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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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**LKA103330.E**

Sri Lanka: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) activity in Sri Lanka, including arrests, whether LTTE members have been responsible for extortion, disappearances or bombings since the government defeated the LTTE, and whether the LTTE has the capacity to regroup within Sri Lanka (May 2009 - January 2010)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The government of Sri Lanka declared victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on 18 May 2009 (*Colombo Times* 28 July 2009; *The Guardian* 18 May 2009). According to the Colombo-based *Sunday Times*, within a week of this defeat, the bodies of numerous prominent LTTE leaders were identified, including the body of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran (24 May 2009). Aljazeera.net similarly reports that Prabhakaran and most of the senior LTTE leadership were killed in the final days of Sri Lanka's military offensive (7 Aug. 2009).

### Arrests

In July 2009, *The Times*, a United Kingdom (UK) newspaper, indicated that Selvarasa Pathmanathan, also known as Kumaran Pathmanathan or KP, once the head of international relations for the LTTE, had been appointed the new leader (23 July 2009). In August 2009, Pathmanathan was arrested and taken back to Sri Lanka for interrogation (*Lanka Daily News* 7 Aug. 2009; Aljazeera.net 7 Aug. 2009). Sources indicate that Pathmanathan is largely known for smuggling weapons on behalf of the LTTE (*ibid.*; *Lanka Daily News* 7 Aug. 2009).

According to a 17 November 2009 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) article, "more than 10,000 suspected Tamil Tigers and their supporters, arrested in the aftermath of the offensive, are detained in military-run camps in the island's north." The International Crisis Group indicates that "in addition to the 11,000 or more alleged LTTE members held in special camps in the north, another 1500-2000 suspects continue to be held under emergency detention orders or other anti-terrorism legislation, some for years without charges" (11 Jan. 2010, 18).

Since the LTTE defeat, there have been reports, several uncorroborated, of arrests of high-profile LTTE members within Sri Lanka (SATP n.d.b.; Colombo Page 8 Oct. 2009; TamilNet 24 Dec. 2009; SATP n.d.c.). For instance, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), a website that publishes research and analysis on terrorism and low-intensity warfare in South Asia (n.d.a.), indicates that the head of the LTTE Eelam Bank was arrested in July 2009 in Colombo (SATP n.d.b.; LankaSri News 22 July 2009).

According to the *New Indian Express*, the media spokesperson and the translator for the LTTE surrendered to Sri Lankan security forces in May 2009 (11 Sept. 2009). Sources report that they were released on bail in September 2009 (*New Indian Express* 11 Sept. 2009; *Sunday Times* 13 Sept. 2009). The *Sunday Times* reports that they were released because the "Criminal Investigation Department (CID) informed

courts that there was no evidence to suggest the suspects had propagated the separatist cause" (ibid.). They were released on the condition that they not leave Sri Lanka (*New Indian Express* 11 Sept. 2009; *Sunday Times* 13 Sept. 2009). The *Sunday Times* article further states that they also have to appear before the CID on the last Sunday of every month (ibid.).

A Colombo Page article reports that a prominent female LTTE member was arrested on 7 October 2009 in the city of Kalutara (southern Sri Lanka) (8 Oct. 2009). Additionally, a 24 December 2009 TamilNet article reports that two allegedly senior LTTE members were arrested - one in Vavuniya (northern Sri Lanka) and the other at Katunayake International Airport [also known as Bandaranaike International Airport]. Reportedly, the December arrests were made based on information the police received from LTTE members in detention (TamilNet 24 Dec. 2009).

According to SATP, which referred to an unspecified November 2009 report, the arrest of a senior LTTE member in Vavuniya revealed plans to carry out a bombing in Colombo (n.d.c.). SATP further states that due to the interrogation of the senior member, who had escaped from an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Vavuniya, police uncovered "a seven kilogram claymore mine and a remote controller in an LTTE hideout" (n.d.c.). SATP also indicates that investigators allege that the suspect had been responsible for bomb attacks in the past, without specifying the dates or locations (n.d.c.).

