

“Winner Takes All”: Opportunities and Challenges to the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka

Ajith Balasooriya

Department of International Relations, University of Colombo

1. Introduction

Sri Lanka celebrates its first anniversary of the end of conflict in 2010. The 2002 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was unable to bring peace to the country due to its inborn failures. Even though there were some parties which were not invited to the negotiation table, Norwegian mediation efforts sought to create a ‘win-win’ situation between the GoSL and LTTE. Nonetheless the presence of some Tamil political parties and other military groups were in the arena, the LTTE called themselves as the “sole representative of the Tamil minority” in the conflict. However, due to potential failures of the 2002 peace process, the Sri Lankan conflict escalated to a new round of fighting in 2004 after the two year interval of conflict violence activities. Since 2006, the conflict reached its deadly phase as the GoSL’s “new strategic approach” to counter LTTE militants in north and east of the country. This scenario accelerated the conflict into a decisive and final phase when the GoSL militarily defeated its thirty year war enemies. This created a doubt among local and international academics and practitioners which gave rise to the question of “does winner take all?” This introductory paper raises the question of opportunities and challenges the GoSL facing in post conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka in the context of “winner”. Furthermore, the paper attempts to scan and illustrate post-conflict Sri Lankan situation in the context of ‘win-lost’ formula and to raise a discussion on post-conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.

The first part of the paper briefs a general overview of the existing nature of post-

conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka in the context of “win-lost” nature. Moreover, it discusses the theoretical explanations of what William Zartman defines as “hurting stalemate” which describes the nature of the conflict parties in a conflict and their incentive to go for negotiation or war. Then it links with the contemporary theoretical discussion of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)¹ highlighting the GoSL’s primary responsibility to protect its civilians from all forms of violence as the immediate legitimate authority of Sri Lankan citizens. The part two of the paper discusses the failed peace process and the entering the war against the LTTE. It further reveals the potential issues of the international community in the peace process in 2002 and the strengthening of the GoSL to counter the “menace of terrorism” in the country. The next part explains the aftermath situation of the conflict which has been faced by the GoSL as an “immediate humanitarian assistance” to the thousands of conflict affected civilians in the north & east of the country. The fourth part of the paper examines the opportunities of the GoSL to rebuild the “deeply-divided” country both in national and international level. The last part analyses and illustrates potential challenges to the GoSL in order to restore the lasting peace in the country in which all citizens are equally beneficial after thirty years of prolonged conflict. Based on the above mentioned discussions and analysis the paper concludes the complex potential opportunities and challenges to the GoSL as the first government which totally defeated the ruthless terrorist group or the conflict party in the protracted conflict in the world. So in post-conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka can consider as a “unique case” in the contemporary international peacebuilding.

1. “Win-Lose” Nature and the Responsibility as a Legitimate Primary Actor to Citizens

In particular, many international human rights groups, well known media, academics,

¹¹ Report on the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

think tanks and major countries constantly criticize(d) and called on the United Nations (UN) to control the “unhealthy and autocratic” behavior of the GoSL during its “humanitarian mission” as well as post-conflict scenario of the country. The triumph of GoSL in the conflict created fear and doubt among the local and international rights groups on the fate of thousands of conflict affected people in Sri Lanka. Human rights groups have given their keen attention on this issue and have even alleged violations of human rights by the GoSL’s humanitarian mission. Furthermore, a growing fear and doubt prevailed among the international community of the likelihood or possibility of that other countries will also follow the Sri Lankan case leading to mass violation of human rights and international law.

Human rights activists have highlighted that the existing political regime’s “aggressive” decision making stance and its direct influence over the security forces are increasing.² On the other hand the majority of Sinhala led civil society has been supporting the government to fight against ‘terrorists’ in the country and accepted the GoSL’s approach to the conflict while Tamil people tempered over the government’s “inhuman” activities. However, GOSL denies international community’s allegations and proceeding its own post-conflict reconstruction and rebuilding activities claiming that it is ‘locally owned.’ Post-conflict nature of the GoSL is very unique and conflict resolution and peacebuilding literature do not give much evidence in such cases in its history in the intrastate conflicts. In particular, since 2005 the GoSL has been strengthening its “challenged legitimate authority” against the international community over their failed peace efforts in 2002.

In addition, the GoSL publicly criticized Norway’s mistakes in the failed peace process which challenged country’s sovereignty and partiality to the LTTE. This public awareness of the failed peace process increased peoples’ total reaction against the LTTE and their supporters both in the domestic and international arena. One conflict resolution mechanism is the “winner takes all”³ concept which is originally applied in

² Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: End witch Hunt Against the Media and NGOs*, March 10 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/03/10/sri-lanka-end-witch-hunt-against-media-and-ngos>).

³ Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution (2 ed.)*,

inter-state conflicts yet it is well applicable in the case of intra-state conflicts too. Therefore, in the case of Sri Lanka, it remains significant unanswered questions in intra-state conflict in the context of “winner takes all” due to rare cases of military endearing conflicts. Furthermore, it challenges to endless international peacebuilding operations deployed by the UN and other international bodies (NATO, African Union) in internal conflicts. Thus, it is timely important to investigate post-conflict Sri Lankan peacebuilding opportunities and challenges to explore new alternatives in the architecture of peacebuilding in internal conflict countries to establish sustainable peace.

