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PROJECT

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PRESS RELEASE: Is the Sri Lanka Government serious about its Office of Missing Persons?

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Johannesburg: The Government of Sri Lanka is undermining the Office of Missing Persons by appointing a politician to implement its recommendations who has denied war crimes, including enforced disappearances, and who allegedly intimidated a victim. Minister Mahinda Samarasinghe has reportedly been appointed to a 10-member cabinet sub-committee expected to implement the interim recommendations of Sri Lanka's Office of Missing Persons (OMP)¹. There are also concerns that the appointment of this sub-committee could be a delaying tactic to further undermine the process, especially as there is no timeline given for its activities².

A **DOSSIER** on Minister Samarasinghe is attached.

¹ The ten members are: Wijayadasa Rajapaksa (Chair), Sarath Amunugama, Rauff Hakim, Vajira Abeywardena, Mahinda Amaraweera, Ranjith Madduma Bandara, P. Palani Digambaram, Thalatha Athukorala, Mano Ganesan and Mahinda Samarasinghe. Story attributed to DG information Sudarshana Gunawardana with names in the second paragraph. <http://www.radiogagana.com/2018/09/21/sri-lanka-announces-names-of-omp-cabinet-subcommittee/>

Tweet by Sudarshana Gunawardana announcing names in Sinhala, https://twitter.com/Sudarshana_RN/status/1043136461594193920

Also cited in: [Sri Lanka: Renewed attack against Channel 4 documentary as "fake" \(VIDEO\), 24 September 2018, JDS](#), <http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/politics-a-current-affairs/813-sri-lanka-renewed-attack-against-channel-4-war-crimes-documentary-as-fake>

²[Justice for Sri Lanka's disappeared thousands further delayed](#), 7 September 2018, JDS, <http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/human-rights/804-justice-for-sri-lankas-disappeared-thousands-further-delayed>

"The Office of Missing Persons is viewed by many in the international community as the last hope for accountability in Sri Lanka," said the ITJP's Executive Director and transitional justice expert, Yasmin Sooka, "this sort of appointment makes a mockery of the body and worse still the victims, who desperately need to see progress after years of waiting for information about the fate of their loved ones. Sri Lanka is reported to have the second highest case load in the world, after Iraq, for disappearances - this is an accountability issue that affects the whole international community who have the responsibility to ensure that the Government of Sri Lanka acts in good faith rather than ending up disowning its own initiative, as it did with the victim consultation process".

In 2015 Sri Lanka undertook to establish four complementary transitional justice mechanisms: a Hybrid Court, a Truth Commission, an Office of Missing Persons and a reparations body. Only one of these - the Office of Missing Persons - has been recently established after three years and its mandate does not allow for criminal accountability. Concerns have also been raised about the inclusion of a retired Major General on the body who was in charge of the legal department of the Sri Lankan Army at a time when the UN found reasonable grounds to believe there were grave violations of international humanitarian law by the Army, amongst others.

Minister Samarasinghe has previously denounced reports of enforced disappearance as terrorist propaganda and outrightly dismissed the idea that Tamils disappeared after surrendering at the end of the civil war. This denial is problematic and rejects the stance taken by the Office of Missing Persons which has said its priority case is the disappearance after surrender to the Army of hundreds of Tamils in May 2009. For a list of more than three hundred names of those individuals please see the ITJP's disappearance [website](#)³.

"Appointing individuals like Mahinda Samarasinghe appears to be a deliberate attempt to subvert the entire process, which is already struggling for legitimacy with many Families of the Disappeared. It is also extremely offensive for the families, many of whom handed their loved ones over to the security forces at the end of the war never to see them again," said Ms. Sooka.

Minister Samarasinghe is also responsible for understating the population numbers in the 2009 war zone, and he refused to accept there were civilian casualties, denied government forces repeatedly targeted civilians and denied they used heavy weapons and claimed there was no issue with media freedom. As Human Rights Minister during the Rajapaksa Government, Mahinda Samarasinghe continuously defended their record and continues to deny state wrongdoing to this day.

"This is the idealogue and apologist for the worst violations committed under the Rajapaksa regime - and there are no indications he has had a change of heart. What is a person like this doing involved in the OMP's activities which are expected to receive substantial

³ <http://www.disappearance.itjpsl.com/#lang=english>

international support from donors?" asked Ms. Sooka. "His appointment does not show political commitment to establishing the truth about enforced disappearances," she added, "and it also disregards Sri Lanka's commitment in UN Resolution 30/1 to vet public officials".

