

New video revealing horrid conditions in IDP camps

A mobile phone footage, shot 2 weeks ago and smuggled out by the group War Without Witness, shows the worsening conditions in the concentration camps in Vavuniya. This has been sent to Channel 4 News in which UNICEF spokesperson, James Elder raised that almost **one third of children under 5 are malnourished** and 8% of them have it in the acute form.

[Click here TO WATCH VIDEO...](#)

SL expel Australian UNICEF worker over media comments



James Elder, an official spokesman of the UN Children's Fund, has been ordered to leave Sri Lanka over comments the Australian made to media on the horrible war conditions endured by children.

Since July last year, Mr Elder had been working in Sri Lanka and being one of the few witnesses of humanitarian crimes, due to Colombo's ban on all media and aid access, he made several appearances on foreign television. He described the *'unimaginable hell'* suffered by children in the final stages of war, called on the GoSL to allow access to aid groups to attend to the desperate needs of 300,000 IDPs and later described the severely inadequate camp conditions.

This case comes as no surprise as numerous aid workers have been forced to leave, over their 'anti-government' actions. Recently, two Red cross offices that followed up cases of abduction and extrajudicial killings were forced to close down. Countless journalists have fled the country or have been jailed. "Mr. Elder was doing propaganda in support of the LTTE," was what Sri Lanka's foreign secretary, Palitha Kohona said: the usual accusation by the GoSL as they continue to threaten, punish, eliminate or send out all witnesses of humanitarian crimes. [Read more ...](#)

EU to withdraw trade concession over human rights issues

Based on the EU's preliminary report on human rights abuses, Sri Lanka is expected to lose its profitable European Union trade concession for its top export, garments.

Despite warnings of a possible withdrawal, issued by the EU since July 2008, Sri Lanka's human rights abuses have only exacerbated, particular during and after the final stages of the war. Colombo's continual lack of cooperation to allow any independent investigation has added further concern.

The possible loss of the EU trade agreement would mean the loss of the largest export partner for Sri Lanka, accounting for 36% of all exports. EU's official decision will be released by October and is non-appealable. [Read more ...](#)

Ban's leadership crisis over passive approach

Despite being only halfway through his first term, Ban's approach in making compromises with autocrats instead of executing moral authority, has cast doubts in his leadership.



The Washington Post describes Ban's weak dealings with Rajapaksa as an example, where Ban and his top advisers withheld criticism of the Gov, advising officials to not publish UN estimates of civilian death toll, an intervention which did nothing to prevent the deaths of 20,000 Tamil civilians.

Ban further signed an agreement with Rajapaksa, committing SL to reconcile with Tamils and to release the 300,000 IDPs from the Gov. camps in exchange for Ban to drop a U.N push for war crimes investigation. No Gov. promises have been kept.

Norway's U.N. ambassador, Mona Juul, described Ban as "spineless", and a "... powerless observer to thousands of civilians losing their lives and becoming displaced from their homes" [Read more ...](#)

From the Camps

- ◆ Currently there are 9,215 toilets while 15,000 are needed- UN
 - ◆ Only 200 bathing spaces have been set up though 1,200 are needed.
- "the camp toilets are flooded. Mud and excrement are draining towards the people's tents and the areas where refugees cook"***
Gordon Weiss, UN spokesman in Colombo.
- ◆ 44 military run camps in Vavuniya, Mannar, Jaffna and Trincomalee – UN.
 - ◆ The World Food Programme is short of \$ 35 million of funds to meet the food needs of the IDPs.
 - ◆ 15,000 tents and 11,000 emergency shelters which are currently available while more than 15,000 emergency shelters are required to meet the needs of the IDPs.
 - ◆ 10-15 people in tents designed for five.
 - ◆ **400 babies are born every month in Manik Farm - Dr A.T.Ariyaretna (NGO Sarvodaya)**
- 'Our hospital has got about 450 beds, and we've now got more than 1,700 patients in the hospital—on the floor, in the corridors, and even outside. So the hospital is very close to being overwhelmed'***
Dr McMaster in Vavuniya hospital.
- ◆ Aid workers have told **The Times** that permanent buildings are being erected at the Manik Farm site where the UN says that 230,000 of the refugees are being held.
- "We're not allowed to work in these areas,..But you can see from the outside proper brick-walled buildings going up."***
Rajinda Jayasinghe, the head of Relief International in Sri Lanka.

Letter to relative in Aus.