However, it is important to note here that all contemporary peacebuilding projects should pay significant attention in establishing a “locally owned peace” or local ownership in conflict affected societies particularly in Africa and Asia. In the context of R2P, it is interesting to analyze and take notes on the “totally locally owned” Sri Lankan conflict transformation and post conflict peacebuilding efforts in order to ensure all citizens basic rights on standard international humanitarian laws and human rights norms. To establish the local ownership in post conflict societies, a legitimate authority and institutions have to be formulated and re/implemented in order to be functioning in the domestic social, political and legal order.⁴

Furthermore, it is questioned about required basic tools of peacebuilding to ensure democratic norms and values by ensuring human rights and international humanitarian law and regulations. According to Lotze and Coning

Building local ownership is ultimately about empowerment local actors to identifying their own needs and priorities and to lead, manage and monitor the change process. To attain this, several requirements must be met, including the creation of the space to participate, facilitating the development of the necessary skills and expertise, providing the required resources in a timely

(Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

⁴ Hideaki Shinoda, “The Difficulty and Importance of Local Ownership and Capacity Development in Peacebuilding,” *Hiroshima Peace Science*, vol. 30, 2008, pp. 95-115.

*manner, establishing and reinforcing the credibility of key stakeholders and providing the necessary political and strategic support as and where required.*⁵

Consequently, as mentioned above local ownership is one of the key components in establishing lasting peace. It allows all citizens to ensure their own socio-economic, political and cultural identities and rights among each other. According to these values and objectives of peacebuilding, it is worthwhile to brief on the failed peace process and its path to grave massive conflict in Sri Lanka.

2. The Sri Lankan Failed Peace Process and the Return to War

Norwegians led peace process originally showed a “win-win” situation to internal and international arena due to mediator’s ability to bring belligerent parties to the negotiation table and the absence of war and other forms of direct violence. However, in the middle of the peace process it was revealed that both conflict parties and mediators were losing their ultimate objectives of the process. As a result of that the civilians’ lives of the country were severely challenged and the breaching of basic rights of the civilians was increased even under monitoring of the mediators. Hence, the failed peace process was defined as a ‘lost-lost’ situation by the local and international experts. This lost-lost nature led to deterioration of the civilians’ basic needs and rights particularly in north and east of the country. On the contrary, it could be argued that the failed peace process created a win-lost situation because during the entire process the LTTE strengthened its own military including weapons and human resources, financial and political capacities while the GoSL was weak on its legitimate authority over all citizens and in keeping the internal socio-economic and political order.⁶ Moreover, the GoSL’s military weakness including physical and human

⁵ W. Lotze, and C. De Coning, 2010 “Looking back When Looking Forward: Peacebuilding Policy Approaches and Process in Africa,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol-5, No. 2, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, p.111; and Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *op. cit.*

⁶ C. Orjuela,, “Domesticating Tigers: The LTTE and Peacemaking in Sri Lanka” in B.W. Dayton (ed.),

resources was beneficial to the LTTE as it enhanced its military networks in the entire country as well as the international arena by engaging in peace talks. This situation intensified the vulnerability of civilian life as both the GoSL and the LTTE “systematically” neglected the basic rights of the civilians. Both the GoSL and the LTTE totally engaged in fighting with each other rather than restoring normalcy in the country.⁷

On the other hand, it can be noted that since 1990s there were some internal attempts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. However, those efforts were ended in serious wars between the GoSL and the LTTE. The GoSL launched massive military operations against the LTTE and the LTTE had conducted its offensive or counter attacks against the GoSL too. Conversely, after 9/11 “terrorist attack” in the USA, the global recognition on the LTTE changed. The USA, Canada and the EU countries banned the LTTE as a terrorist organization in their countries. American President, Bush’s “war on Terror” policy had directly affected the LTTE. The LTTE’s demands and its justifications as a rebel movement were ignored by some western countries and regional powers in the context of LTTE as a terrorist organization. LTTE was further labeled as the “deadliest terrorist group” in the world. The war on terror international scenario dropped down the LTTE’s reputation and their vicious conducting against the majority civilians in the country.

In parallel, the instability of domestic political and economic structures directly affected the GoSL and forced them to go to the negotiation table for peace. According to Touval and Zartman⁸ this situation could be described as ‘mutually hurting stalemates’ as each party had doubts about their ability to achieve expected goals through fighting. By 2001 both sides shared a strategic perception that the conflict had arrived at a military stalemate. The GoSL and the LTTE decided to go to the

Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 252-269

⁷ A.G. Bose, and E.E.H. Harmell “Improving Post-Conflict Coordination between Prosecutors, UN Panels of Experts and Truth Commissions,” *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol. 5, No. 2, United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010.

⁸ S. Touval and I.W. Zartman, “International mediation in the Post-Cold war Era” in C.A. Croker, F.O.Hampson and P.Aall (eds.), *Tribulent Peace: Challenges of Managing International Conflicts* (Washington, D.C.: United Nations Institute of Peace Press, 2001), pp. 427-443.

negotiation table in 2002 with the support of the Norwegians. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall⁹ further describe this going to the negotiation table as compromising other party's interests. It helps conflict parties to prevent the "zero-sum" or self gain over the other's interests. In the case of Sri Lanka, however, the conflict was concluded in a "zero-sum" nature.

