CHAPTER – III

LTTE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES
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Since independence in 1948, the powers and privileges that the Sri Lankan Tamils enjoyed during the British rule in Sri Lanka declined systematically and gradually. This led to increasing political alienation and polarization and the resultant violence and seemingly intractable impasse of the 1980s. Thirty years of political moderation and demands for accommodation of the Tamils with the majority Sinhalese led to secessionist demands for a separate state of Tamil Eelam comprising the northern and eastern provinces since the early 1970’s by the Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹

During this period several armed groups were formed with the objective of creating a separate state for the Tamils called Tamil Eelam through armed struggle.² Although, there were reports of more than thirty such armed groups, some important organizations are as follows:

- Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS, 1975)
- Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, 1976)
- Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO, 1979)
- Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE, 1980)
- Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF, 1980)

² Ibid, p. 91.
Among the listed armed groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Eelam Revolutionary organization of Students (EROS), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) emerged as the most important Tamil organizations. These groups emerged slowly as a response to the discriminatory policies carried out by the Sri Lankan Government towards the Tamil minority in the post independence period.\(^4\) By the early 1990s, the LTTE gained supremacy and eliminated all other groups in the north and east. Many of the other groups joined mainstream politics or were eliminated by the LTTE.\(^5\) Thereafter, the LTTE became the only armed outfit or militant organization in Sri Lanka.

**THE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)**

The roots of the LTTE can be traced back to as early as 1970, when the Tamil Students Federation (TSF) was founded. The Tamil Students Federation renamed itself as Tamil New Tigers (TNT) and finally as the LTTE in 1976. In November 1978, the LTTE issued a document entitled *"The Struggle for Tamil Eelam and the Liberation Tigers"*,


\(^5\) *Ibid*, p. 98.
which articulated the need for its birth, its relevance and role for the future. In it, the LTTE provided the ideological *raison d'etre* (reason for being) and for the type of activities in which it engaged itself.

...the Tamil Liberation Tigers are the historical product of the Sinhalese chauvinistic oppression. They were the product of a revolutionary situation generated by the contradictions of national conflict. Caught up at the peak of national oppression, constantly victimized by police brutality and political actions, the revolutionary ardor of the militant Tamil youth sought concrete political expression to register their protest. Disenchantment with the political strategy of non-violence, confronted with the demand for revolutionary political practice, the Tiger movement gave its historical birth in 1976 as the resistance movement of the people...

As shown in figure: 3.1, the LTTE had two basic political objectives. First, the total liberation of the Tamil homeland comprising of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka, securing political independence for Tamils in Sri Lanka and the establishment of an independent, Sovereign, Socialist, State of Tamil Eelam. Secondly, the socialist transformation and creation of a radically new society free from all structures of oppression and exploitation.

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With regard to the objectives and demands of the LTTE, various views have been expressed by the respondents. According to the responses and opinions expressed by different groups of people interviewed, 57 percent said that the objective and demand of the LTTE was to achieve a separate state of Tamil Eelam and 18 percent considered its objective to be the sole political representative of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Federal autonomy for the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka as the objective of the LTTE was expressed by 7 percent, while social emancipation of the Tamils as the objective of the LTTE was viewed by 6 percent of the respondents. 5 percent of the respondents said the LTTE demanded the merger of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka into a single administrative unit while getting concessions from the government for the Tamils was
viewed by 4 percent of the respondents. The remaining 3 percent of the respondents expressed that permanent solution to the ethnic conflict was one of the objectives of the LTTE.

According to the United States State Department Reports, the LTTE headed by Velupillai Prabhakaran was the world’s most organized terrorist organization. However, the LTTE considered itself as freedom fighters working for the liberation of the Tamils from Sinhalese oppression in the country. It clarified its character and role as an extra parliamentary liberation movement and not a group of terrorists as the government and the international community has called them.

