all three communities. First therefore a large amount of development projects were started in 2007 and the relative peace had been felt by all communities there, especially the people from liberated the East. Secondly through the military and political strength in the Eastern province, provincial council elections were held on 10 May 2008 as President Mahinda Rajapakse pledged on March 10 2008 to hold free and fair elections and restore democracy in the Eastern province soon after its liberation from the LTTE.

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The idea of the liberation of the Eastern province refers not only to the protection of war affected children, resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs), human rights capacity building, deployment of civilian human rights experts, issuing early warnings, prevention of conflict, and elimination of land mines, but also improving the economic situation, human security building, and ensuring a sustainable peace situation in the province as well as in the island. After the liberation of the Eastern province, the key role in developing the area was taken up by the state, local and international non-government organizations by involving in various livelihood development projects, economic improvement projects, public service infrastructures. These bodies are committed to promoting democracy and pluralism as well as peace building. For the purpose of rehabilitations and reconstructions in the Eastern province, many improvable projects have been taken, and many resettlements programme to make sustainable human security in terms of the liberation in the Eastern province. Meanwhile, the government has taken an important role to promote peace in the absence of a peace agreement. For example, the government started a 180 days economic development programme rapidly under the Awakening of the East (Negenahira Navodaya / Kilakkin Uthajam) programme which combines the efforts of both the central and local government authorities. Later it carried out further by holding elections to local government councils in electorates of eight Pradeshiya Sabhas and one municipal council (some of these were under the LTTE territory since 1994) in the Batticaloa district on 10th march 2008. Conducting elections and governing democratically constitute the most effective way to end the sufferings of the people that had continued for nearly three decades in this region. Meanwhile the election in 2008 was in other senses a good manner undertaken by the government towards devolution, granting full powers of implementation in relevant areas to the newly elected authorities. Further, the government believed, a key feature in the post-election scenario would make the collective responsibility of all elected members to work as a team and fulfill the aspirations of the people of the three communities in the Eastern province. Furthermore, it strongly hoped that although the provincial and local authorities might not get directly involved in human insecurity activities, they would support such a policy in future by eradicating the root causes of civil war in the Eastern

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province and Sri Lanka, such as making human rights violation, poverty, discrimination, prejudices, and inequality situations towards minority people of the Sri Lanka.

The Challenges

The Eastern province, as we see, is one of the highest ethnic complex provinces in Sri Lanka since under the LTTE control. Due to the high multi ethnic density complex in the East, it further needs to be approached carefully for finding out the challenges of making peace and human security. Particularly after the liberation in 2007 the East has namely become the access of the democracy. Thus, the success of making democracy, peace and human security situations in the East should be dealt in terms of clear understanding of its geographic, religious, linguistic, political, and socio-economic differences and demands by all three communities in the region. Particularly the body of language, religion, and politics play a significant role in the region. If we Compare with the Sinhalese somewhat, the ethnicities of Tamils and Muslims are the majority of the region and also the Tamil language is used as the major linguistic tool in both Tamil and Muslim Communities. Meanwhile, although Muslims belong to communicate their freedom and thoughts in the Tamil language, they seek their identity in terms of religion and politics, not in terms of language. Tamils are predominant with their characteristic in terms of their language and regional politics affairs in the province; whereas, the Sinhalese speak their language and engaging in politics with a support of the government policy in the region.