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In addition there are concerns about the chair of the sub-committee Wijayadasa Rajapaksa **[see note below]** whose record on minority affairs, alleged support for religious extremists and intolerance of freedom of expression and homosexuality hardly make him the right person to oversee the implementation of a rights-based approach to disappearance.

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A Note on Wijayadasa Rajapaksa

The chair of the OMP cabinet sub-committee, Wijayadasa Rajapaksa, has been heavily critical of the UN, reportedly saying of two UN special rapporteurs: *“They lack caliber and have hidden agendas. They think Asians are uneducated and uncivilized and have to follow the West”*. He is reported to have had a heated argument with Special Rapporteur, Ben Emmerson⁵, in 2017 and then claimed this was why he was removed from the Justice portfolio.

Mr Rajapaksa has also been open in his opposition to devolving power to Tamil areas and unabashed about calling for Sinhala Buddhist leadership⁶. He is alleged to have given misleading population numbers for Sinhalese in the East, allegedly in order to generate a sense of threat to the majority community⁷. He had a discussion in parliament premises with the leader of the extremist Sinhala Buddhist party, Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), effectively legitimising them⁸, despite a petition⁹ of 5000+ signatures calling for the BBS monk’s arrest for inciting racial hatred and threatening a bloodbath¹⁰. One commentator described the Minister as the “unofficial patron of Bodu Bala Sena (BBS)” and said he was seen as a “blatant liar” by the Muslim community¹¹. The writer highlighted the Minister’s links to the Rajapaksa regime and concluded he was unfit to be Justice and Buddha Sasana Minister (his posts at the time). The Minister’s anti minority bias has also extended to Christians with Mr Rajapaksa attacking a respected lawyer, Lakshan

⁴ UN Special Rapporteur lacks calibre, diplomacy: Minister, 15 July 2017, Daily Mirror, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/UN-Special-Rapporteur-lacks-calibre-diplomacy-Minister-132879.html>

Also Govt. to go ahead with terrorism bill: Rajapakshe, Sunday Times, 15 July 2017, <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/170716/news/govt-to-go-ahead-with-terrorism-bill-rajapakshe-250594.html>

⁵ More on 'clash' between Justice Minister and UN official, 14 July 2017, The Island, http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=168277

⁶ Published 24 April 2018, <http://www.radiogagana.com/2018/04/24/top-level-discussions-to-promote-sinhala-buddhist-leadership-for-sri-lanka/> Translation from Sinhala “He went and met the Buddhist hierarchy after he had to resign from the Justice minister post. He said that he had to resign because he told Emmerson off and chased him away. He told the top buddhist monk that there is a need for a Sinhala Buddhist leadership to run the country in order to stop the new constitution that will get rid of the executive presidency and devolve power to the Tamils. Such people with ‘a tribal mindset is the need of the hour’ he told the monk”.

⁷ Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe Plays With Numbers Again, This Time He Lies About The Sinhala Population In Batticaloa, 22 Dec 2016, Colombo Telegraph, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/wijeyadasa-rajapakshe-plays-with-numbers-again-this-time-he-lies-about-the-sinhala-population-in-batticaloa/>

⁸ Justice Minister’s statement earns ire of Muslim ministers, 27 Nov 2016, Sunday Observer, <http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2016/11/27/justice-minister’s-statement-earns-ire-muslim-ministers>

⁹ Petition in English: <http://www.radiogagana.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Complaint-to-IGP-against-Police-inaction-on-Buddhist-monk-attacks-18-Nov-2016.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.radiogagana.com/2016/11/23/gnanasara-wijayadasa-talks-despite-petition-to-arrest/>

¹¹ [Wijedasa Rajapaksa: Unfit for the job of Justice and Buddha Sasana Minister](http://www.radiogagana.com/2016/11/23/gnanasara-wijayadasa-talks-despite-petition-to-arrest/), 27 Dec 2016, Groundviews, <https://groundviews.org/2016/12/27/wijedasa-rajapaksa-unfit-for-the-job-of-justice-and-buddha-sasana-minister/>

Dias, because he said there had been 190 attacks on Christians under the current government¹².

Media reports allege Rajapaksa was behind the attempt to use Interpol to seek the arrest of a UK based Sinhala journalist, Sandaruwan Senadheera, allegedly for contempt of court¹³. As Minister of Higher Education and Cultural Affairs, Wijayadasa Rajapakshe is reported to have ordered the police to file charges against the author and publisher of a novel, sparking protest from the Free Media Movement in Sri Lanka¹⁴.