The LTTE is perceived differently by people living in Sri Lanka and other countries. In its initial stage, they were identified intimately as “boys” by extremist Tamil politicians who themselves were gunned down by the LTTE later as they differed in their demands from the LTTE. Others labeled the LTTE as Terrorist organization or guerilla movement. But the LTTE has described itself as a liberation organization. The LTTE successfully discredited or destroyed almost all other rival militant groups and emerged as the single most important entity. It organized itself as a state within a state by controlling territory, organizing civil and criminal administration in areas under its control and collecting taxes. The LTTE also marginalized all moderate, Tamil opinion and no one dared accept a solution that was not acceptable to the LTTE. One factor that symbolized

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8 Kronstadt, Alan, K. Sri Lanka: Background and U.S. Relations, Report for Congress. 09/04/03.
9 Gamage, Siri and Watson, I. B. (eds.) (1990) Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Pearl of the East or the Island of Tears. n. 5. p. 55
the LTTE's superiority over other armed groups, is the cyanide capsule worn by every cadre. These capsules were to be swallowed when capture by the enemy was inevitable. This showed their absolute or extreme commitment to their cause of achieving a separate state for the Tamils of Sri Lanka (Eelam).\(^{11}\)

The LTTE derived its support from the Jaffna Tamils in the early years of its formation. Its literature is filled with references to the ancient glory of the Jaffna kingdom, Tamil tradition, culture and language and the Tamil homeland which needed to be protected from the Sinhalese.\(^{12}\) Primarily a nationalist group from the beginning, the LTTE advocated violence. The first instance of such violence was the assassination of Jaffna Mayor, Alfred Duraiappah on July 27, 1975 by the leader of LTTE, V. Prabhakaran.

The year 1983 proved to be a watershed in the ethnic conflict and violence increased in the north and east of Sri Lanka.\(^{13}\) 1983 was a decisive moment in the history of political violence that took place in the form of anti-Tamil riots of an unprecedented scale and intensity. The events of 1983 anti-Tamil riots are believed to be the result of the ambush and killing of army soldiers by the LTTE. Thus, it appeared that the LTTE based its movement on violence from its very inception. For a discussion of human rights violations committed by the LTTE, a brief recapitulation of the Eelam Wars has to be made. There are four different phases of the war, Eelam war I, II, III and IV. Eelam War- I

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11 Gamage, Siri and Watson, I. B. (eds.) (1990) Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Pearl of the East or the Island of Tears. n. 5. p. 57.
commenced in 1983 in the aftermath of the anti-Tamil riots of that year in July till Indian Peace Keeping Force established itself in the north and east of Sri Lanka in 1987. Eelam War-II started in June 1990 with the collapse of peace talks and continued till December 1994. The third Eelam War begun in April 1995 which was again after the peace talks collapsed and continued till 2002 when peace was brokered by Norway.14 The final war started in 2008 and ultimately ended the 37 year old quest of the LTTE following the death of its leader V. Prabhakaran (1954-2009), who was killed in combat with the Sri Lankan Army (SLA).15

Figure 3.2: Activities of the LTTE to Achieve its Objectives

To achieve the stated objectives and demands, the respondents said that the LTTE had involved in different activities which resulted in human rights abuses. Figure 3.2

15 The Hindu, “End of a War Zealot,” 19/05/09.
clearly reveals that the LTTE had been involved in extortion, suicide bombing, physical torture, conscription, abduction, murder, political assassination and recruitment of child soldiers to achieve its objectives in the Tamil Areas of Sri Lanka. 15 percent said that the LTTE was involved in suicide bombing while another 14 percent said that political assassinations were one of its activities in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka. 14 percent expressed that the LTTE recruited child soldiers, and extortion was also stated by the respondents. Further, 11 percent of the respondents stated that the LTTE committed murder while another 11 percent said that the LTTE was involved in abduction in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka. Conscription of people into the LTTE was expressed by 10 percent of the respondents, while the remaining 2 percent of the total respondents said that the LTTE was involved in Guerilla warfare to achieve its objectives.

A brief chronology of the LTTE could be summarized as follows:

- "1975" the LTTE demanded a separate state for ethnic minority Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka.
- "1983" LTTE ambushed an army patrol in Jaffna killing 13 soldiers which is believed to have led to the anti-Tamil riots where an estimated 300-600 people mostly Tamils were killed. The Civil War in Sri Lanka begins.
- "1987" India and Sri Lanka sign a pact called the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord to end Tamil Separatism. Following the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord, the Indian Peace Keeping Force was sent to Sri Lanka who ended up fighting the LTTE.
- "1990" Indian Troops were withdrawn from Sri Lanka.
• “1991” An LTTE suicide bomber assassinated former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during an election campaign near Sriperumbudur, Chennai, apparently in revenge for sending the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

• “1993” President Ranasinghe was assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber after peace Talks failed.