The challenge of making human security and peace in the East depends on “political strength” which is dealing with all the representative political parties and the all Arm groups in the region as well as Sri Lankan politics. Particularly, when the East was mainly under the LTTE territory before fully cleared in 2007, the affairs of peace and human security had been mainly contacted with the parties between the government, which was as a major responsible party in the state, and the LTTE, which enthusiastically welcome a so-called ‘sole representative’ group of the Tamils and Muslims who participated from the deference political interested for what they had an idea on peace for Muslims in the region.
Since Liberation in the East, perhaps, the process of peace and human security situation mainly hands with the changes of its democracy and political strength towards the government and the military balances. Whereas the voice of Eastern Tamils’ political interested somewhat lies with the TMVP representing the Eastern Tamil, Muslims political parties dominate the Muslims political affairs. Other paramilitary groups such as the EPDP, the EPRLF (Perumal), and the PLOTE (Siddarhan) also legally return in politically and military interested in the Eastern province. At the same time, the LTTE had been eradicated by the military operation from the East. On the contrary, since the liberation of the East, a few amounts of LTTE members again penetrate into the East from the Northern Province, the province which still under the LTTE’s control. They are still able to frequently interfere them its political interested by creating both human rights violation and the political instability situation in the region. Especially, for showing the political power again in the region, the LTTE is involved in killings and abductions of both military and paramilitary members, and civilians who have an alternative idea towards the LTTE. Meanwhile the LTTE criticizes both the government and the military forces that are supporting the paramilitaries’ activities towards creating a highly human rights violation in the region. Moreover, obviously they accuse that the Tamil paramilitaries who are not only being acted a political role with the support of the government’s divide and rule political strategy toward the Tamil community and the LTTE but also involving in immense human rights violence is taking place all over the region. Also, another Tamil political party known as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which has 22 members in parliament, politically represents the North and the East of the island at the parliamentarian election in 2004. The TNA members who have been elected with the push of the LTTE strength, still they are labeled as a voice of the LTTE. Thus the TNA members who even represent the East still they have not enough power to deal the political affairs in their region.

Meanwhile, Muslims fear of being made second class citizens under a Tamil administration. Their distress has grown visibly since the LTTE began to target Muslims in August 1990 the massacre of 130 people at two mosques in Batticaloa. Besides, it also questions among Muslims that the East with the LTTE’s concept of “home land” and its claims of being the “sole representative of Tamils”. Therefore, Muslims are predominant in their territory especially in Amparai district, in the divisions of Kattankudy of Batticaloa and Muttur of Trincomalee, all in the Eastern province. Of late, Muslim leaders have begun demanding a separate territory within the northeast in case greater autonomy is granted to the northeast as a whole under any power-sharing model.¹¹ Duo to its ethnic tensions and instability of the political scenario, in the East it was felt that the needs of peace and human security should be addressed immediately. Therefore, while liberating the East, the government had taken a whole political authority in order to make political strength in the region. The Consequent military victory in the East, the government immediately promised restoration of democracy, devolution of power to local and provincial politicians and development for the region. The removal of the LTTE perhaps, brought benefits to all three communities in the East. Meanwhile, although many resettlement and the rehabilitation projects have been consequently done in the region, people, particularly those who caught up in the war territory, might feel that those rehabilitations and resettlements in the liberated territory has made only the economic benefits of relative peace and not for a meaningful, sustainable peace and human security situation in the region.

Further, the government has consequently attempted to hold the provincial elections in 10th of May 2008 in order to make democracy and peace in the East. Thus the government believed the result of the provincial council elections would play a significant role to make peace and human security in terms of understanding the democracy after liberation in the Eastern province.

¹¹ Mayilvaganan.m, (October,05 2006) “The Eastern Factor in the Sri Lanka Ethnic Conflict”, institute for defence studies & analyses
The barriers

The decision of the Supreme Court in October 2006 to de-merge the Eastern from the Northern Province, temporarily merged under the terms of the 1987 Indo-Lanka accord, and later would hold a provincial council election in May 2008. The statement of the Supreme Court has affected the minorities of Sri Lanka. Because, both North and East provinces is linked a predominant territory of the minority both Tamil and Muslims in the island. After liberation in the East the provincial council election has been successfully held in May 2008. The incident of holding an election people in both North and East had felt that they would be divided in two separate territories and also they realized the effect of the De-merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces that they would not identify the voice of their rights together. Thus people from the North and East still feel the provincial election could have been held even after liberation of the North in terms of the 1987 Indo-Lanka accord. Because of the De-merger of the North and East, the minorities of the island extremely feel the government has purposely done this crisis situation to weaken the minority’s voice towards making demands on the government.