We are fine here. We pray that you, your mum, dad, and sister are also well, as my husband and I, together write this letter. We received Rs27000 money you had sent, and are somewhat relieved. However, we will still share with you the harsh conditions here.

We are not allowed to leave the concentration camps at any time. It is among difficult conditions that we are able to make calls to you. We have to walk almost 2km to access phones. There have been instances where it has been impossible and we had to return to the camps. To make a single call, we spent Rs8300 from the money you had sent us. We have to go to the Post Office where we wait in a line for hours on end and even when we do call, we can only talk for 5 mins; we haven't got permission to talk for longer. This is why we don't call as often; please don't take us wrong.

Your sister is suffering a lot here. You are well aware of my health condition. When we left Killinochi, we arrived at the camp, with only the clothing we were wearing. Here, we don't get adequate clothing, or food. Even for drinking water, we have to queue up for hours in a line.

For 20 days in a month, our meal is only rice and dhaal. Words cannot describe the extreme conditions in which we are living in these camps. You and your family witnessed how well we were living in Killinochi. But now, we are worse than beggars, suffering for a single meal a day. My husband and I are like orphans here. We are holding onto our lives with the only hope and belief that you and your family will look after us.

Currently, we don't have enough money for the essentials of adequate food and necessities. After you sent us the money we paid back those that helped us to make phone calls. There is no need for us to lie about this. You have to please understand our plea.

They are resettling people to their own villages. However, they are not sending back those from Killinochi. I am scared thinking about how we are going to live here any longer. Only god will know if we will be able to escape the starvation, pain and atrocities and be able to see you again.

This is an extract from a letter written by a civilian in one of the concentration camps, to their relative.

3800 hopes shattered as resettlement promise is broken

Tearfund, a Christian relief and development agency, reported that a scheduled return of 3,800 detained Tamils, who were all pack and ready to return home, was cancelled on 30th August.



Esther Ducai, Tearfund's Programmes Manager, condemned Sri Lanka's continual torture of the IDPs saying that "People are deeply frustrated and acutely vulnerable having given their only remaining possessions to others in the camp. Already some camps have experienced dramatic flooding during the current monsoon season and this has led to further suffering. We fear that holding on to these civilians for so long has greatly added to their suffering and has given opportunity for human rights abuses."

Tearfund further expressed 'the need for an independent investigation into war crimes in Sri Lanka,' in light of the massacre video that was recently released. [Read more ...](#)

Appeal against Indian Cricket team visiting Sri Lanka



A petition has been filed in Madras High Court as part of the [Boycott Sri Lanka campaign](#) to prevent the Indian cricket team from visiting Sri Lanka to participate in the tri-series with Sri Lanka and New Zealand.

Joel Poul Antony, the petitioner, charges Sri Lanka with committing genocide against Tamils and violating International Human rights law. Similar to the boycott of Zimbabwe by the English team, Joel hopes that prominent members of the Indian team and world wide sports would bring the highly concealed Tamil human rights issues to the table and thereby make a stance by boycotting Sri Lanka. [Read more ...](#)

UK Tamils accuse authorities of deportation

Sri Lankan Tamils accuse the British Government who has been vocal of the human rights violations in Sri Lanka, of deporting Tamil asylum seekers. They say that there's no more trouble there, despite UNHCR's call to all governments not to return Sri Lankan Tamil asylum seekers from the north, as normality has not yet returned.

"Tamils in the north are still heavily targeted in the security and anti-terrorism measures....Widespread detentions and confinement of Tamils from the north remains a serious concern," it said in the UNHCR guidelines. [Read more...](#)

Suspicion arises as Vanni videos are released

As a response to recent release of videos showing the brutal treatment of Tamils by the Sri Lankan military, the suspicious GoSL has ordered the Chairman of the State run Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation and Independent Television Network to hand over all video tapes in relation to Vanni war front immediately to the Media Minister. [Read more...](#)

"Share our Feelings," an event open to all wanting to get a glimpse into the suffering of Tamils currently detained within military run camps in the North of Sri Lanka. As an Australian Tamil community, now more than ever, there is an urgent need to gather and share our inner most feelings and emotions and re-affirm our commitment and devotion to securing the freedom and liberation of our Tamil brothers and sisters. Gather at Silverwater Park, Saturday 26th September in Sydney. The event will also take place in Canberra on Sunday 27th Sept and Melbourne on Sunday 11th Oct.