• “2002” Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) was signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

• “2005” LTTE launched the first major attack since the Ceasefire Agreement killing atleast 12 Sri Lankan Navy soldiers.

• “2006” Talks in Norway started that aimed at restoring peace.

• “2009” Sri Lankan Government officially stated it has captured the last LTTE held territory. The government also claimed that V. Prabhakaran and his top aides including his son Charles Anthony were killed on May 18, 2009.16

Constant clashes between the Sri Lankan Army and the LTTE since 1983 have had its grave consequences for the civilians living in the north and east of Sri Lanka. In any fighting the loss of a combatant does not generally draw much attention. On the contrary when innocent civilians are affected in the crossfire there is much criticism for such actions against either group. We have seen that the objective of the LTTE was to achieve a separate state for the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The LTTE followed the path of violence and armed struggle to achieve its stated objective, thus violating the rights of civilians living in the regions under its control. The LTTE had involved in various methods

16 The Times of India, "LTTE Chief Prabhakaran killed: Lanka Army Sources". 18/05/09.
of violence which reflect grave abuses of human rights. These human rights violations
include extortion, kidnapping, torture, murder, political assassinations, suicide bombing,
child recruitment and conscription. However, these abuses are not documented well to
provide an approximate figure of victims. Most cases filed against the LTTE are in the
context of political assassinations through suicide bombing. Other abuses were generally
not reported as civilians in the region faced threats to their lives by the LTTE. In all
instances, anyone who opposed the LTTE were generally killed or murdered and in many
cases abducted and disappeared. Reports of many human rights agencies show evidence of
such abuses. Some of the activities of the LTTE that drew both the national and
international communities’ attention are as follows:

Political Assassinations

Since the growth of the LTTE and its increased amount of violence, the LTTE has
been involved in a number of political assassinations. Some of the major political
assassinations include former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi (May 21, 1991),
assassination of Sri Lankan President R. Premadasa (May 1, 1993), killing of presidential
candidate Gamini Dissanayake (October 24, 1994). Other assassinations include Tamil
politicians, A. Amirthalingam (July 13, 1989) founder of Tamil United Liberation Front
(TULF), Assassination of Tamil intellectual Prof. Rajani Tiranagama (September 21, 1989)
and Dr. Neelan Thiruchelvam (July 29, 1999). Political assassinations by the LTTE have
been in most cases through suicide missions. The LTTE killed or assassinated the above
said people probably because they were at one time or the other opposed to their ideology
of a separate state of Tamil Eelam.

Suicide Missions or Bombings by the LTTE

A list of suicide missions carried out by the LTTE is as follows in chronological order:

- July 5, 1987, the LTTE carried out its first suicide mission at Nelliady army camp killing 40 security forces.
- July 12, 1990, six security personnel were killed when a group of four male suicide cadres of the LTTE attacked a naval vessel in Trincomalee with an explosive laden boat.
- March 2, 1991, Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne and 18 persons were killed by an LTTE suicide bomber in Colombo.
- November 16, 1992, Sri Lankan Navy Commander, Vice Admiral W. W. E. C Fernando and four navy personnel were killed by a suicide bomber on a two wheeler at Galle Face in Colombo.
- May 1, 1993, a suicide bomber, later identified as Babu, killed President R. Premadasa and 23 persons in Colombo.
- October 24, 1994, leader of opposition and United National Party UNP candidate for presidential elections Gamini Dissanayake and 58 others were killed by a female suicide bomber at Thotalaga junctions in Colombo.
- November 3, 1995, a suicide unit intruded into an oil storage depot in Colombo and destroyed 14 storage tanks causing $ 61 million in damage. They also killed 23 soldiers and two civilians.
January 31, 1996, a suicide bomber detonated a truck loaded with more than 100 Kilograms of explosives in front of the Central Bank at Janadipathi Mawatha in Colombo killing 91 people and wounding at least 1400 others.

October 15, 1997, suicide bombers detonate a truck packed with explosives in the parking lot at Galadari hotel close to World Trade Centre (WTC) in Colombo killing 18 persons and injuring at least 110.

January 25, 1998, sixteen persons were killed in Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist Shrine Sri Dalada Maligwa by LTTE suicide bombers.

July 29, 1999, A Tamil Politician, Neelan Tiruchelvam and two more persons were killed by a suicide bomber at Kynsey Road, Rosmead Place in Colombo.