However, the provincial election result further had enthusiastically motivated the government to deal with democratic activities in order to make humans security and peace in the region. The TMVP, a loyal alliance partner of the government, won the elections by a narrow majority. As a result of victory the provincial election the TMVP deputy leader, S.Chandranthan has been elected the province’s chief minister. Although chief minister had so far worked well with pro-government Muslims ministers, many Muslims have continued to distrust the TMVP’s intentions and see as it was maintain the LTTE’s aggressive approach to Muslims. Besides, it also had a doubtful sense among Muslims that the return of Karuna, the founder of the TMVP, to Sri Lanka in June 2008, and soon after he has been taken into the parliament. Meanwhile, there is another issue regarding the power-sharing in the Eastern province. The chief minister S.Chandranthan feels that the time when he assumed the post of the chief minister in

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13 Sri Lanka’s eastern province: land, development, conflict (15.october 2008) the international crisis group. P.2
the East, he was promised to give more authorizes to deal the provincial affairs properly. Consequently he received some of the provincial authorities within very limited levels. Thus he now accuses the government that he is not able to administer the province which he has the powers in his hands. Also, he is amazed due to re-taking his some powers by the central government which was namely given to be a chief minister position. Therefore the chief minister says that he was selected for his position to ensure the benefits of peace and human security in the region in terms of being a position of the chief minister in the Eastern province. Thus he continuously denotes the government must devolve real power to the newly elected provincial council as much as possible.

Meanwhile, there is highly collapsible situation among the TMVP members Karuna who founder of the TMVP and also a parliamentarian, Pillaiyan who is the chief minister of the East and also deputy leader of the TMVP and Iniyaparathai who dominates his power in the Ampara district and also secretary of the TMVP. Because of the collapsible situation among the TMVP still they have no good relation among themselves to make peace and human security in the region. Also, they involve in many human rights violation and use to accuse each others for the creation of human rights violation in the region.

The LTTE as known have been eradicated from the East. They frequently interfere the political affairs with using its maximum energy in the region nowadays, and also the LTTE involve in many human rights violation and also criticize the government and other Tamil political groups who have an opposite ideas about them, in order to dominate the political power and make them as the so-called ‘sole representatives’ of the Tamil’s voice in the region again. Meanwhile, the interference of the LTTE in the East also seems to be a barrier for making peace and human security in the Eastern province.

**The current Issues**

Since, the liberation of the Eastern province in 2007 people are, somewhat, entering in real meaning of the democracy. The people who are caught up in the conflict as they were promised, the government had begun many economic development projects
soon after the liberation under the name of the “Awakening of the East” project in the East. Almost, now the rehabilitations and reconstruction schemes are finished properly with the support of the foreign aids in order to make democracy and peace in the region. Whereas, although, people are happy and feel somewhat free to enjoy the benefits of the economic developments in terms of the liberation of the East, still they feel that there are many issues regarding human security and human rights in relation with the people caught up in the conflict. Especially, people who are caught up in the conflict when they were under the LTTE’s control before they liberated in 2007 and by the time of the LTTE, they were taken in many LTTE’s activities, and also many of them had been much closer relationship with the LTTE. Meanwhile, even after the liberation, the suspicion of the LTTE’s activities is being a very strong phenomenon over there and thus, still people who are caught up in the conflict are taken in threats and violence in terms of the LTTE suspicion.

According to local and international observation on the Eastern province, the situation of peace and human security are still in critical condition. Further the report points out that still people are in insecure conditions and they absolutely did not turn their normal lifestyle from the experience war situation and human rights violation where the people caught up in conflict areas in Eastern province. Whereas, government perhaps, successfully develops the East in terms of the liberation, but meanwhile, they carrying out heavy military operation in the Northern Province and consequently having successful military victories over there, thus the people of the Sri Lanka extremely expect the war is a way to end the war in Sri Lanka in near future. Due to military victories in the north, the LTTE is being weakened and they somewhat turn to show their political interferences in the East again, and thus they purposely create a political tension by killing the military soldiers and TMVP members as we as people who supports the TMVP and other paramilitaries in the region now a day. The TMVP members also, as known have collapsed among themselves and thus they involve in many human rights violation on civilians parliamentarians who help the LTTE and other paramilitary groups in the region.
According to International Crisis Group report in 2008, there are serious issues regarding land and development in the East. As it further said by the meaning of the liberation in the East, both Tamil and Muslims suspect the government plans to Sinhalese the East – through development projects that would bring in new Sinhala settlers, environmental regulations that would remove public lands from use by Muslims and Tamils and the recovery of ancient Buddhist sites. It also pointed out another issue regarding the development plans in Trincomalee district. The new location in Trincomalee with a high security zone that had forced some 8,000 Tamils to leave their lands and still they did not resettle properly in the region. And also people suspect regarding power-sharing in the region after the liberation particularly, the acceptance of the de-merger of North and East, the appointment of a new Sinhalese-dominated provincial administration, the major role of the military in civilian affairs, development plans that promise large-scale changes to the East, local government and provincial council elections – all have been imposed from Colombo. There had been little input from independent representatives of Tamil and Muslims, who constitute a clear majority of the province. Further the report suggests the government must devolve real power to the newly elected provincial council, end impunity for ongoing human rights violations and work to develop a consensus on issues of land, security and power sharing with independent representatives of all communities, including those from opposition parties.