As Justice Minister, Wijayadasa Rajapaksa, also accused homosexuals of being mentally ill, causing uproar among rights activists¹⁵.

¹² [Sri Lanka government under fire for threatening human rights lawyer](http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/human-rights/691-sri-lanka-government-under-fire-for-threatening-human-rights-lawyer), 20 June 2017, <http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/human-rights/691-sri-lanka-government-under-fire-for-threatening-human-rights-lawyer>

¹³ [Court seeks Interpol help to arrest exiled Sri Lankan journalist](http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/media/647-interpol-called-to-help-to-arrest-exiled-sri-lanka-journalist), 25 Dec 2016, JDS, <http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/media/647-interpol-called-to-help-to-arrest-exiled-sri-lanka-journalist>

¹⁴ Political meddling in artists' work causes issues – Free Media Movement, 27 Aug 2018, <https://lankanewsweb.net/news/67-general-news/32123-political-meddling-in-artists'-work-causes-issues---free-media-movement>

¹⁵ Homophobic Justice Minister Wijeyadasa Should Resign: Right Activists, 22 Jan 2017, Colombo Telegraph, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/homophobic-justice-minister-wijeyadasa-should-resign-right-activists/>

Dossier: Mahinda Samarasinghe

1.0 Denying Enforced Disappearances

1.1 Denial in 2007

Minister Samarasinghe is quoted in the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights investigation report into Sri Lanka (OISL) as denying reports in 2007 about people who had disappeared:

"...the then Human Rights and Disaster Management Minister, Mahinda Samarasinghe, claimed that the reports about people who disappeared were the result of the "propaganda strategy" by "a ruthless terrorist organization" which tried to "paint a bleak picture internationally to bring pressure on the government so that our resolve will be weakened. (Para. 397)"

It is worth noting this was a period when enforced disappearance was rampant - a Human Rights Watch report at the time collated 498 cases of disappearances, abductions and missing people that occurred in 2006 and 2007¹⁶ and even this may be an underestimate. In its 2006, 2007 and 2008 reports, WGEID indicated that it was gravely concerned at the increase in reported cases of recent enforced disappearances¹⁷. The UN also said in the majority of the cases of enforced disappearance the security forces were allegedly responsible¹⁸.

1.2 Denial in 2009

In a BBC HardTalk interview in March 2009, Minister Samarasinghe was asked about reports from Human Rights Watch that young Tamil men and women had disappeared before reaching the camps for the war displaced. He flatly denied this¹⁹. The UN Investigation report (OISL) recommended 'an independent review of the lists of individuals registered as "surrendees"' which has not happened to date.

1.3 Denial in 2018 of Summary Executions of Surrendees

In 2018, Mahinda Samarasinghe responded to the assertion by another Sri Lankan Minister, S.B. Dissanayake, that an LTTE leader, Colonel Ramesh, had telephoned him 10 minutes before surrendering to government forces in May 2009 whereafter he was executed. Minister Dissanayake alleged LTTE cadres who surrendered were killed. In the case of Colonel Ramesh there is video showing him alive in army custody and then later he is seen dead. Minister Samarasinghe however said he totally rejected his colleague's story because, "if anyone surrenders, a professional army will never take steps to kill them"²⁰.

¹⁶ Cases of "Disappearances," Abductions, and Missing Individuals Documented by Sri Lankan Human Rights Groups, <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/srilanka0308/srilanka0308cases.pdf>

¹⁷ OISL Paras. 403, 404 and 405.

¹⁸ OISL Para. 412.

¹⁹ BBC Hardtalk With Mahinda Samarasinghe MP, early March 2009, Transcript at http://www.businesstoday.lk/cover_page.php?article=35&issue=207

²⁰ Translation of his remarks in Sinhala: "Our military is a professionals military. If these things were correct, I would like to ask the person who told such things (SB) how Prabhakaran's

This comment by Minister Samarasinghe is of particular significance because the Office of Missing Persons has acknowledged that its priority case is the investigation into the hundreds²¹ of Tamils who disappeared after surrendering in May 2009 to the Army.