June 5, 2000, thirty four navy personnel belonging to the Sri Lankan Navy were killed in a suicide attack by sea tigers near the Vadamarachchi coast of Jaffna Peninsula.

July 24, 2001, 20 suicide bombers of the LTTE attacked the Air force base in Katunayake and the Bandaranaike International Airport. 8 military aircrafts including KFIR Jets two MI-17 Helicopters, MIG-27 Fighters and six Sri Lankan Airlines airbuses were destroyed in the attack. 13 LTTE cadres, six soldiers and an airport engineer were killed in the crossfire.

July 7, 2004, a woman suicide bomber identified as Thiyagaraja Jeyarani detonated explosives strapped around her waist at the Kollupitiya Police Station killing 4 policemen and injuring 1 person.
April 25, 2006, Army Commander Lieutenant. General Sarath Fonseka was critically injured while atleast 8 persons were killed when a pregnant suicide bomber blew herself in front of the military hospital in Colombo.

May 24, 2007, a suspected LTTE suicide bomber in an explosive laden motorcycle, rammed a bus carrying army personnel in Colombo.

October 22 and 23, 2008, two LTTE suicide boats carried out an abortive attempt on two merchant ships. Two top sea tigers were reportedly killed in the attempt.

February 4, 2009, a 13 year old LTTE suicide bomber blew herself after reaching the troops in a location north of Chalai injuring one soldier.\(^\text{18}\)

The above mentioned instances of suicide missions are just one in a year but the LTTE has carried out many such attacks which are not mentioned here. The list also shows that the LTTE had used suicide attackers which included children who were 13 years old to pregnant women. In all of these attacks, innocent civilians were also victims. The LTTE in many cases had carried out such attacks to draw the attention of the government. Many reports suggest that the LTTE had used children in suicide missions. It is also reported that the LTTE has used child soldiers in its suicide missions because they are not usually checked thoroughly by the security forces. Since the 1980s, the LTTE has approximately carried out 200 suicide bombings.\(^\text{19}\)


Child Soldiers

The LTTE had recruited children and used them as soldiers throughout its struggle in Sri Lanka, especially since October 1987 when the LTTE attacked the IPKF in the northern peninsula. LTTE’s recruitment of Child soldiers was fueled by several factors. First, a sophisticated LTTE propaganda which exposed children throughout the north and east by special events honouring LTTE heroes, parades of LTTE cadres, public displays of war paraphernalia and speeches and videos, particularly in schools. Families of LTTE heroes were afforded special respect, and children were drawn to the status and glamour of serving cadres, which attracted many to join the organization. The second factor was that children recruited into the organization were victims of violence or witnessed violence being perpetrated against them or their families. These children joined the LTTE to avenge those abuses committed against them. Third, deprivation including poverty and lack of vocational and educational opportunities often fueled recruitment particularly among the Tamils of the eastern province. Enlisting in the LTTE was perceived as a positive alternative to the other options children saw around them. Finally, coercion and force by the LTTE brought many children into the organization. Particularly in the east, the LTTE had pressurized Tamil families to provide a son or daughter for the cause of achieving Tamil Eelam. Any resistance to comply with the demand of the LTTE was often subjected to threats and harassment. In many cases it is alleged that children were recruited by force.

ibid, pp. 4-5.

ibid, p. 5.
However, the LTTE often used the excuse that children joined the organization voluntarily for food their parents could not adequately provide. Sri Lanka’s Directorate of Military Intelligence estimated that at least 60 percent of LTTE fighters were below 18 years of age. A comparative estimate of LTTE child fighters revealed that at least 40 percent of the fighting force were both boys and girls between the age group of 9 and 18 years. Children were recruited as they are receptive to high levels of indoctrination, willing to engage in high risk operations, obedient and can easily learn to use modern weapons such as M16, AK-47 and Type 57 which are light in weight, easy to fire and require minimum training. It was also reported that the LTTE used children in its operations because of the fact that the Sri Lankan armed forces or the police did not perceive children as potential threats. Children were well-known to be used for both gathering of intelligence, as well as ambush. Various reports also suggest that children were used everywhere except in leadership positions. Most of the children between 10 to 16 years of age were from Batticaloa region. It is reported that more children were recruited from Jaffna and the Vanni regions by the LTTE. The children recruited by the LTTE were trained for a period of four months in jungle warfare. Parents of the children had no access to visit their children during training. It was reported that during 1995 and 1996 the LTTE recruited and trained about 2000 persons, largely from the displaced population in the north. It was also reported that of the 2000 recruited about 1000 were between the ages of 12 to 18. The LTTE also formed a group called the Leopard Brigade, which consisted of children drawn from LTTE managed orphanages. The LTTE regarded this group as their fiercest fighting force.\(^{22}\)