According to the independent news 2008 report, human security and human rights situations have heavily violated with high amounts of reports of extra-judicial killings, and abductions in the East province. As it has clearly reported that some 193 people had been killed, and 110 have been disappeared between January – November 2008. The report said many of them (102 murders and 66 abductions) had been reported in Batticaloa district. Further this report has identified some places such as Kokkaddi Cholai, Shaththuru Kondan, Vantharu Mulai, Maheladith Thivu, Thannai Maravadi,

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14 Sri Lanka’s eastern province: land, development, conflict (15.october 2008) the international crisis group
Thiriaaj, Kummurup Pitdi, Thiraajk Kani, and Udumpan Kulam where higher numbers of human rights violations had been reported in 2008. These places were cleared in 2007.  

Finally, it further says particularly during the end of November in 2008, there have been reported that some 25 people have been killed with in a one week of the period in the East. Hence, in the current situation in the East, it can be obviously seen there are still people in insecurity situation even it is so-called liberated.

**Conclusion**

We, the Sri Lankans, strongly believe that we can finish the war in the near future. While trusting that the government will solve the LTTE’s issues first, and we believe that the government will ensure a sustainable peace and human security over the country in future. Thus, we accept the military victories against the LTTE. Hence, consequently we hope perhaps, the military victories may help the country to make peace and human security. Once, the liberation of the Eastern province in 2007, Sri Lankans might think that part of the LTTE’s issues have finished in the region. Later it would continue to demolish rest of the LTTE in North of the country in before the national day in February 4th 2009.

The cleared areas of the East led the government to interfere its power indipentedly on province with a concept of “liberation”. Thus most of the economically development projects had been successfully done in terms of “Awakening of the East” programme. And as a resulting of the economic developments in the East perhaps, the benefits of the development might have given the people to improve much of their livelihood than before liberation in terms of democracy and liberation in the region. However, on the other hand, even after liberation, the East is viewed once of the highly human rights violated region in Sri Lanka, and people of the East still feel the threats on their rights and security in daily base.

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16 Ibid
At any rate the government may say they could maximum interfere in the East to ensure the peace and human security from the threats of the LTTE, but the critical sense is even after eradicated the LTTE in the region why are people in fear? And, how can human right violations occur in the region? Thus, the critical situation is clearly seen that there are still have some issues to fulfill the shortage of the real meaning of the liberation in the East. Meanwhile, for the reason of the critical situation in the East, people may think the existent of the LTTE is only the key facts in the region to occurrence the human rights violation. But perhaps, there should be many reasons may lie to motivate the facts on behalf of the shortages of power sharing, security, and authority of the provincial council in the region. Also, the facts may be viewed the differences of the attitudes, demands, purposes and approaches of the Government, the TMVP, the LTTE, and some Paramilitaries who seem to be the key players to ensure the peace and human security situations in the region.

Therefore, if the government loyally attempts to ensure real peace and human security in the East, they should fist consider the key issues which seem to hinder peace building and human security in the region. Secondly they should try with commitment to overcome those issues in order to make sustainable peace and human security in the Eastern province. It is only by doing so that the people who are caught up in the conflict could feel happy and enjoy real peace without facing threats in the East as well as the whole island.
Glossary of Terms

GOSL – Government of Sri Lanka
LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
TMVP – Tamil Makkal Viduthai Puligal
SL Army – Sri Lankan Army
SLMM – Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission
TNA - Tamil National Alliance
EPDP – Eelam People Democratic Party
EPRLF – Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front
PLOTE - People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
INGO – International Non – Government Organization
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