

# A PRINCIPAL FOR A PRINCIPAL AS SHADOW WAR MOVES TO JAFFNA

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Twenty years after former St. Johns College Principal Charles Anandarajan was killed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam school principals have become targets of gun toting assassins again.

It was night around 8.35 pm on the 11th when two men on a motor cycle arrived at the residence of the Kopay Christian College Principal near the Kalaivani community centre and Library in Kopay north about 4 km north-east of Jaffna town. Calling out to the unsuspecting Principal the assassins entered the house. Sivakadatcham who was watching television in the company of his wife and eight year old daughter got alarmed by this intrusion and abruptly stood up. One of the men trained his pistol on the principal at close range and fired away. Forehead shattered a blood splattered Sivakadatcham fell down while his wife and child screamed. He was dead on the spot.

It was broad daylight around 3.40 pm when the Jaffna Central College Principal arrived at the entrance of Veerasingham Hall in Jaffna town. Rajadurai was the chief guest for the "Navarathri" (Nine nights) cultural ceremony organized by the Jaffna Educational Secretariat. Even as Rajadurai alighted from the motor cycle pillion he was riding four waiting youths walked up to him. One of them whipped out a pistol and fired fatal shots at point blank range. At least four bullets entered the head, shoulder, chest and abdomen. The youths fled on motor cycles as Rajadurai collapsed. He was taken to hospital but succumbed to his wounds at 4.25 pm.

Both Ilamparithy and Devananda were trying to pin both killings on one party. The LTTE was accusing the security forces and EPDP of being involved in both killings. Devananda on the other hand was charging the LTTE of being responsible for both killings. The army information center, Police, Sections of the Southern media and even the cabinet spokesperson were ardently toeing the "Douglas line". The Ilamparithy "spin" however was NOT echoed faithfully by tiger and pro-tiger media like "Nitharsanam", "puthinam" and "Tamilnet". Their reporting seemed to indicate that Sivakadatcham was killed by minions of the state while Rajadurai was murdered by the LTTE.

Inquiries made of informed circles in Jaffna by this writer over telephone and electronic mail resulted in an inescapable conclusion that two sets of killers had been responsible for the two murders. The intelligence apparatus of the state seems responsible for the Kopay Christian College Principals killing. The LTTE was responsible for killing the Jaffna Central College Principal. Though the LTTE had been kill-

ing people without restraint over the past years the killing of Rajadurai seemed essentially a tit for tat killing.

The ceasefire expressly forbade such killings but the LTTE went on merrily killing. When queried the "ever smiling" tiger political commissar Tamilselvan cavalierly dismissed the charges saying the army and Police were responsible for law and order in the Government controlled areas. The tigers had nothing to do with the killings he said. Tamilselvan even suggested that the killings were a result of internecine feuding within and among the Tamil groups. Sadly the Wickremasinghe government and Oslo seemed incapable of checking this staggered massacre. The non-tiger outfits like the EPDP, PLOTE and an EPRLF faction reduced their presence in the N-E and became virtually non-functional.

The turning point came with the LTTE Eastern Commander Vinayagamorthy Muraleetharan alias "Col" Karunas revolt. After suffering some reversals and withdrawing from the East Koruna inspired his cadres to keep resisting the LTTE through hit and run attacks. Though his rebellion was initially "homegrown" he was constrained to collaborate with the Sri Lankan state apparatus for reasons of survival. Soon the tide turned. Karunas cadres augmented by ENDLF men began dishing it out to the LTTE. The predator became prey. The LTTE has restricted its movements very greatly in the East now and is almost a non-presence in Government controlled areas. It must be noted that Karunas ascendancy was made possible to a great extent by the covert logistical support provided by the state though denying it overtly.

It was however a different scenario in the North where the LTTE continued to target its perceived "enemies". These included some members of the armed forces suspected to be military intelligence too. A high watermark of the LTTE's unbridled disregard for civilized norms was the brutal murder of "King" Charlie Wijewardene the Jaffna SSP. This was followed by the Lakshman Kadirgamar assassination. It appears that some time after these killings the green light was given for an "unofficial operation" in the North too. It was felt that only an "eastern type" campaign would help cut the tigers down to size in the North. What goes around comes around. The chickens have all come to roost in the LTTE coop.

The LTTE as usual became aware of the plan and began a media campaign. Nevertheless the blueprint for a shadow war went on as planned. According to an informed source a contingent of specially trained Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim security personnel are now in the north. They are guided by military intelligence personnel. They are assisted by

some members of non-tiger Tamil groups.

The shadow war commenced sometime in late September. Since every act of violence is inevitably linked to the LTTE few suspected that the clandestine operation had been launched. The Presidential election also gave impetus to the shadow war campaign. It was resolved that the LTTE should not be given an opportunity like 2004 elections to manipulate polling. A countervailing force to check and counter the LTTE was needed.

Initially all killings and violent acts in Jaffna were depicted as tiger sponsored. But the LTTE knew which was which. The tigers suspected that their political wing operatives were going to be victimised. It is said that quite a few tiger operatives and agents had been abducted clandestinely. The LTTE keeps quiet about it for tactical reasons as well as pride. The 30 year old video shop owner in Uduvil killed a few weeks ago for example was a tiger agent. He was allegedly shot dead by an intelligence operative codenamed "Banda". But the Southern media portrayed it as a tiger killing while the northern media parroted the familiar killed by unknown person's line.

The LTTE with pre-emptory caution moved its known political cadres outside the Government controlled areas. Ilamparithy now operates from Pallai near the Muhamalai border. The LTTE intelligence personnel and killer squads remain within the Government controlled areas. According to a news item posted in the EPDP website sometime ago the tigers are targeting a list of 67 people in a preemptive bid to eliminate potential opposition. Some of the recent violence was directed against these targets.