Sources have also reported on the arrest of suspected LTTE members without giving an indication of their rank (*Colombo Times* 19 June 2009; BBC 25 Oct. 2009). For instance, the *Colombo Times* reports, in a 19 June 2009 article, that three LTTE members who were "plotting to assassinate" President Mahinda Rajapaska were arrested by the western province police intelligence unit. Additionally, according to an October 2009 article by the BBC, a military spokesperson reported that suspected LTTE members who have been released from camps in Vavuniya are being arrested in Trincomalee camps and returned to rehabilitation camps in Vavuniya (25 Oct. 2009).

Information on the release of the arrested LTTE members mentioned above could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

### **Extortion, Disappearances or Bombings**

Reports of extortion, disappearances or bombings conducted by LTTE members in Sri Lanka since the end of the war could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, there are reports of Sri Lankan authorities finding stores of arms in Sri Lanka (*Sunday Times* 7 June 2009; ibid. 19 July 2009; SATP n.d.b). For instance, a 7 June 2009 *Sunday Times* article reports that large stores of LTTE arms, including grenades, bombs and explosives, were uncovered during search operations conducted in northern Sri Lanka after the war. The article also indicates that search operations in Trincomalee and Batticaloa (eastern Sri Lanka) led to the recovery of mines, detonators and ammunition (*Sunday Times* 7 June 2009).

According to the *Sunday Times*, in July 2009, the personal files of Prabhakaran were found in Mullaittivu (northern Sri Lanka) (19 July 2009). The article indicates that LTTE members in police custody who had been close to Prabhakaran accompanied a search team to eleven sites where LTTE documents were buried (*Sunday Times* 19 July 2009). Prabhakaran's personal files reportedly contain information on arms purchasing and military plans (ibid.). The article also reports that the search operation uncovered stores of arms in the vicinity, including anti-aircraft missiles, guns, chemicals and "suicide kits" (ibid.).

The SATP website includes a list of "terrorist-related incidents" that took place during 2009, cataloguing several incidents when arms were uncovered within, or close to, Colombo (n.d.b.). For instance, on 6 August 2009, the police reportedly found two suicide jackets, guns, detonators and grenades in Wallawatte; on 28 August 2009, the police found two claymore mines near a bus station in Angulana; and, on 10 November 2009, the police found explosives and detonators in Wattala (SATP n.d.b.).

### **LTTE Capacity to Regroup**

*The Times* reports that Pathmanathan did an interview in July 2009 wherein he alleged that between 1,500 and 2,000 LTTE members remain in Sri Lankan jungles and that there was a new, undisclosed LTTE headquarters within Sri Lanka (23 July 2009). In contrast, according to 21 January 2010 correspondence from a senior research fellow at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) in New Delhi, which is an independent think tank that specializes in the study of "national security issues, conventional military operations and sub-conventional warfare" (CLAWS n.d.), the "LTTE has now been decimated" within Sri Lanka (Senior Research Fellow 21 Jan. 2010). The Senior Research Fellow, who has published articles on the conflict in Sri Lanka for several years, indicated that LTTE remnants within Sri Lanka are trying to remain inconspicuous due to the enhanced security situation and that some may have integrated with the population or left the country (ibid.). He also stated that LTTE members, and those remotely affiliated with LTTE activities, are being apprehended by authorities, and that weapons and ammunition are being uncovered (ibid.).

In an address to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2009, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka, stated that "although we have been successful in defeating terrorism in Sri Lanka, we urge our friends... to continue to take action against the illegal acts of the LTTE in their soil" (Sri Lanka 26 Sept. 2009). According to an October 2009 interview with Professor Rohan Gunaratna, who specializes in international terrorism, "within the territorial borders and waters of Sri Lanka, the LTTE has been entirely dismantled" (*Sunday Observer* 25 Oct. 2009). In a subsequent *Sunday Observer* interview with Professor Gunaratna in December 2009, he argued that despite being defeated within Sri Lanka, the LTTE "remains active outside Sri Lanka" (6 Dec. 2009).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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