Therefore, the peace process came to an abrupt end in December, 2007 with the GoSL unilaterally pulling out of the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA). The five year long, Norway mediated CFA brought the main conflict parties to the negotiation table by holding the twenty five year old ethnic conflict. There were six rounds of peace talks between the conflict parties in order to strengthen the proposed conditions of the agreement. During the peace process, Norway started the resettlement of the IDPs and refugees who were directly affected by the conflict. Sri Lankan economy also quickly recovered and growth rate significantly increased when compared to pre CFA.¹⁰ Moreover, the social mobilization among all ethnic groups in the country increased. LTTE and its carders were able to mobilize around the country and demonstrate their "militarized political interests" among citizens of the county. Especially, social mobilization helped civilians to exchange their social and cultural values and improved their basic needs too.

Despite the short term relative success, the entire peace process revealed a gap between root causes of the conflict and solutions ushered in the peace process. Uyangoda¹¹ points out that the peace process has led to an escalation of massive violations of human rights during the CFA. Both parties in the conflict were unable to agree and establish any stable institutional body to address the root-causes of the conflict rather than their "hidden political agendas." Lack of fortify and legitimacy and inborn weakness of the peace process did not help the GoSL and the LTTE to move to a viable negotiated agreement. It has brought a "lost-lost" situation to the conflict

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Bose, S., 2007. *Contested Land; Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus and Sri Lanka*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London.

¹¹ J. Uyangoda, "Beyond Negotiations: Towards Transformative Peace in Sri Lanka," *Marga Journal*, Colombo Vol. 1, No. 1, 2003, pp. 47-78.

parties since 2006. At the beginning, the LTTE had showed its own strengths against the GoSL. However, in 2007 the GoSL significantly increased its capacity against the LTTE and won the majority of civil society's support to carry out its so called humanitarian operations against the LTTE. As a result, the GOSL successfully completed its two major humanitarian missions from 2006 to 2009 one in east and the other in north of the country to counter the menace of the LTTE.

3. Ending the Military Conflict

Even though conflict resolution theorists widely believe that a successful end to a conflict could be brought through negotiated peace process, the case of Sri Lanka did not prove fruitful.¹² On the contrary, in May 2009, the GoSL military defeated the LTTE by claiming that all local leaders of the LTTE were killed and that they had rescued more than 300,000 civilians who were used by the LTTE as a human shield during the war. Furthermore, the GOSL pointed out that the operation was “the world's largest human rescue” from a manmade disaster.¹³ At the end of the war, there had been a massive need for an immediate humanitarian response for the thousands of war affected peoples' basic needs including medical assistance, water, food, clothes and shelter. The latter part of the war experienced heavy monsoon rains and other adverse climate condition difficulties in northern Sri Lanka and thousands of rescued people faced a lot of difficulties in their day to day lives.

As Galtung¹⁴ says the end of the conflict does not bring total peace and harmony for the affected civilians in the society until it deals with root-causes or structural issues of the conflict. This scenario was clearly manifested just after the

¹² Camilla Orjuela, *The Identity Politics of Peacebuilding: Civil society in War-torn Sri Lanka* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2003).

¹³ Sri Lanka Rupavahini Cooperation, *World Largest Human Rescue*, May 16 2010, SLRC, Colombo; and Ministry of Defence, *President Appoints Lesson and Reconciliation Commission Learnt*, May 17 2010, Ministry of Defence (http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=20100517_07 Accessed on June 02, 2010).

¹⁴ J. Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, 1967.

conflict in Sri Lanka. The absence of war brought a “non violence peace” while creating a bulk of immediate humanitarian needs and psycho-social, economic, political and human rights issues particularly in conflict affected areas in Sri Lanka. As long as the government could not deal with the above mentioned issues of the conflict, there is a possibility of returning to conflict within a decade or so.¹⁵ This scenario directly applies to the case of Sri Lanka as one of the results of win-lost.

Civilians who were directly affected by the conflict suffered from huge immediate humanitarian needs. According to UN sources and rights groups report¹⁶ there were more than 300000 IDPs during the last five months of the conflict in 2009. Apart from the civilians that there were directly affected by the conflict, there are also hundreds and thousands of civilians that were indirectly affected in the country. This human catastrophe and its effects on victims of the conflict are the primary responsibilities of the parties in the conflict. In particular, even though there are more than 10,000 LTTE suspects who are under controlled of the government forces, there could not be seen any of LTTE’s organizational body or authority that could be held responsible of their ex-combatants and post-conflict activities after May 2009. It is true that the LTTE’s military capacity and capability were totally paralyzed in the country and none of its top members could take leadership responsibility on their side. Therefore, the GoSL, as a legitimate authority over the citizens of the country has the prime responsibility to deal with post-conflict issues faced by the victims of the conflict. From here onwards the article discusses how the GoSL has been dealing with

¹⁵ Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus and Sri Lanka* (London: Harvard university Press, 2007).