In April 1995, the LTTE is said to have visited schools and recruited students in their mid-teens through intense propaganda and the screening of action videos. This had often led to closing down of schools in the north and east of Sri Lanka as parents and teachers feared that their children would be abducted or kidnapped or attracted to join the LTTE. As said, the LTTE is reported to have used threats and intimidation on those families who resisted such recruitment. Many families were known to have fled to safer places to save their children from being recruited by the LTTE. It was also reported that the LTTE resorted to abduction if families failed to contribute their quota. Children were frequently abducted from their home at night or picked up by the LTTE cadres while returning back from school or temples or shops to their homes. It is also alleged that parents who resisted abduction of their children faced violent retribution from the LTTE.

After recruitment, children were subjected to rigorous training. They were trained to handle weapons, including landmines and bombs and also in military tactics thereby placing the lives of such children in a precarious condition. Children who made mistakes during training were subjected to frequent torture. The LTTE, harshly punished children who attempted to escape. Those children who were caught trying to flee LTTE camps were beaten or shot dead in front of their entire unit. Such actions by the LTTE dissuaded other children who were contemplating to run away.

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25 Ibid, p. 3.
The Norwegian brokered ceasefire between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and LTTE in February 2002 brought about an end to hostilities which had cost more than 60,000 lives. However, it is reported that during the ceasefire period (2002 to 2008), the recruitment of children by the LTTE may have increased. In February 2003, following the peace talks in Berlin, an LTTE spokesperson said the LTTE had made a solemn pledge to United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to cease all underage recruitment. He also stated that children’s ages will be checked prior to their recruitment into the LTTE. But, it was reported that abduction, forcible and involuntary recruitment of children continued despite its pledge to avoid child recruitment. In February 2004, about 1250 children were reportedly still remaining in LTTE custody. Most of the children recruited were about 15 years during this period.

In March 2004, following the split of Karuna, Commander of the LTTE in the eastern province, fighting between the northern group led by V. Prabhakaran and the eastern group led by Karuna started. Personal differences between Prabhakaran and Karuna were believed to be the main reason for the split in the LTTE. Karuna is believed to have demanded the sacking of Pottu Amman, Head of the Intelligence Wing, Tiger Police Chief Nadesan and Finance Division Chief Thamilendhi. Karuna also alleged that of the 30 LTTE departments none is headed by an Eastern Tamil. Following the split within the LTTE, Karuna was expelled from the LTTE. Eventually the group led by Karuna was defeated by the LTTE headed by Prabhakaran. After the defeat of the Karuna faction, some 2000 child soldiers fled or were assisted to return home by the Karuna led forces. This was

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26 Ibid, p. 3.
followed by massive re-recruitment of children by the LTTE, often through force, abduction, threats and intimidation. Those who resisted re-recruitment were reportedly beaten by members of the LTTE.28 In December 2005, it was also reported that the LTTE recruited children displaced or orphaned by the tsunami.29

Following resumption of fighting between the Sri Lankan armed forces and the LTTE, the violence increasingly placed civilians’ lives in danger. The LTTE is also said to have restricted the movement of civilians through a pass system. It was reported that only people with medical needs and elderly were allowed to go out of the areas under the LTTE’s control. The LTTE also continued to compel young men and children to join their forces. Reports also suggest that the LTTE had gone beyond its “one person per family” recruitment policy and required more members to join the organization depending on the size of the family.30 According to the report of UNICEF, as of October 2008, there were 1424 cases of children recruited by the LTTE whose fate remains unknown.31

Forced recruitment by the LTTE of adults was also reported. Human Rights Watch reported in December 2008, that the LTTE forcibly re-mobilized all former LTTE fighters including those who were recruited as children in an effort to boost their ranks with experienced fighters.32 In September 2008, the LTTE publicly announced more severe punitive policies for those who would attempt to avoid recruitment. The LTTE is reported

