

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 8.6.2013 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:

"I wish to bring to your immediate attention a matter of grave import that greatly offends the sensitivities and sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu. Despite the overwhelming groundswell of public opinion in Tamil Nadu against the continuing atrocities upon the civilian Tamil population in Sri Lanka by the Sri Lankan Government, the Government of India has, in an act of astounding insensitivity, again invited two defence personnel to join a training programme at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, The Nilgiris, in Tamil Nadu. I understand that these officers – Wing Commander M.S.Bandara Dassanayake and Major C.S.Harishchandra Hettiarachchige have already reached Wellington and are undergoing a pre-training orientation programme which began on 27th May, 2013.

Please recall my D.O. letters dated 16.7.2012, 25.8.2012 and 28.8.2012 wherein I had strongly conveyed the deep sense of outrage felt by the people of Tamil Nadu at a similar move by the Government of India to impart training to Sri Lankan defence personnel in Tamil Nadu.

You are well aware that there is a widespread feeling of revulsion and shock amongst the people of Tamil Nadu against the genocidal pogrom and continuing human rights violations affecting the innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka. Further, the entire fishermen community in Tamil Nadu is agitated and exercised over the repeated brutal attacks and arrests of innocent Tamil fishermen on the high seas by the Sri Lankan Navy. We have repeatedly conveyed our protests to the Government of India in writing and also by Resolutions of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly condemning the hostile actions of Sri Lanka.

In spite of all these vehement protests, with utter disregard for the emotions and feelings of the people of Tamil Nadu, the Government of India has again clandestinely permitted two more Sri Lankan military officers to undergo training in the Defence Services Staff College at Wellington in the Nilgiris.

What is even more surprising is the fact that on 27th May, 2013, on the very day that the two Sri Lankan officers commenced pre-training at Wellington, the Union Defence Minister Thiru. A K Antony, speaking on the sidelines of a function in Thanjavur, was quoted as stating that "Responding to the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu, we have taken a decision not to provide training to Sri Lankan military personnel in Tamil Nadu". I am amazed that the Union Defence Minister was unaware that his policy announcement was being flouted by his own Ministry. This is a very sorry commentary on the Government of India's ambivalence and ad hocism on a serious and emotive issue that affects the people of Tamil Nadu.

I strongly urge you to give suitable instructions to immediately discharge the two Sri Lankan officers from the training course at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and to send them back to Sri Lanka forthwith. In addition, the Government of India should issue a clear policy directive not to provide training or to engage in any form of co-operation with the Sri Lankan Armed Forces until satisfactory and credible action is taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to completely stop the human rights violations against the Tamil population in Sri Lanka and to stop illegal attacks on fishermen belonging to Tamil Nadu.

I request urgent action in this matter."

Issued by: Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.

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