¹⁶ International Crisis Group, *War Crimes in Sri Lanka*, May 17 2010 (Accessed on 10 August 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/191-war-crimes-in-sri-lanka.aspx>); Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: End Indefinite Detention of Tamil Tiger Suspects*, February 1 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/29/sri-lanka-end-indefinite-detention-tamil-tiger-suspects>); Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka Government Proposal Won’t Address War Crimes UN Secretary-General Should Establish International Investigation*, May 7 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/07/sri-lanka-government-proposal-won-t-address-war-crimes>); Human Rights Watch, *Q&A on Accountability for Violations of international Humanitarian Law in Sri Lanka*, May 20 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/20/q-accountability-violations-international-humanitarian-law-sri-lanka>); Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: New Evidence of Wartime Abuses*, May 20 2010 (Accessed on 12 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/20/sri-lanka-new-evidence-wartime-abuses>).

post-conflict issues as the primary legitimate actor of the state.

4. The Government of Sri Lanka`s Opportunities as the Winner

The opportunities open to the GoSL are relatively limited when compared to the challenges. It is important to divide opportunities into two sections based on internal and international developments. As one of the main arguments of the article, internal opportunities are more significant than the international opportunities. During the failed peace process, it was noted both the GoSL and the LTTE were benefitted from the international community in their own agendas. However, the internal atmosphere was not totally supportive to carry out the peace process due to various socio-political issues of the Sri Lankan civil society. Based on national patriotic nature, the Rajapaksa government took an advantage to aware civilians against the brutality of the LTTE militancy by using state media. The atrocious activities of the LTTE against the civilians created opportunities to the GoSL while the international community was challenged over its “unclear” peace engagement.

Having said so, the main opportunity to the GoSL was the majority Sinhala community’s support to carry out its military operations against the LTTE. As a result of the failed peace process in 2002 the GoSL was able to win the majority peoples’ support against the LTTE. It is noteworthy, the spilt of LTTE eastern leader, Karuna Amman, in 2004 was a political advantage to the GoSL to win harts of Tamil civilians especially, in the eastern region. In addition to that, the Tamils who live in that area where the GoSL controlled supported the government to carry out “humanitarian missions” against the LTTE because they were continuously abused by the LTTE in many ways. Mostly, Tamil community harshly condemned the LTTE’s abduction of children and forcible child recruitment into the organization.¹⁷ Child abduction and

¹⁷ University Teachers for Human Rights, “The Plight of Child Conscripts, Social Degradation & Anti-Muslim Frenzy,” July 2002, *Special Report No: 14* (<http://www.uthr.org/SpecialReports/spreport14.htm> Accessed on 20 October 2010); and

forceful recruitment created anger among Tamils over the LTTE. Particularly, moderate Tamil civil organizations blamed the international community and its various actors over breaching of civilians' human rights in the name of peace. "While agencies were watching the military balance, there has been a steady decline of democratic and human rights, especially as regards political opponents, women and children"¹⁸

At the end of 2005, LTTE carried out series of bomb attacks in crowded cities and killed hundreds of civilians without a justifiable reason. The LTTE's "unnecessary" and indiscriminate violent activities led to increase civilians' anger against the LTTE. Thus, majority of the society, especially Sinhalese, demanded the GoSL to solve the issue of the LTTE. In addition, the majority of civilians had doubt on the peace process and the violent behaviour of the LTTE. Moreover, the GoSL and its leadership were able to receive the political support of radical, moderate and extremist national political parties in the country to demonstrate its military interests against the LTTE. Those parties supported the GoSL to keep "stable" political authority in the parliament. Even though there were relatively unstable economy and negative consequences on the lives of civilians, most of them believed in the government's leadership in overcoming the menace of the LTTE by coping with difficulties in their day to day life.

These developments provided an opportunity and encouraged the government to carry out its military activities against the LTTE. The strongest support from the majority civilians gave an extra power to the GoSL to carry out its so called "humanitarian mission" against the LTTE. Furthermore, it helped to allocate a significant amount of financial aid from the national budget. There was nearly 3-4% growth of Gross National Product (GDP) for the fiscal year 2008 and 2009. Reelection of President Rajapaksa in a landslide victory in the Presidential Election of 2010

University Teachers for Human Rights, "Child Conscription and Peace; A Tragedy of Contradictions," July 2003, *Special Report No: 16* (<http://www.uthr.org/SpecialReports/spreport16.htm> Accessed on 20 October 2010).

¹⁸ University Teachers for Human Rights, "Child Conscription and Peace; A Tragedy of Contradictions," July 2003, *Special Report No: 16* (<http://www.uthr.org/SpecialReports/spreport16.htm> Accessed on 20 October 2010).

further proved the majority civil society's support for the GoSL. The article argues that electoral conduct clearly demonstrates and ensures the GoSL's local ownership of the peacebuilding as the primary legitimate authority of the citizens, though it is not accepted by the international rights groups as an appropriate measure to restore the lasting peace in the country.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the GoSL was able to increase members of its security forces with the high public support to enhance public security against the LTTE violent activities especially, in the majority Sinhala living southern urban areas. This situation further forces international community to re-examine its roles in the failed peace process and post-conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka.

