

JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION - WANNI
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF JAFFNA
St. Theresa's Church, Kilinochchi.

Date: 26 August, 2008

The Director
International Committee of the Red Cross
Iranaimadu Junction
Kilinochchi

Honourable Sir,

PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF WANNI

Wanni has been the eye of the war storm for the past two years. Deaths, injuries, displacements and attendant misery pervade the lives of the innocent Tamil Civilians. The Draconian economic embargo imposed slyly on Wanni has become a monstrous obstacle even in giving relief and solace to the 170,000 persons recently displaced. Day and night, Wanni is thundering with Artillery Guns, Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers, Supersonic fighter jets and Naval gun boats.

A great human tragedy is exploding in Wanni which is calculatedly concealed from the world outside.

The Sri Lankan Government and its Security Forces with scant regard to, leave alone the Geneva Ethical Codes on the Conduct of War, humanitarian concern for their fellow citizens, wage an aggressive and ruthless war in Wanni. The sanctity of the civilian settlements, hospitals, schools and places of worship and are blatantly violated with impunity.

The Sri Lankan security forces heavily bombard villages after villages forcing the people to flee from their traditional homeland. Not once, but again and again displacements continue. Even before the displaced people begin to settle down in one place they are

shelled to flee again. This inhuman exodus goes on and on. People are languishing under trees and on the waysides, under the scorching sun and dusty winds, and in pouring rain and thundering blasts of artillery and mortar shells. Only a few of the displaced take shelter in schools, places of worship, with friends and relatives. All these innocent people continue to live amidst severe deprivations.

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The assistance that reach the people from GO's, NGO's, INGO's and the people of goodwill, even though praiseworthy, are not adequate to cater to the basic human needs of theirs. Even though the Government claims to allow all the necessary amenities, essentials such as Tarpaulin sheets, water containers, fuel, medical supplies and food are drastically slashed at the entry-exit points in reality. There are severe restrictions imposed on the movement of the INGO's thus hampering their humanitarian services to the helpless displaced people.

Besides the old and the sick, pregnant women and lactating mothers and children are the most affected ones. School children are subjected to untold hardship and bitter and traumatic experiences. The General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) examinations is being held in the country now and imagine the plight of these children who are sitting this exam under these tragic conditions. If the situation is such with the grown ups, imagine the plight of Grade 5 children who sat for the scholarship exam on the 17th August, 2008. Epidemics are threatening the people in the absence of sufficient medical facilities. Drinking water has become a scarce commodity.

These innocent people continue to live amidst dire distress.

These **fundamental human rights violations** strike all over Wanni, and the truth of which doesn't reach the world at large. There are numerous obstacles calculatedly laid across the path of truth so that the dissemination of it is effectively arrested. Instead, diabolic lies are spread with ease. Prevention of the media personnel from entering Wanni and reporting impartially on the horrendous situation of the innocent Tamil people

is the most cruel and cunning mode of the repressive violence perpetrated by the Sri Lankan Government.

T h e c a l l o f t h e h o u r i s u r g e n t .

**Protect the people of Wannu who are threatened with
death and destruction and dehumanization.**

**This is an ardent appeal from the Justice and Peace Commission -
Wanni to the people of goodwill all over the world.**

**Fr. James Pathinathan,
The President,
Justice and Peace Commission-Wanni.
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