# TamilNet reports on the media personel killed in Vanni

TamilNet website has compiled details of Tamil journalists and media workers confirmed killed during the height of war in Vanni, between March and May. The list consits of many of its reporters, is not exhaustive. These media persons, committed to the human cause and engaged in the noble task of bringing out information to the people inside and to the world outside, have laid down their lives in achieving what the international media shamefully couldn't accomplish. TamilNet will be serialising compilations on the losses of other humanitarian workers too in due course.

## Maheswaran

Maheswaran, who was Mullaiththeevu district in-charge for Eezhanaatham daily, the only newspaper that was coming from the LTTE controlled Vanni, was killed on 06 March while travelling on Maaththa'lan - Valaignarmadam Road. He was on journalistic assignment when he was killed.

In addition to his responsibilities with Eezhanaatham, Mr. Maheswaran was working freelance to TamilNet, assisting TamilNet's Chief Correspondent in Vanni.

Maheswaran was killed in Sri Lanka Army (SLA) shelling that hit his right eye and head. There were many people on the road at that time and 24 civilians were killed in the indiscriminate SLA shelling along with Maheswaran.

Maheswaran joined Eezhanatham as a media worker in 2000 when the newspaper was functioning at Puthukkudiyiruppu of Mullaiththeevu district. He actively contributed relocating the newspaper office to Ki'linochchi.

During peace times, he was working in Vavuniyaa district and later, recognised for his talents, he was in-charge of all activities of the newspaper in Jaffna peninsula. He had to face many death threats during this time. When situation worsened in Jaffna, Maheswaran was withdrawn to Ki'linochchi and became manager of the paper for the Mullaiththevu district.

## Antonykumar

Antonykumar was killed on 14 May 2009 at Mu'l'li-vaaykkaal in an RPG attack by the SLA. He was storekeeper for Eezhanaatham. Because of his efforts, the printing material for Eezhanaatham was preserved until the end even when everything was moved to the safety-zone. He also worked as an assistant to reporters and occasionally as a reporter by himself.

## Rooban

Mr. Rooban also died on 14 May 2009 in SLA attack on civilians. Both Rooban and Antonykumar were killed in front of their family members. Rooban was working as a computer operator in Eezhanaatham. He was working since 2006 for the newspaper and worked hard in bringing out the newspaper under trying conditions. He was also engaged in distribution of the newspaper when people were confined to the safety-zone. Two months before his death, on 07 March 2009, he received injuries to his leg when the SLA was firing on civilians at Maaththa'lan junction.

## Sasimathan

Sasimathan, Eezhanatham's distributor for Mullaiththeevu district, was killed in SLA artillery attack on civilians at Ira'naip-paalai. Many civilians were killed along with him. He was working with Eezhanaatham since 2001.

## Densey

Densey and her husband were killed in SLA artillery attack at Pokka'nai while they were at home. The couple had a one-year-old child, which narrowly escaped death. Densey, who joined Eezhanaatham in 2003, was a computer operator. She worked with full commitment at Eezhanaatham even at a time when Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) was continuously bombing the surroundings of Eezhanaatham office at Ki'linochchi.

## Anton

Anton, father of two children, was killed in SLA artillery attack while on media work and riding a motorbike at Ira'naip-paalai area. 11 civilians were killed along with him in the attack. Anton, who joined Eezhanaatham in 2006 as a distributor, became its machine operator later. At a difficult time, he worked day and night, many days neglecting to fulfil the needs of his own family, in shifting the machines and the stores of the newspaper.

Eezhanaatham was moved from Ki'linochchi to Tharmapuram first and then again from Tharmapuram to Mu'l'li-vaaykkaal. The last displacement was particularly dangerous amidst torrents of artillery shells and gunfire. Yet, due to the devotion of the workers, most needed items were transported and the newspaper was re-published. During this transportation 9 media workers were almost caught by the SLA, but narrowly escaped. Anton was one of them.

# So Gaza was Disproportionate

## Where is the international outcry against the Tamil slaughter?

by Geoffrey Alderman,
The Jewish Chronicle

Earlier this year, two military operations were undertaken in two of the world's most volatile conflict zones. In the first, Israel launched a large-scale incursion into Gaza, following months of rocket and grenade attacks against Israel by Gaza's Hamas government and by independent Islamist militias that Hamas was unable or unwilling to control.

You can take whatever view you please of the legal and military justification for this action. You can argue that Israel's action was "disproportionate" or that Israel should have turned a blind eye to the attacks. You can point to the overwhelming military might that Israel brought to bear on an area less than 140 square miles in size, into which are crammed some 1.4 million persons. You can assert that, therefore, it was inevitable there were going to be significant civilian casualties. You can then argue that the worldwide demonstrations that ensued against Israel were utterly predictable and thoroughly deserved.

If you do espouse these arguments, may I ask you to put all your passion to one side, just for a moment, and consider the second of these military operations? I refer, of course, to the civil conflict in Sri Lanka.

## Israel against Sri Lanka

You can take whatever view you please of the origin of this conflict. You can declare that the Tamil people who inhabit the north and east of the island of Sri Lanka had been victimised and oppressed for decades, and that their demand — or at least the demand of some of them — for independence was fully justified.

You can, if you wish, extend this justification to the modi operandi employed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam. I refer not merely to their campaign of political assassinations and random murders, but their pioneering use of the suicide bomb and the suicide belt.

You can point with appropriate disdain to the fact of the proscription of the Tamil Tigers as a terrorist organisation by more than 30 countries, and you can claim that this was without justification. You can glory in the fact that the Tigers were responsible for more suicide attacks than Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Al Qaeda combined.

You can deny that the Tigers ever took civilian hostages, and you can condemn without reservation the many authoritative reports that they routinely used human shields.

You can point instead to the brutal, "disproportionate" means used by the government of Sri Lanka to liquidate the Tigers, to that government's refinement of techniques first employed by the British during the Boer War to deal with a guerrilla insurgency — I mean the corralling of enemy civilians within poorly provisioned concentration camps, and the banning of "relief" organisations from ameliorating the situation of those imprisoned in these camps (though, to be fair to the British, some relief work was eventually permitted, whereas the Sri Lankan government never showed such mercy).

Take whatever view you please on these matters but please do not deny what is undeniable — that, whereas the sum total of deaths resulting from the recent Gaza conflict was 13 Israelis and around 1,300 Palestinians (including Hamas military personnel), the sum total of deaths resulting from the Tamil uprising runs into tens of thousands, and that, in the final stages of the conflict, the UN estimated that at least 6,500 civilians had been killed and more than 13,000 injured.

Worse, in the concentration camps ("welfare villages") established by the Sri Lankan government, the civilian death toll is now — as you read this column — around 1,400 per week. So where, I ask you to ask yourselves, is the international outcry? Where are the calls for a cultural and academic boycott of Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans?

A media analysis recently published by justjournalism.com reports that, across the five major daily broadsheets, war crimes allegations against Israel were featured earlier this year twice as often as similar allegations in relation to Sri Lanka.

If the Tamils had been Arabs, and the Sri Lankans had been Jews, you can rest assured that no such imbalance would have resulted.

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நாள் வரைக்கும்

காடுகள் சுடுகின்ற

காலம் நிலைக்கும்

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