The patriotic leadership of the country united diverse socio-economic, cultural and political ideologist communities and groups into a main goal of elimination of menace of terrorist from the country. Having experienced politically and socially weak leaderships since independence of the country, the highly patriotic oriented leadership is one of the main opportunities to the GoSL. It is said that the country has been seeking a patriotic leadership since 1950s and the President Mahinda Rajapaksa took the advantage of it. Apart from that, Sri Lankan historians reveal on existing historical trend that the country used to suffer from unstable socio-political issues for thirty or forty years and then one of the leaders emerged in the Southern Sri Lanka would rescue the country from all difficulties. According to that view, the president Rajapaksa hailing from Southern Sri Lanka and majority Sinhala Buddhists used to believe those historical traditions. They justify and promote the leadership of Rajapaksa in order to create a strong patriotic leadership which aims to eliminate menace of terrorism and establish a unitary country for all citizens.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group, *War Crimes in Sri Lanka*, May 17 2010 (Accessed on 10 August 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/191-war-crimes-in-sri-lanka.aspx>); Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: End Indefinite Detention of Tamil Tiger Suspects*, February 1 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/01/29/sri-lanka-end-indefinite-detention-tamil-tiger-suspects>); Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka Government Proposal Won't Address War Crimes UN Secretary-General Should Establish International Investigation*, May 7 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/07/sri-lanka-government-proposal-won-t-address-war-crimes>).

Internal power struggles among leaders of the LTTE created another “plus opportunity” for the government to get weaken the organizational functions of the LTTE. In particular, the split of the eastern leader and his subordinates gave an advantage to the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and the GoSL during and aftermath of the conflict. Those internal issues of the LTTE weaken the organization which led to the dividing of the Tamil civilian support for the LTTE. SLA was able to access the LTTE’s military information (storage of Arms, number of carders, suicide carders and their immediate targets and their locations, daily routings of top leaders) and their strategic locations against the government. In 2008, the LTTE pointed out that their belligerents used their own resources against them. Furthermore, this situation directly influenced the entire establishment of LTTE and a considerable core of LTTE carders surrendered the SLA. Meantime those surrendered carders played as counter propaganda speakers against the LTTE and it sternly affected the LTTE’s international propaganda mechanism (especially on the LTTE’s human rights violations and child abduction and underage recruitment). Aftermath of the conflict the SLA and the GoSL deployed those former surrendered LTTE combatants to carry out minor administrative activities in transit camps under supervision of the SLA.

It is said that the GoSL and its security forces’ strategic approach in humanitarian missions over the LTTE was highly advanced. For instance, the building of morality in politically discolored security forces was well organized and implemented. Furthermore, second, third and fourth layers of forces were changed according to the performance of individuals. Basic facilities and wages of security forces were increased. This helped to enhance the reputation of the security forces by making them patriotic towards their country and its citizens. This nature encouraged young citizens to join security forces and military recruitment. It was more than doubled when compared to previous records particularly during the failed peace process. This increase was a strong physical opportunity to the GoSL in carrying out its military operations against the LTTE. The aftermath of the conflict saw the employment of a considerable amount of military personal in reconstruction activities in conflict affected areas in the north. The opportunity of skilled military forces has

steadily been employed in demining activities and related clearance activities. Moreover, this progressive situation has contributed to keep in time resettlement of IDPs in their homelands and improve the national security in areas where insurgents had planted thousands of land mines and other military equipment.

In discussing the international opportunities open to the GoSL, the stable regional relations particularly with the regional super powers of India and Pakistan are very significant. It is a widespread truth that in the 1980s India and Sri Lanka did not maintain steady diplomatic relations. Thus, India helped the LTTE to strengthen their military stabilization.²⁰ However, the assassination of prominent Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi by the LTTE changed India's diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka. Furthermore, India suspended its military and other assistance to the LTTE and started counter operations against "South Asian terrorism." It directly affected the LTTE and its activities on Indian soil against the GoSL. India's policy against LTTE created close and cordial relationship between India and Sri Lanka. The importance of this positive diplomatic relations can be fully understood in relation to the failed peace process. From the beginning, India did not support the Norwegians brokered peace due to extra regional influences in the region. In this context, the GoSL was careful at the beginning of the mission and used to be advised from India in a more transparent manner. This approach was highly appreciated by India and extended its continuous military and strategic support to Sri Lanka. However, at the end of 2008, there were significant protests against the central government of India from the southern Indian state of Tamilnadu where majority of inhabitants are Tamil. Also, nearly 300,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are living in Tamilnadu. Still, India was able to manage those reactions by winning the general election on 16 May 2009, just three days before the defeating of the LTTE in the north of Sri Lanka.

India positively pushes the GoSL to take stable political actions to establish sustainable peace for all ethnic groups in the country. To do so, Indian higher level diplomats including Minister of External Affairs, Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs, advisors of external affairs to the Prime Minister of India and other officials

²⁰ Bose, *Contested Lands*, p. 54.

visited Sri Lanka and closely monitored the GoSL's activities in the northern and eastern parts of the country. As a recent development of India's relationship indicated by opening two new regional Indian consulate offices in the northern, Jaffna and the southern, Hambanthota in order to meet local people's need and expand the Indian "active involvements" in public.