31 Ibid, p. 5.
to have said that if persons called up for its (LTTE) services fled, it would arrest upto 10 members of those person’s relatives and use them in hazardous forced labor, building military reinforcements on the frontlines. An international humanitarian official reported that when a 21 year old man went into hiding after the LTTE tried to recruit him, the LTTE arrested his relatives including his wife, brother and all other male relatives and used them in hazardous labor until he came out of hiding and agreed to fight for the LTTE. It was also reported that LTTE had asked even those who were UN humanitarian workers in the Vanni region Tamils to join them.\textsuperscript{33}

LTTE’s demands on the civilian population under its control were not limited to forced recruitment only. The LTTE required all families to donate labor mostly in projects involving hazardous task of building LTTE defenses. Civilians including Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) were also required to do forced labor for the LTTE for 10 days every 3 months. The LTTE termed it voluntary service. If anyone wanted to be exempted from such labor a sum of Sri Lankan Rupees 5000 had to be paid to the LTTE. In the final stages of the war, the LTTE refused to accept exemption payments from civilians in the region, especially in Vanni. Reports also suggest that the LTTE used forced labor as punishment. International humanitarian law during internal armed conflicts places prohibitions on the use of such forced labor. Relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is reflective of customary international law, provides that civilians may not be compelled by the parties engaged in the conflict to work which is directly related to the conduct of military operations, or work that would involve in any

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p. 8.
form of military operations. For any work, payment of wage is required.\textsuperscript{34} However, these international norms and standards were reportedly violated by the LTTE.

Freedom of movement was reportedly restricted by the LTTE in the north and east of Sri Lanka. It was reported that the LTTE imposed strict regulations if anyone wanted to leave the areas under its control to government controlled areas since 1995. The LTTE also used a coercive pass system to prevent civilians from leaving areas that were under its control. Anyone between 12 to 35 years of age which was later extended to 45 years, wishing to temporarily leave LTTE controlled areas were required to leave a guarantor. If the person after leaving the area did not return within the stipulated time, the guarantor of that person was often used in hazardous labor for the LTTE as punishment till the person returned. The LTTE had a Transport Monitoring Division (TMD) to handle this issue.\textsuperscript{35}

As the war between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE was in progress, civilians faced extreme hardships caused by the LTTE. While the LTTE territory diminished, the civilian population was forced into smaller space. It was reported that in violation of the laws of war, the LTTE refused to allow civilians to leave the war zone. It was also alleged that the LTTE repeatedly fired on those trying to reach government held territory and deployed its forces near densely populated areas to prevent people leaving the region under its control. As the LTTE retreated in the face of the Sri Lankan Army’s offensive, it is alleged that the LTTE forced civilians to retreat with it, which not only increased danger for them but also made them move further away from desperately needed

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, pp. 10-12.  
humanitarian assistance. There were reports that, when members of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations went to LTTE controlled areas of Puthukudiyiruppu in Mullaithivu district, to fetch about 300 patients who needed immediate treatment, they were turned back by the LTTE. It was also reported that the patients were held captive at gunpoint as human shield.

In 2008, the Sri Lankan Government withdrew from the cease fire agreement with the LTTE that was signed in 2002. Following this full scale war started in the northern province to crush the LTTE. In the fighting that took place between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces, it was reported that the government forces were steadily capturing those areas under the control of the LTTE. On May 17, 2009, the Sri Lankan Government officially stated that it had captured all the areas under the control of the LTTE and claimed that V. Prabhakaran the leader of the rebel organization was dead along with his son Charles Anthony. During the final stages of the war it was reported that the LTTE had fired upon unarmed civilians who were trying to leave the region into government controlled areas.

Thus, throughout its existence, the LTTE had committed various forms of human rights abuses. It is also evident from its activities that the LTTE has shown little regard for humanitarian laws and human rights. The LTTE, which grew as a byproduct of the state’s repression of Tamil minorities, claimed to work for their rights by creating a separate state

37 The Hindu, 'LTTE Holds 300 Patients at Gunpoint' 29/01/09.
for the Tamils in the north and east of Sri Lanka. But what appeared is that the LTTE in pursuit of its objectives had violated the rights of the people living in the region. The LTTE seemed to have denied the rights of the Tamils living in the north and east of Sri Lanka during its existence particularly during the last phase of war. Having discussed the various charges of human rights abuses against the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, the following chapter would analyze the various factors responsible for such violations of human rights in the north and east of Sri Lanka.