2.0 Trinco 5: Alleged intimidation of a key witness and suppression of evidence

2.1 IIGEP

A confidential report to donors by the International Independent Group of Eminent Persons (IIGEP, April 2009) which assisted a Commission of Inquiry in Sri Lanka²² investigating 16 emblematic cases, found credible evidence that Mahinda Samarasinghe knew early on that government security forces had killed the five youths and injured others in Trincomalee in January 2006. The Minister has never disclosed that evidence.

IIGEP's report said a witness, Dr Manoharan, gave sworn testimony that Mahinda Samarasinghe had contacted him by phone and told him not to talk to internationals, that members of the security forces had killed his son, and that he would assist him and his family with a new life in Colombo. This incident has also been widely reported in the Sri Lankan media²³.

parents can be accounted for. Prabhakaran's mother and father surrendered and that responsibility was taken. Today Daya Master is living. They also surrendered and with the things they did and if it (killing surrendeers) was a policy they won't be alive. A better example is, 12,000 youth surrendered, some had cyanide capsules when surrendering, they were properly registered, they were accounted for, they have been rehabilitated and they have been reintegrated within society. That is how our military worked. We didn't take revenge from anyone. When there is a war, people from both sides die. But, if anyone surrenders, a professional army will never take steps to kill them. They didn't do that. We clearly state that. That is our stance earlier. It will be the same today and in future as well. These examples are enough, Shamindra, to show that this is a contradictory statement. If so, this story about Colonel Ramesh should have been told at that time (2009). "I spoke to him 10 minutes before surrendering and now he is not alive". This is a serious statement and I think that this claim warrants the recording of a statement, on how this came to be known. When there is a war, people from both sides die. A massive number of terrorists died. Many officers from our military also died. But, our tri-forces and police only helped those surrendered they didn't lay a hand on them. We are very clear on that."

Sinhala story and video on presser held on 19th September
2018:<http://www.radiogagana.com/2018/09/19/sri-lanka-wartime-minister-at-logger-heads-with-party-after-admitting-to-war-crimes/>

²¹ ITJP Has been collecting names and photos of the disappeared and currently has 338 names listed: <http://www.disappearance.itjpsl.com/#filter=type:enforced&lang=english> but is still receiving additional information.

²² Known as "The Commission of Inquiry Appointed to Investigate and Inquire into Serious Violations of Human Rights which are alleged to have arisen in Sri Lanka since 1st August 2005".

²³ For example: "Whilst military personnel intimidated Dr Manoharan, Sri Lanka's minister for human rights Mahinda Samarasinghe tried a different tact. He called the doctor and offered him a "nice house Colombo for you and your family" in exchange for dropping pursuit of the perpetrators. "We can find a nice school for your children," said Mr Samarasinghe, a politician who would go on to represent Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva". [12 years on and still no justice - Trinco 5 killings](https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/12-years-and-still-no-justice-trinco-5-killings), 2 January 2018, Tamil Guardian, <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/12-years-and-still-no-justice-trinco-5-killings>

IIGEP commented that:

“The import of this evidence is that, not only does it prove that the GoSL knew early on that their forces were responsible and that there was intimidation and/or attempted bribery of a material witness from the very Minister responsible for protecting human rights in Sri Lanka, but it was intimidation from a person who was, and remains part of the GoSL’s team that represents Sri Lanka at international forums on human rights..”.

2.2 Media

It is worth noting the senior police official in charge of Trincomalee at the time of the killings was SSP Kapila Jayasekera²⁴ and Dr. Manoharan has alleged he was responsible for the killing of his son²⁵. Kapila Jayasekera has been promoted to Senior DIG of police and is still posted in the East of Sri Lanka in overall charge of the area²⁶.

3.0 Denial Regarding the Final War

3.1 Casualty Figures in War

Mahinda Samarasinghe is also quoted by the UN’s OISL report as publicising what turned out to be vastly underestimated population figures for civilians in the war zone in 2009 in order to assert that sufficient food was supplied. We now know from UN reports that there were three times more people than the Minister asserted and acute food shortages with some cases of starvation. The UN Investigation concluded that the significant differences in population numbers could not be “explained by inaccuracies on the part of the Government” (Para 979).

3.2 BBC Interview

In an extraordinary interview with the BBC’s Hard Talk programme in the spring of 2009 Minister Samarasinghe denied any wrongdoing by the Sri Lankan Government in the conduct of the final phase of the war²⁷. Local reporting of the broadcast framed it as the Minister “dismissing the biased questioning of the BBC”.

