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NESOHR Report on the Tamil Political Prisoners

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In early 2008 the then member of parliament Kiddinan Sivanesan handed to NESOHR a data CD of PDF files of seventy hand written statements of Tamil political prisoners who were held in the New Magazine prison at that time. A few weeks later Sivanesan was assassinated in a claymore attack.

After the end of the war in 2009, NESOHR made contact with a couple of these prisoners in an effort to help them. NESOHR learnt at that time that most of them could get released by paying/bribing 5K-10K US\$. NESOHR also became aware of particular cases of these political prisoners who had indeed obtained their release in this manner. It became clear to NESOHR then that for a bribe of one million US\$ most of the known Tamil political prisoners could obtain their release. Such was the justice system then. Most Eelam Tamils know this fact but it is not clear how many Sinhalese people are aware that it was possible to obtain the release of all the Tamil political prisoners with bribes amounting to one million US\$.

The present “celebrated” new government, however, continues to struggle to release these same Tamil political prisoners despite promises made. Some have suggested that the current government is mindful of enraging the Sinhala people who would think that releasing these Tamil political prisoners is tantamount forgiving the LTTE. Who are these political prisoners and what are their experiences.

The snapshot presented below was drawn from the seventy hand written statements mentioned above that is in possession of NESOHR. Can any human being think of any purpose in holding these Tamils in prison?

Case:0001; Age of arrest: 20; Current age: 40

Family: Two nephews disappeared. Home was burnt down.

Torture: Stripped naked and genitals were burnt. One week isolation without food or water.

Case: 0002; Age of arrest: 23; Current age: 35

Family: Lost everything following displacement in 1991. Orphaned by 2004 tsunami.

Torture: After arrest several people beat him standing around after his hands were tied behind.

Case: 0003; Age of arrest: 17; Current age: 40

Family: One nephew was killed in military shelling and another nephew was shot and killed by the military.

Torture: Beaten on the face with boots by the military. This caused swellings of the face which lasted for one month. Hands were tied behind and head was dipped into water for several minutes. Head was covered with a plastic bag and neck was strangled. Was stripped naked and beaten while ordering to wash the military's clothes and polish their boots. Between 1993 and 1994, saw more than 15 inmates being tortured and killed by the military inside the Batticaloa prison. Their bodies were thrown into a well located in the Batticaloa prison.

Case: 0004; Age of arrest: 18; Current age 37

Torture: Had a wound caused by a fall before arrest. Military poured petrol on it and beat on the wound. Put chilly powder on the wound and stirred with a pen. Beaten by a fat log which cracked the forehead. Elbow was also broken during the beating. Was stripped naked and hands were tied behind. Covered head with a plastic bag soaked in petrol and neck was strangled. Inserted pins on all five finger nails. Was handcuffed behind and was dipped into water. Burnt the penis and hand with cigarette.

Case: 0005; Age of arrest: 25; Current age: 42

Family: Aunt, 35, was killed in an aerial bombing.

Torture: Hung on both thumbs using shoe strings and beaten with broomsticks and nylon ropes. Hand cuffed behind and hung upside down. Covered face with a plastic bag filled with chilly powder and strangled the neck. Stripped naked and hung upside down. Put penis in a coconut shell filled with water and chilly powder. Crushed scrotum with hands. Still naked and chained crossed legged and beaten on heels with wickets. Right leg was broken and head was cracked. Inserted pin in all fingers. Burnt with cigarette.

Case: 0006; Age of arrest 31; Current age: 47

Family: Nephew went missing in 1997. Uncle was shot dead by military.

Torture: Chained crossed legged and beaten on heels for one hour. Poured water into the nose. Hand cuffed behind and a stick was inserted between hands and back and it was turned up and down. Ordered to kneel and placed a log across the thighs. Then two people stood on it and was beaten with wire. Was stripped naked and was beaten on buttocks, knees and spine with wickets which caused fractures of the second toe and left foot. Burnt with cigarette and crushed scrotum with boots.

Case: 0007; Age of arrest: 40; Current age:54

Family: Brother was shot dead by military. Another brother went missing in 1996. A third brother also went missing. Two sons, were arrested and tortured by military.

Torture: Was handcuffed behind and hung. Beaten with cane. While still hanging, head was bent forward. Hand cuffed, made to kneel on hot sand under the sun from 7.00am to 5.00pm.

Case: 0008; Age of arrest: 25; Current age; 44

Family: Brother was shot dead by military.

Torture: Chained hands and legs and was beaten on joints. Put in a dark room for one week. Head was broken and four of the teeth were also knocked out. Pulled bits of the hair. Stripped naked and hand cuffed behind. Made to lie on stomach on a table and beaten on the heels with a plastic pipe filled with cement. Bent and broke right thumb. Chained hands behind and treaded on the penis and scrotum with boots.

Case: 0009; Age of arrest: 27; Current age:46

Family: Sister and aunt were killed in aerial bombing after seeking refuge in a church. Other relatives were also injured in this.

Torture: Handcuffed behind and beaten by 8 to 10 people with batons, canes and boots. Made to lie on side on floor and beaten on heels with wickets. Right toe was crushed with boots. Removed nails.

Case: 0012; Age of arrest: 25; Current age: 46

Family: Father and sister were shot dead by military.

Torture: Covered face with a plastic bag soaked in petrol. Strangled neck and beaten on heels with a plastic pipe filled with cement. Put penis and scrotum in a drawer and crushed it by closing the drawer. Crushed scrotum with hands.

Case: 0017; Age of arrest: 119; Current age: 28

Family: Cousin went missing. Brother was abducted from refuge's camp and shot dead.

Torture: Blindfolded, handcuffed behind and beaten by iron rod. Forced head down a seat and kicked with boots on the ribs. Pierced hands with pins. Stripped naked, inserted an iron rod into anus and pushed it in and out. Crushed penis and testicles with hands.

Case: 0018; Age of arrest: 22; Current age: 35

Torture: Placed heavy flat object on head and banged it with another heavy object. Beaten on heels with pipe filled with concrete. Stripped naked, tied up and thrown on ground and urinated on. Crushed scrotum with hands.