

**High Commission for the Democratic  
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**



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HCL/Media/16

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2009

Mr. John Mulholland  
Editor  
The Observer

Dear Mr. Mulholland

**The Observer Article "Desperate Tamil refugees 'had sex with Sri Lankan guards to get food' by Gethin Chamberlain – 20.12.2009**

The above article which appeared in your paper of 20 December compelled me to write to you as it carries false allegations against the government of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Chamberlain names the interviewee as Vany Kumar throughout the article though he knew her full name as Damilvany Gnanakumar. (Mr. Chamberlain wrote a similar malicious article to the Guardian on 16 September interviewing the same person under the name of Damilvany Gnanakumar. Please refer to the attached article and my response to the Editor of the Guardian for which I am yet to receive a response.) I wonder whether there is any reason for Mr. Chamberlain to refer to the same person in two different names in two articles on two different occasions, I suspect a hint of malice and a personal agenda.

The article which appears after three months from Mr. Chamberlain's earlier article makes some different allegations i.e. physical and sexual abuse within the IDP welfare centres in Sri Lanka. The reason given for this belated "full scale" revelation is that Ms. Kumar has been waiting till her "relatives" were released from the camps. In her earlier interview in September she did not make reference to any relative in Sri Lanka. However, the original article in the Guardian was also similarly damning the Government of Sri Lanka and I wonder whether she was not afraid of the "reprisals against friends and family held with her" during the time of that article. This single fact itself makes a mockery of the entire allegation by Ms. Kumar, which Mr. Chamberlain so triumphantly articulates.

Ms. Kumar's allegations are all based on hearsay and totally unsubstantiated. She says "I heard the officers were giving money or food in return for sex". This contradicts her claim that "sexual abuse is something that was a common thing, that I personally saw". Ms. Kumar does not specify a single case of sexual abuse rather than making allegations in general. In contrast the Government of Sri Lanka is honest and responsible in dealing with huge number of internally displaced people and the Secretary to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, Professor Rajiva Wijesinha has been specific in admitting that individual aberrations could have happened. However,

the Government of Sri Lanka does not tolerate any systematic sexual abuse in the IDP welfare centres and would take stern action against perpetrators if they are reported.

Ms. Kumar's belated attempt to discredit the government of Sri Lanka has gone awry without her knowledge many times. Once she says that "the basic needs like water and food were always a problem. Most of the time you were queuing for water". This contradicts her previous claim that "so everyday I had a bath ...." Ms. Kumar has forgotten she had a water shortage when she wanted to allege false accusation on the government of Sri Lanka and the police.

If Ms. Kumar had sympathy towards the displaced people in Sri Lanka she could have voiced her concerns when she met the high officials of the government of Sri Lanka or when she met the British High Commission officials in Colombo rather than waiting till she returned to the UK. This kind of "revelation" could only cause a media sensation and an opportunity for the anti Sri Lankan propaganda to flourish and would never solve the problem on the ground. May be there are those who don't want to see peace in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has suffered more than quarter of a century under the brutal terrorism of the LTTE and is endeavouring to consign the scourge to history and march into a peaceful future. These hundred thousand of people were internally displaced due to LTTE terrorism and the Government is in the process of providing them a new livelihood in their original habitats. There are many international organisations and foreign nationals who are assisting the Government of Sri Lanka in this process. Ms. Kumar, however was in Sri Lanka's north helping the LTTE and left the country leaving behind the destitute. Had Ms. Kumar being so concerned about the plight of these people she should have extended her services to the benefit of these people inside the camps rather than fleeing and making false allegations. It does not require a great deal of insight to decipher that Ms. Kumar is a LTTE activist. LTTE was well known for its disinformation from its inception.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely



Justice Nihal Jayasinghe  
High Commissioner

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