At the opening occasion, the Indian External Minister stated that India's friendship with Sri Lanka is based on its historical ties, civilization and culture. In spite of this, political analysts of South Asia states that the Indian close ties with Sri Lanka go beyond historical relations, focusing more on regional geo-political competitors such as China and Pakistan. "India agreed to provide US\$1.7 billion through loans and aid over a period of three years starting from 2011. Out of this total assistance, some US\$416 million credit will be used to rebuild the railway system in the Northern Province and the balance will be spent on several key projects."²¹ Contrary to global actors of the international community, India fully agrees and blesses the GoSL's resettlement efforts during the last one and half year.

However, it is reported that at the latter part of the war, India prevented its military assistance to Sri Lanka due to continued protests of Tamilnadu. At that time, Pakistan increased and continued its military supplies to Sri Lanka without any resistance from India. This friendly relationship helps Sri Lanka to enhance its military capacities against the terrorism. Therefore, Pakistan provided military equipment and technical support (human resource training), economic cooperation and education exchange between the two countries. In particular, both countries have signed two bilateral agreements in 2005 in order to enhance socio-economic sectors of two countries. When India experienced its internal political challenges over assistance to Sri Lanka, Pakistan came out and increased and continued its military supplies to Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, India did not raise any objection against Pakistan military support to Sri Lanka. According to those developments, South Asian regional political analysts

²¹ A. Hemanthagama, "Krishna's visit strengthen Indo – Sri Lanka Relations," *Asian Tribune*, 27 November 2010, (Accessed on November 28, 2010 <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/11/27/krishna%E2%80%99s-visit-strengthen-into-%E2%80%93-sri-lanka-relations>).

concluded that Sri Lanka was able to highly benefit from South Asian super powers after 30 years of the conflict. To establish the regional stability and peace, the South Asian super powers have “a common agenda” to eliminate menace of terrorism in the region. Therefore, the common agenda against terrorism is beneficial to Sri Lanka to continue its humanitarian mission and post-conflict peacebuilding activities since May 2009.

The global policy of war on terror gave “an international golden key” to the GoSL to counter the globally dominated LTTE. This opportunity has been used by the GoSL to overcome physically, strategically and skillfully strong LTTE in a diverse way. For instance, 9/11 was one of the main setbacks to the LTTE and major European countries (Canada, EU countries and USA) and Australia banned the LTEE as a terrorist organization. This action seized almost all activities of the LTTE in those countries. Taking advantage of this situation, the GoSL launched a massive counter information propagation mission against the LTTE among the actors of international community. In particular, the government established and reformatted the Ministry of Defense website²² against the LTTE’s main propaganda machine of Tamil Net²³ which disseminates biased information on the conflict and conflict affected civilians. Furthermore, the GoSL took advantage of international think tank reports on LTTE’s child abuses and forceful recruitments of children. Recently it was proved by one of the LTTE leaders, Kumaran Pathmanathan (KP) who confessed that their diaspora and fundraising activities were blocked and some accounts of the LTTE were suspended due to the GoSL’s counter activities around the world. Even though some of western countries stood against Sri Lanka in the latter part of the conflict, most of them were keeping silence over the GoSL military missions against the LTTE as a group of terrorist.

Another external opportunity is the GoSL’s alternative foreign policy strategies to non conventional countries. Particularly, as a former colony of Great Britain, Sri Lanka used to follow the British policy approaches and suggestions in dealing with

²² Ministry of Defence website (www.defence.lk).

²³ Tamilnet website (www.tamilnet.com).

socio-economic and political issues in the country. On the contrary, the present president of Sri Lanka and his government merely ignored British advice and suggestions on the conflict. The urgent diplomatic visit of former British Secretary of the Foreign Affairs which was focused on finding negotiation ground for ceasefire during the last phase of the conflict clearly indicated the GoSL's diplomatic ignorance of British advice on the conflict. Furthermore, France and the Scandinavian countries were also treated in the same way. As a result of this diplomatic kick-up, Sweden had closed her embassy in Sri Lanka in March 2010.

The GoSL has strengthened its relations with traditional friends like China, having had enormous support amounting to millions of dollars worth of military as well as humanitarian assistances. Even though, historically Japan is the biggest single donor of Sri Lanka, during the last months and aftermath of the conflict. China became a key actor in post-conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, China has invested large scale macro economic development projects in both north and south in Sri Lanka. Providing multimillions of military hardware in loan basis as well as humanitarian assistances, China extended her assistance during the conflict and post-conflict peacebuilding.²⁴

China provided immediate humanitarian assistance including temporary shelters, sanitation facilities and highly efficient demining equipment immediately after the end of conflict. China's timely assistance to Sri Lanka during and aftermath of the war establishes a higher reputation for China among civil society and other countries. In addition to that, China has invested a set of large scale massive macro economic development projects of state own as well as private sector own in both northern and the southern areas in Sri Lanka. Newly constructed and opened the world's biggest in-land harbor is significant in Chinese development assistance in post-conflict Sri Lanka. It is said that China invested US \$ 1.5bn to build the port. "The port will drive the country towards its goal of becoming one of the five global mega hubs in the world, amidst the Pacific Coast, Atlantic Coast, European and Far Eastern mega

²⁴ TamilNet, *Norway finances Humiliation of Tamils*, Wednesday, 18 November 2009, (<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=79&artid=30631>, Accessed on 2 Sep 2010).

hubs.”²⁵ The port is built by the state-run- China Harbour Engineering Company and Sinohydro Corporation.