²⁴ The Trinco-5 And The Matale Mass Grave: Behind The Facade Of Accountability, Colombo Telegraph, 17 July 2013, <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/the-trinco-5-and-the-matale-mass-grave-behind-the-facade-of-accountability/>

²⁵ “I have no doubt that Mr Kapila Jeyasekera is responsible for killing my son” said Dr Manoharan, seven years after the murder.’, [Still searching for justice - 11th anniversary of Trinco 5 killings](#), 2 January 2017, Tamil Guardian, [Still searching for justice - 11th anniversary of Trinco 5 killings](#)

²⁶ Tension in Ampara town, 27 Feb 2018, Daily Mirror Lanka, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Tension-in-Ampara-town-146513.html>

²⁷ BBC Hardtalk With Mahinda Samarasinghe MP, early March 2009, Transcript at http://www.businesstoday.lk/cover_page.php?article=35&issue=207

3.21 Heavy Weapons

The Minister claimed the government had stopped using heavy weapons around 20 February 2009²⁸ - something refuted in the subsequent UN Investigation which said, "the Sri Lankan Armed Forces used indirect-fire weapons, including artillery shells and MBRLs on the three NFZs and surrounding areas, causing widespread damage to civilian infrastructure and loss of civilian lives" (Para 750). The UN also cited the Government in late April [two months after Samarasinghe said it had stopped] now announcing it would stop using heavy weapons²⁹. Moreover the UN said at this point, "the shelling did not stop, and may even have intensified according to some sources". It is worth noting the UN said from the end of January the LTTE lacked heavy weapons (Para.86).

3.22 Zero Civilian Casualties

The Minister denied reports from a government doctor that artillery shells fired from government positions had killed 10 civilians, responding "Well we categorically deny this" and he surreally claimed the doctor had never given the interview in question. Later the Minister alleged the doctors had been forced to give false interviews by the LTTE - something they denied when free to do so.

The Minister also denied his government was responsible for any civilian casualties saying (a) civilians had not been targeted and (b) claiming the UN hadn't accused them of this³⁰. However the UN Panel of Experts in 2011 said there was "sustained SLA targeting of No Fire Zones" (762 OISL) and the UN OHCHR Investigation found "reasonable grounds to believe that they were deliberately targeted" (Para 864).

The UN later gave estimates for civilian deaths of 40,000 (UN Panel of Experts) and then 70,000 (Petrie Report). The UN OISL report (Para 750) added that, "At least four medical facilities - PTK, Mullaivaikkal, Udayarkaadu and Putumattalan - were shelled with unguided weapons and ammunition such as MBRLs according to witness testimonies". Interestingly in the BBC Interview the Minister confirmed the government did know the locations of hospitals³¹. With respect to hospitals, the UN's OISL report also said that government forces "in some cases, may have deliberately targeted the facilities" (Para 789).

3.33 Detention of War Survivors

The Minister flatly denied that survivors of the war put in Manik Farm Camp were detained there against their will. However the OISL report

²⁸ This interview is cited in OISL, Para. 749.

²⁹ Para 91: On 27 April, the Government announced that combat operations had reached their conclusion and that the security forces had been instructed "to end the use of heavy caliber guns, combat aircraft and aerial weapons which could cause civilian casualties".

³⁰ "I can tell you very frankly that neither the ICRC nor the UN at any point has said that the Government has fired into civilian positions. Of course they have said that civilians have died, but to that, we have asked them the question: How do you identify a civilian from a terrorist?".

³¹ "...some of these hospitals and other areas where civilians are there, the coordinates have been made available to us".

says (Para 1072), “The IDPs were not only prohibited from leaving Manik Farm without authorization, but also could not leave the zone to which they had been assigned” and the report highlighted the role of the military in the administration of the camp, the terrifying nature of the screening process there and the appalling physical conditions. ITJP witnesses have described being raped while interrogated in the camp, and one identified her rapist as a military intelligence officer whom we know is still serving in the military.

3.34 Media Freedom

The Minister denied in 2009 there were any problems with journalistic freedom though the UN later said, “The number of journalists and media workers killed in Sri Lanka also ranks among the highest in the world and placed severe restrictions on freedom of expression” (OISL, Para 257). The UN OISL report has a whole section on the killing of journalists – an issue also highlighted by the domestic Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission in Sri Lanka. Several journalists, Sinhalese and Tamil, are still in exile despite the change of government in 2015.

