

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 30.11.2013 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Dr. Manmohan Singh**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:-

"Over the last two years, I have written to you a number of times bringing to your notice the strong sentiments amongst Tamils and in Tamil Nadu on a range of issues relating to India's relations with the present regime in Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the ethnic civil strife in Sri Lanka, which was marked by an ethnic pogrom and genocide on the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly has already passed four Resolutions condemning the continuing discrimination against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka and violation of their human rights.

The other serious issue, which clearly demonstrates the harsh and unreasonable attitude of the present Sri Lankan regime, is the continuing marauding and totally unprovoked attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy upon innocent Tamil Nadu fishermen on the high seas, followed by their extended periods of detention in Sri Lankan jails, confiscation of their boats, fishing nets, etc. thereby causing loss of their livelihood and condemning the fishermen and their families to suffer considerable mental agony.

Therefore, there is a deep and widespread sentiment prevailing amongst all sections of Society and shades of political opinion in Tamil Nadu about the need to hold the Sri Lankan regime to account for the acts of genocide and war crimes in the closing stages of the civil war and continued discrimination against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Further, the entire fishermen community in Tamil Nadu is agitated over the indiscriminate abduction of our fishermen on the high seas. It is against this background that the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly had passed a historic Resolution on 27.3.2013 urging the Government of India to stop terming Sri Lanka as a "friendly nation".

Please refer to my letters dated 16.7.2012, 25.8.2012, 28.8.2012 and 8.6.2013, wherein I had written to you to convey the deep sense of outrage of the people of Tamil Nadu regarding the imparting of training to Sri Lankan defence personnel at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, located in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu. While communicating Tamil Nadu's strong protest, I had urged that the Government of India should issue a clear policy direction that the Ministry of Defence should not hereafter provide training, or engage in any form of co-operation with the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, until satisfactory and credible action was taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to completely stop the human rights violations against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka and end the unprovoked and marauding attacks on fishermen from Tamil Nadu. I had also written to you on 11.9.2013 that the Government of India should cancel the agreement to supply naval warships to Sri Lanka and ensure that no support of any kind is provided to the Sri Lankan military forces.

I am, therefore, dismayed to note from media reports that the Indian Navy has now offered to train Sri Lankan Navy officers and would put them through the four year Bachelor of Technology course now being offered to Indian Navy officers. It is learnt that this announcement followed a meeting between the Chief of Naval Staff and Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka. This has

come as a great shock to the people of Tamil Nadu. In utter disregard of the sentiments and emotions of the people of Tamil Nadu, the Government of India is persisting with the policy of defence co-operation with the Sri Lankan Armed Forces. The commitment made by the Government of India is tantamount to actively working with the Sri Lankan regime and providing them with the necessary wherewithal to act even more strongly not only against the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, but also against the poor Indian fishermen who regularly bear the brunt of the brutal attacks of the Sri Lankan Navy.

I wish to convey our strong protest against this insensitive policy of defence co-operation with Sri Lanka, which totally ignores the impact it may have upon the feelings of the people of Tamil Nadu. I, therefore, request you to urgently review this policy and instruct the Ministry of Defence not to pursue the proposed training programme for Sri Lankan Naval officers by the Indian Navy.

May I request a line in reply?"

Issued by: Director, Information-Public Relations, Chennai-600009.
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