Also, Sri Lanka was defended by China in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and human rights sessions against other permanent members’ proposals and criticisms. Even though historically Japan is the biggest single donor of Sri Lanka, it followed other Western powers and voted against Sri Lanka at the UN human rights council during the last phase and aftermath of the conflict. This allowed China to dominate its involvement in post-conflict scenario. Sri Lankan state own media highlighted China as a “real friend” who supports Sri Lanka in difficult times. Consequently, it seems that the majority of Sri Lankan society recognized and appreciated China’s role in post-conflict peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. This alternative foreign policy interests made new global friends including Argentina, Iran, Libya, Myanmar Ukraine and Vietnam. Apart from that, the GoSL was sure to keep its historical relationship with Russia which supported Sri Lanka when UN human rights council discusses about Sri Lankan human rights violations in 2008 and 2009.

5. The Government of Sri Lanka`s Challenges as the Winner

When talking about challenges in the context of Sri Lanka, the winner in the conflict which was the GoSL, has been facing significant challenges since May 2009. In other words, to implement a set of peacebuilding activities such as changes in post conflict policy instruments supporting political process and reconciliation and national healing have become the main challenges to the GoSL. “Building the structural apparatus of the state in a post-conflict situation, therefore, must also be balanced by efforts directed towards the building of trust and accountability between governments and their

²⁵ Hemanthagama, A., 27 November 2010. *Krishna’s visit strengthen Indo – Sri Lanka Relations*, Asian Tribune (Accessed on November 28, 2010 <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2010/11/27/krishna%E2%80%99s-visit-strengthen-indo-%E2%80%93-sri-lanka-relations>)

constituents.”²⁶ In order to build trust and accountability among conflict affected civilians, the GoSL has launched several activities from the phase of military missions. Despite relative success of those “limited activities” there could be seen a bulk of core activities which have to be focused on years long root causes of the conflict.

The GoSL’s military operations have concluded the prolong conflict in less than three years. However, establishing positive peace²⁷ which address all structural issues of the victims and perpetrators of the conflict are not straightforward. The victims of the conflict demand their basic human rights and justice against the perpetrators. Also the perpetrators demand their basic human rights including amnesty and reputation in the society. In contrary, the public, political parties and international rights groups demand the GoSL to prosecute those who are responsible for violation of human rights during the conflict and introduce political reforms in order to ensure political rights of all citizens of the country. Moreover, the GoSL has concerned on how to strength the national security to prevent from another form of terrorist or insurgent threats.

Basically, challenges emerging from planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding activities in the aftermath of the conflict. Without any international peace agreement or mandate the GoSL has to implement its own activities to establish durable peace in the country where multi ethnic communities are expecting to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in the society. Therefore, the GoSL has to win the hearts of all ethnic groups of the country to establish a durable peace. Particularly, the government needs to address all surface and in depth issues of the directly conflict affected Tamil, Sinhala and Muslim civilians in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Even though the GoSL says that they are in the process of making “indigenous” or “Sri Lankan own model” of peacebuilding, the article argues that it is the main challenge to the GoSL to implement or build transparent and accountable peace with lesser support of International Community. Many developed western nations challenged the GoSL’s “mischievous” behavior during the military mission and its aftermath.

²⁶ Lotze and Coning, *op. cit.*

²⁷ Galtung, *op. cit.*

Indeed establishing and maintaining the normalcy in the country is the other main challenge to the GoSL, particularly in severely conflict affected northern areas where the infrastructure and civilian life were totally damaged. More than 90% of civilians' properties were destroyed and other public facilities such as roads, hospitals, schools, irrigation system and other livelihood institutions are completely malfunctioned due to heavy conflict.²⁸ As an immediate response to the root causes of the conflict there is need to fulfill the basic needs of the victims of the conflict.²⁹ Therefore, the resettlement of all IDPs and demobilization and reintegration of ex-LTTE carders into the main stream society are main obstacles for the GoSL's move to restore normalcy. According to BBC reports on the opinion of intellectuals the "displaced people are not happy as there are no livelihood programmes. They lost everything, especially in the mainland Wanni region."³⁰ Hence, the GoSL has to go deeper into addressing the resettlement of civilian life in a more comprehensive manner.

In addition to the above mentioned challenges there could be seen an existing psychological traumatize among the majority of war victims in the northern parts of the country. Tamil net revealed that as "collective trauma in the Wanni – a qualitative inquiry into the mental health of the internally displaced due to the civil war in Sri Lanka has to be considered in the agenda of development."³¹ Thus, massive development projects launched by the GoSL and sponsored by China, India and other international organizations need to commit the GOSL's serious attention on "the dimensions of the psychiatric crisis in the nation of Eezham Tamils as a result of the trauma inflicted on them by the war."³²

Negligence of these psychological issues has been clearly shown by the GoSL's

²⁸ M. Ganguly, *Sri Lanka's Displaced: The Political Vice*, April 8, 2009, Human Rights Watch (Accessed on 25 August 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/04/08/sri-lanka-s-displaced-political-vice>) and observation and Interview with resettled civilians in Jaffna, 5 February 2010.