4.0 Persistent Denial of War Crimes Evidence

4.1 Channel 4 Execution Footage

In 2018 Minister Samarsinghe has continued to attack Channel 4 for its coverage of the civil war, alleging it broadcast fabricated videos³² at the behest of the Tamil Diaspora. The Channel 4 execution videos supplied by exiled journalists that the Government of Sri Lanka disputed were found authentic by the UN³³ and the UK broadcasting regulator, OFCOM³⁴.

³² “As for C4 during the war, we very clearly knew it was on a political agenda. When we look at today's technology, it is very easy to create these things. At that time they fabricated them and showed them... Actually, what they (C4) wanted to do at that time was to give publicity to do what the extremist Tamil diaspora wanted to say. So, we have, our Sri Lankan High Commission there has, complained to the press council there. We took every possible step, but they didn't stop. They continued showing this. Not only them, actually others also showed them. So we can't be responsible for them. They were fake, fabricated and stage-managed things, which was shown at the time. I have to very clearly state that the military was never compelled to do such things.” Translation of remarks in press conference, 19th September 2018,

<http://www.radiogagana.com/2018/09/19/sri-lanka-wartime-minister-at-logger-heads-with-party-after-admitting-to-war-crimes/>

Remarks reported in English at Sri Lanka: Renewed attack against Channel 4 documentary as “fake” (VIDEO), 24 September 2018, JDS, <http://www.jdslanka.org/index.php/news-features/politics-a-current-affairs/813-sri-lanka-renewed-attack-against-channel-4-war-crimes-documentary-as-fake>

³³ “However, the report, commissioned by the UN's Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Philip Alston, examined the video frame-by-frame and a group of experts said they could find no evidence that the video was a fake., 7 Jan 2010, Sri Lanka execution video ‘appears authentic’, <https://www.channel4.com/news/sri-lanka-execution-video-appears-authentic>

Also: ““What is reflected in the extended video are crimes of the highest order - definitive war crimes,” Heyns, said.”, UN urged to probe Lanka war crimes, 30 May 2011, BBC, https://www.bbc.com/sinhala/news/story/2011/05/110530_geneva_unhrc.shtml

³⁴ Ofcom Broadcast Bulletin, Issue 192 24 October 2011, Not in Breach, Sri Lanka's Killing Fields, Channel 4, 14 June 2011, 23:05

4.2 Doctors

Minister Samarsinghe continued in 2018 to allege the government doctors who were in the war zone were forced by the LTTE to give untrue information³⁵. This is despite the fact the (a) the information the doctors gave has now been corroborated by multiple other survivor accounts and various UN investigations and (b) one such doctor has said they were forced to recant while in government custody after in his case being denied a vital operation if he didn't cooperate and having his family threatened³⁶. This amounts to psychological torture.

4.3 Denial in Geneva

In May 2011 the Minister asserted in Geneva that there were no standards to deal with conflicts like Sri Lanka's³⁷. He later claimed he had thwarted "a major international conspiracy against Sri Lanka" in being able to prevent the tabling at the Human Rights Council of the UN Panel of Experts report³⁸.

ends

https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0026/45926/obb192.pdf#page=45

Govt. expresses displeasure over ruling, 26 Oct 2011, Infolanka,
<http://www.infolanka.com/news/IL/dm72.htm>

³⁵ "Now look, the best example is, those doctors; remember there were four doctors at that time. CNN or Al Jazeera used to take information from them daily over the phone. Those doctors were saying, now hospitals are being bombed, civilians are being killed, patients in them have died, so on and so forth. Alongside that footage containing acting is shown. Understand? Civillians are running, bombs exploding, ok? What did the doctors tell after they came out (from the war zone). The four doctors came out and said, "we were forced to say these things, so we had to talk." They asked, "what else can we do when a gun was held to our heads?" So, this is what really happened there. These were premeditated things." Translation from same press conference.

³⁶ Tamil Doctors and the Sri Lankan War, BBC Radio, 2015
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02w11dv>

³⁷ "There is no one set of international panacea that can apply for such a complex set of domestic issues," Minister for Plantation Industries and Special Envoy for Human Rights in Sri Lanka said", UN urged to probe Lanka war crimes, 30 May 2011, BBC,
https://www.bbc.com/sinhala/news/story/2011/05/110530_geneva_unhrc.shtml.

³⁸ Sri Lanka 'defeated conspiracy at UN', 30 September 2011, BBC Sinhala,
https://www.bbc.com/sinhala/news/story/2011/09/110930_mahinda_unhrc.shtml

Please note Ms. Sooka was one of the 3 experts on the Panel.

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