



Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation

25 August 2006

Jaffna TRO Office and Storeroom Attacked and Ransacked

The TRO Jaffna office at No. 141, Temple Road was attacked by heavily armed men wearing military fatigues at approximately 23:00h on 23 August 2006. This attack by armed military personnel occurred during the strictly enforced curfew that the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has imposed on the Jaffna Peninsula. The TRO office is situated in a high security zone with other international NGOs and the UN in the immediate vicinity and a GoSL army checkpoint less than 100 meters away.

The armed military personnel chased away the security guards from TRO and the surrounding iNGOs and then broke open the front door to the TRO office. Once inside they destroyed the office furniture, 3 computers with monitors and printers, and set fire to the building using fuel they had brought with them.

The TRO storeroom was also ransacked and burnt. Armed men in military fatigues smashed open the door of the storeroom and burnt the emergency relief items meant for the IDPs affected by the recent fighting. A large quantity of clothing, footwear, and other non-food relief items (NFRI) were completely destroyed. The losses are reported to be over Rs. 5,000,000 (US\$ 50,000) and come at a time when transportation of relief items to Jaffna is almost impossible.

TRO Jaffna staff reported this attack to the Jaffna Government Agent (GA), the Jaffna Superintendent of Police, Eric Perera, the Jaffna NGO Consortium, and the Sri Lanka Human Rights Commission's Jaffna office.

TRO once again urges the GoSL to ensure the safety and security of TRO offices and staff. The recent execution of 17 Action Contre La Faim staff in Muttur, the abduction and disappearance of the 7 TRO staff members, and the continuing attacks on the TRO Jaffna and TRO Batticaloa offices seem aimed to limit and discourage the delivery of aid to the affected populations in the Tamil areas.

This is the most recent in a long list of attacks by security forces and/or paramilitaries on TRO offices and personnel:

7 August 2003, 13 June 2005, 27 September 2005

- Grenade & machine gun attacks on TRO Batticaloa Office – Security Guard killed in 27 September attack

29 & 30 January 2006

- Abduction of 7 staffers in Welikanda area – still missing/disappeared

26 April 2006

- TRO Santhosam Children's Home (40 orphans) damaged by a Kfir bomb
- TRO's office at Kadakarachenai damaged by bombing/shelling
- TRO Muttur / Eachchilampattu office attacked/bombed – food store damaged

29 June 2006

- Boat engines being transported from Trincomalee to Punoachimunai stopped by Police in Polonarawa and driver and truck held for 3 days

13 July 2006

- Valaichennai – truck & cement stolen by paramilitary group

15 July 2006

- Grenade attack on TRO Jaffna office

31 July 2006

- Punoachimunai cement stolen – intimidation of workers, told not to return to site by Karuna Group representatives

15 August 2006

- Amparai TRO/NECORD office attacked - shooting & grenade thrown

19 August 2006

- Bombing of TRO Boatyard by SLAF

23 August 2006

- TRO Jaffna office destroyed