

Follow up of the Alalpity Massacre : Mass Displacement May 26, 2006

The whole world knows now the massacre of 13 people at Alalpity in Jaffna, Sri Lanka on Saturday, May 13, 2006. There was a claymore attack at the entrance of the village on April 30, 2006. From that day onwards the people have been seeking refuge and security in St. Philip Neri's Church. All the village people go to the Church in the night for their security reasons. Rev. Fr. A. Amalraj was with the people day and night. Non Violent Peace Force has been monitoring the whole incident.

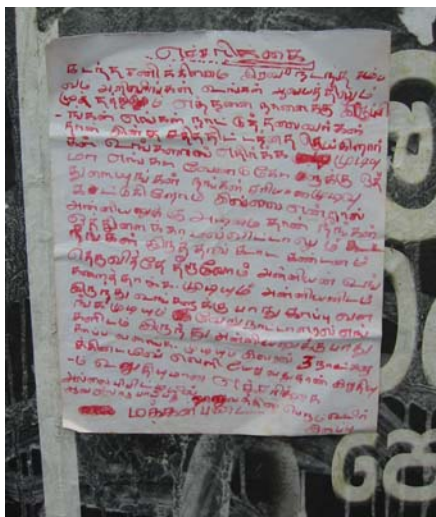
After this massacre on 13th the people have fled to take refuge in the Church. Day and night the people stayed in the church. Non Governmental Organizations helped them with dry ration. Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and Non Violent Peace Force were with the people ensuring their security and monitoring the situation. They did a marvellous and tremendous work for the people. They accompanied them in their struggle to live.

The district judge Mr. Jeyaraman Trockcy ordered the DIG on May15, 2006 to give police security to the people in the church, to the victims and to the injured who are in the hospital. They were indifferent to the call of the judge. After recording the statements of the eyewitnesses on May 17, 2006, at the district court at Kyts in Jaffna the Judge again ordered the police to give security for the people in the Church, to the eyewitnesses, and to the injured in the Hospital. In the presence of the high rank police officers and officers from Criminal Investigation Department (CID) the judge spoke out. You failed to give security to the people before the incident happen (i.e. after the claymore explosion, the people were in the Church) during the massacre and after the massacre. He requested the police to give in writing the reasons why they cannot give security for the people if they fail to do so. The Centre for Peace and Reconciliation worked hard to ensure the security of the witnesses and witness protection was provided.

They did not carry out the order of the Judge. The judicial system was not respected by the Police Department of the Government. On May 18 state council, Judge and lawyer recorded the statements of the injured in the hospital.

In the mean time the people have aired their grievances to the Judge through their respective Grama Sevaga (the first Government representative in a village). They complained that they were in vulnerable position. They were not allowed to move out

A notice was pasted on a public notice post

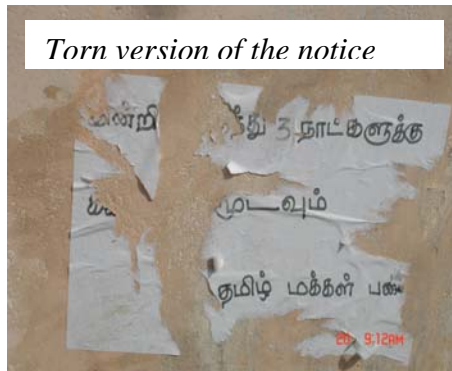


of the village. The Sri Lankan Navy at the check point of the entrance of the village did not allow them to cross over the point.

The judge ordered the police to give security to the people who would like to leave the village saying, “you have irrespected the judiciary, you have failed to give security to the people before the incident happen, during the massacre and after the massacre. Now at least you give security to the people who would like to leave the village.”

On May 19, 2006 a notice was pasted on a public notice post. The notice begins with the heading “Warning.” The notice reads: “you all know what had happened on last Saturday night. How long will you stay in the Church and out of your

houses? The plot to kill people is carried out by our leaders of the country. Can you encounter and oppose this plot? Co-operate with our request. We will show you the right path. If not, you are slave to the Forces. Even if you do not co-operate we will condemn. How can the forces give you security? Therefore vacate the place within 3 days. This is a warning”. People Force claimed the notice.



Torn version of the notice

I met the people. They said that even before the massacre had taken place there was a notice. The notice reads: “Close the shop for three days.” Tamil People Force claimed the notice. So they connected the latter notice with the former one and were afraid that again some tragedy would happen. So they decided on the 19th that they would leave the place on May 20, 2006.

The people who could organize their evacuation looked into their means to move out. The people requested the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation and the Non-Violent Peace Force to give accompaniment and to facilitate their passage to cross over the check points where they were not allowed to move out.

Early morning of May 20, 2006 we organized some buses and lorries for them. many of them wanted to go to the LTTE controlled area. We agreed to take them to Secretariat in Jaffna where the Government Agent office is and advice them to speak



Fr. J. J. Bernard OMI speaks to the Policemen who entered the Church premises. He airs the grievances of the People.

to UNHCR, ICRC, and SLMM to facilitate them if they want to move to Wanni – the LTTE controlled area.

While the people were preparing to move out the policemen came in big number. The Chief Senior Superintendent Police spoke to me. He asked me to stop the people from going out of the village. I told him my purpose of being with the people. But the people screamed and shouted at the police to not to enter the church premises.

Premila from Non-violent Peace Force and I spoke to him. The people said that they are afraid to see the policemen. In the mean time the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) too entered the place. In spite of the order of the judge no security was provided to the people. The people were screaming, blinking, trembling saying that they had come to kill them. We approached them and explained the people’s panicky situation. The SLN left the place immediately respecting and accepting our request placed to them on behalf of the people. Again about 1 PM the policemen entered the Church with arms. The eye witnesses were in the Church. They ran into the parish house. Then we rushed to the Church and found the policemen with heavy weapons. Again we spoke to them and ask them to leave from the Church premises. They responded positively.

The first convoy leaves



The first convoy started to move. The SLN at the check point of the entrance of the village stopped them. We were still organizing the rest of the buses and lorries. As soon as we received the message that they were stopped, we rushed to the spot. We spoke to the SLN commander at the point and negotiated them to allow the people go without any harassment. They got down all

the details of the people and the vehicles that carried them. After sending first convoy from check point we came back to the village to be present with the people and facilitate the second convoy. We accompanied the second convoy. In the mean time we received the message form the first convoy that they were stopped by SL army at the Pannai Causeway check point. This check point is an entrance to the Jaffna Town. They were stopped there for more than an hour. The children and the ladies were crying for water and food. It was around 3:45 PM. From morning they did not have anything to eat and drink. GTZ distributed dry food items in the morning in the Church. It helped them a little. I spoke to the Army commander. He said that he did not receive order to allow the people to proceed. We told him that the Judge has ordered the police to provide security to the people who vacate the place. There was a big argument between us and Army. We called the Judge over the telephone and asked the commander to listen to the Judge. Then we also call the Human Rights Commission. The coordinator Mr. Rohitha Priyatharshna immediately came to the spot. After a long procedure the people were allowed to go. Then they stopped me saying that their high rank officer would like to meet me.

Human Rights Commission and Non-violent Peace Force were with me. They supported me by their presence. They did not want to move. They wanted me to join them.

At last we managed to go from the check point after a serious argument. The people went to the Secretariat. We had already informed the humanitarian agencies to help them. So they received them at the Secretariat.

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