



HCL/POL/1B

03 December 2009

Mr. Dominic Grieve, MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr. Grieve,

**Petition on the Internally Displaced People of Sri Lanka – 01 December 2009**

Reference the petition (copy attached) on Sri Lanka tabled by you on 01 December 2009 on behalf of your constituents on the situation of the Internally Displaced People of Sri Lanka (IDPs) the contents of which are inaccurate in its entirety..

I must state very emphatically that the problem of IDPs was not a creation of the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL). The GOSL had to fight the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for over 25 years. During the final stages of the conflict the LTTE drove the civilian population of the Northern district of Sri Lanka from the North Western coast to the North Eastern coast of the Island and held them as human shields. It was no secret that the LTTE militarised the no fire zone established by the GOSL for the safety of the civilians who were seeking to escape from the LTTE.

With the military defeat of the LTTE on 19 May 2009 the GOSL inherited a problem of over 280,000 IDPs. The GOSL with the assistance of the international community promptly established welfare villages for IDPs until their original habitats are ready for re-occupation. You may note that the GOSL with the support of the international agencies has commenced de-mining the areas which were under the control of the LTTE. The cumbersome task of clearing an area of 402 sq. km is being progressed and it is estimated that over 1.5 millions mines and unexploded ordnances are buried and abandoned by the LTTE with no maps.

The GOSL has been able to resettle over 60% of the IDPs so far and it is expected that remaining IDPs will be able to return to their original habitats by the end of January 2010 once the de-mining is completed. Currently only 123, 000 IDPs are living in the welfare villages and since 01 December 2009 people could move freely. Ironically on this very day you have submitted the petition of your constituents which claims that the IDPs are being kept against their will! They were never kept against their will.

Kindly note that over 60 International Humanitarian Agencies (ICRC, OXFAM, Save the Children etc) including UN specialised institutions (UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, IMO etc) have been working in the welfare villages and other parts of Sri Lanka including Northern and Eastern provinces. The IDPs are being provided with

basic food, medicine and other needs by the GOSL at a cost of over 50 million Sri Lankan Rupees per day. The children are continuing with their school education in the welfare villages and they have been able to sit for their national examinations. In addition over 500 conscripted children who have been rehabilitated admitted to two leading Tamil language schools in Colombo.

All the IDPs have been registered and issued with identity cards. The identified ex-combatants are being rehabilitated at 13 centres with the assistance of the IOM in a two year programme at a cost of US\$ 23 million funded by the USAID. These ex-combatants are being trained vocationally on 08 trust areas which include agriculture, tourism, hospitality industry, information technology etc so that they could re-integrate into the society as resourceful persons. If your constituents so wish to obtain information of their relatives, you may inform them that they could contact my office through you or direct.

We have noted over the years pro-LTTE elements and a section of the Tamil diaspora have been misleading the UK politicians, media and civil society organisations etc with their propaganda. The petition submitted by you may be considered as a part of this campaign as an identical petition was also submitted to the House by Dr. Vincent Cable, MP for Twickenham on 12 November 2009.

I therefore, kindly request you to verify the facts of such representations made by Tamil diaspora and pro-LTTE elements before tabling same at an august assembly like House of Commons.

A detailed update on the situation in Sri Lanka dated 13 November 2009 is sent herewith for your information.

I look forward to meet with you on a mutually convenient date and time.

Yours sincerely,



Justice Nihal Jaysinghe  
High Commissioner