Unfortunately for the tigers the EU has banned travel and called for an end to assassinations. Yet the tigers are caught up in a vortex of violence. If they are to continue their campaign it will blacken prospects with the EU. But from their perspective of self-survival there is no way out. Even if they retaliate to some acts the blame will be on them. Already the escalation of violence after the EU ban has been noted. Further more agent-provocateurs are likely to provoke the LTTE into more violence.

The killings of Sivakadatcham and Rajadurai have to be viewed against this backdrop of a shadow war. Contrary to propaganda being dished out by the state and sections of the media Sivakadatcham was a strong supporter of the LTTE. He had at one time been supportive of the EPRLF but was now staunchly pro-tiger like the EPRLF's Suresh Premachandran. It was only a few weeks ago that his nephew Nagulan was killed in Vavuniya. Nagulan an EPRLF cadre had quit politics and was living quietly with his wife and children in a Sinhala majority area. The kill-

ing was as usual attributed to the LTTE but there is some suspicion now that the actual killers belonged to the EPDP.

Sivakadatcham was a leading office-bearer of the Tamil resurgence committee responsible for organizing the Pongu Tamil demonstrations. He also was in charge of the 18th anniversary celebrations of Lt. Malathy who died during the IPKF battle on Oct 19th 1987 in Kopy. She was the first woman tiger to die in battle. The first woman militant to die in battle was Shobha of the EPRLF who died in the attack on Naval base at Karainagar in 1985. Shobha was the sister of Douglas Devananda. There is some resentment in EPDP and EPRLF circles that the LTTE is distorting history by blacking out Shobha and promoting Malathy as the first woman martyr.

The selection of Sivakadatcham by the anti-tiger elements as a "soft" target in the shadow war against the LTTE can be understood if not condoned in this context. If the killing of a high-profile supporter of the LTTE was calculated to send shivers down the spines of non-combatant tiger supporters the LTTE response was prompt and predictable. An equally symbolic target had to be eliminated to demonstrate that the tigers would not take these types of killings lying down. So Rajadurai was killed by the LTTE nineteen hours of Sivakadatcham's murder.

Rajadurai was already in the LTTE's bad books. He was principal of Jaffna Central College where Douglas Devananda had part most of his secondary education. Jaffna Central College founded by Methodist missionaries is one of the oldest schools in the Country. Devananda as minister showered the College with attention. Rajadurai as a dedicated principal cultivated the alumnus and got a lot of money for school development. Many new buildings, classrooms and laboratories were put up through Devananda's help. Rajadurai also allowed Central College students and premises to be used in the educational program "Kalvikkalam" broadcast over radio.

This perceived closeness to Devananda was resented by the LTTE and in May this year the tiger front "Ellalan Padai" (elaras force) issued a leaflet warning Rajadurai. He was asked to stop all cooperation with the Government and Devananda or face the consequences. This was followed by the LTTE Tamil website "Nitharsanam" operating in Oslo with Norwegian funds threatening him as an EPDP "consultant"... The Nitharsanam also threatened Rajadurai. Incidentally this writer and his photo has also been featured frequently in this website run by "Oothai Sethu" a man linked directly to LTTE intelligence chief Pottu Amman.

A troubled Rajadurai went to Kilinochchi after the threats and met Daya Master, Balakumaran and "Baby" Ilankumaran. He explained his position and said that he was not of the EPDP. Rajadurai also said that he was cultivating Devananda to get as much aid as possible for the betterment of the school. The LTTE told him not to worry and sent him back. Rajadurai may have thought that he was safe. It may even have been so. But when a pro-tiger principal was killed by suspected EPDP gunmen tiger logic necessitated the killing of a perceived pro-EPDP principal. It had to be prominent, quick and easy. Rajadurai fitted the bill. It was open knowledge that he was going to be at Veerasingham hall. That was that and his life snuffed out just like that.

While there is no doubt in most minds that Rajadurai was killed by the LTTE there is some doubt about Sivakadatcham. The security and Police circles along with ministers Devananda and De Silva are trying to pin blame on the LTTE for this too. Sections of the media are swallowing this line either wittingly or unwittingly. The desire on the part of the security apparatus and its collaborator Devananda to blame the LTTE for Sivakadatcham's death is obvious. For one thing the launching of a northern shadow war has to be kept unpublished. The killing of a principal for whatever reason will not go down well with the Tamil public. Moreover Sivakadatcham's killing was the provocation for the second murder and therefore deserved greater condemnation.

Thus Devananda and the security sources are coming out with contradictory pronouncements. The trouble in all this is that Sivakadatcham was a known and publicly identified LTTE supporter. He was on a tiger platform even a few days prior to his death. So Devananda says that Sivakadatcham had arguments with the LTTE a few days ago. He had allegedly objected to student conscription. Other stories planted by security circles are about Sivakadatcham consistently opposing conscription of minors, a change of heart after the EU ban, resentment over his nephew Nagulan's killing and about LTTE anger over a poor show of Pongu Tamil. The LTTE therefore killed him.

But the LTTE has awarded him a Tamil national patriot "Nattrupattaraalar" title post-humously. A tiger press release was issued. The Tamil National Alliance MP's Eelaventhana, Sivanesan and Gajenthiran organized and participated at the funeral. LTTE intelligence helped organize a transport stoppage by the Kopay students at the Kopay junction where the Point Pedro; Jaffna road and Kaitthay - urumpirai roads criss-cross. Many leading education officials participated at the funeral. All this would have been impossi-