²⁹ Lotze and Coning, *op. cit.*

³⁰ S. Natarajan, *Displaced Tamils demand a better life*, January 23 2010, BBC (Accessed on 12 August 2010 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8470878.stm).

³¹ TamilNet, "Development' Conquistadors have no Appetite for Psychological need of Eszham Tamils," August 20 2010 (Accessed on 27 August <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=79&artid=32458>).

³² *Ibid.*

newly appointed “Uthuru Sanwardana Janadipathi Karya Sadaka Balakaya” (North Development Presidential Task Force- NDPTF) and its Sinhala and Tamil ethnic participation. Almost all the administrative structure and authority have been constructed in favour of the GoSL. The authority of the NDPTF was given to the retired army personnels and henchmen of the GoSL. Even though the NDPTF is totally for majority Tamil living in northern area, more than 80% of the members are compromised with Sinhalese. So, these reconstruction activities initiated are not successfully contributed to reconciliation and establishing normalcy in the country.

This developing situation has been revealed by the civilians and religious leaders who are recently resettled in the northern. By giving testimonials in front of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) one of religious leaders expressed that there could be a possibility to emerge demographic changes and “land colonization” through the GoSL’s existing activities. It further reveals that the presence of military personnels and continuous political influences could establish highly militarized and politicized civil administration which creates “a fear and tension amongst the majority Tamil community, who feel they are being marginalized in favour of those known to influential politicians of the government.”³³

In this context, the GoSL and its members have to transfer the ownership of the humanitarian and development projects immediately to those who are living and to directly benefitting from the initiatives.³⁴ If the situation continued, there could be a possibility of creating an unhealthy environment among locals over their livelihood activities which have been occupied by the military forces. Moreover, the international and local civil society organizations and agencies would reluctant to fund for those military launched activities due to the minimum or zero participation of the civilians.³⁵

³³ TamilNet, “146,679 Vanni People Missing within a Year of War: Bishop of Mannaar,” Wednesday, 12 January 2011 (Accessed on 14 January 2011 <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=33380>).

³⁴ Human Rights Watch, *Sri Lanka: US Report Shows No Progress on Accountability*, August 11 2010 (Accessed on 25 August 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/B099-sri-lanka-a-bitter-peace.aspx>).

³⁵ S.W.R. de A. Samarasinghe, “Sri Lanka: The Challenge of Postwar Peace Building, State Building and Nation Building” in John Coakley (ed.) *Pathways from Ethnic Conflict; Institutional Redesign in Divided Societies* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2010), pp. 175-200.

This would be a “serious” problem to the GoSL because there is still an existing mistrust with government by Tamils in the northern areas. Hence, the post conflict peacebuilding activities do not reflect local ownership of Tamil rather it’s a “dominated national ownership” over powerless conflict victims.³⁶ Based on that, the article argues that the GoSL was not able to establish a proper mechanism or strategic approach or policy framework to deal with those “sensitive” and “very influential” issues in the entire post-conflict peacebuilding project.

Building confidence among different ethnic groups and civilians in order to expel the feeling of politically discriminated is another significant challenge for the GoSL. The years long mistrust and suspicion between two ethnic groups cannot be easily taken away from the minds of each group. Therefore, the government has to make genuine efforts to build trust between two groups without politically manipulating them. It could be seen that just after the conflict the Southern civil society came forward and assisted conflict affected Tamils by supplying immediate basic needs.

This situation opened a channel of communication between civilians of the two ethnic groups to see each other and to reestablish preliminary relations with each other. The GoSL further needs to enhance those socio-cultural links among civilians to build confidence in each other. Therefore, the resettlement of IDPs and reintegration of ex-LTTE carders in to the mainstream society would be another major challenge for the government.

It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 ex-LTTE combatants³⁷ who are

³⁶ A. Ethirajan, “Fear and Anxiety in battered Tamil City,” February 1, 2010, BBC, (Accessed on 25 August 2010 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8491120.stm).

³⁷ The actual number of ex-LTTE combatants is yet to be confirmed. The UN organs, the BBC and international human rights groups noted that there are more than 12000 ex-combatons being camped under military control. In contrary the government authorities and Ministers have reveled different numbers of ex-combatants at different occasions. “For example, in an interview with the Sunday Observer of 1st August 2010, Minister D. E. W. Gunasekera was quoted as saying there 7000 ex combatants in custody out of an initial number of 12,000 at the end of the war. However, the Minister was quoted in the Divaina of 15th Sept. 2010 as saying 4000 out of 12,000 had been rehabilitated and released implying a number of 8000 that remained detained. On 10th August, Government MP Rajiva Wijesinghe was quoted by IRIN as saying 6900 continue to be detained out of an initial number of 11,000 LTTE fighters that were detained.” In TamilNet, “146,679 Vanni people missing within a year of war: Bishop of Mannaar,” Wednesday, 12 January 2011 (Accessed on 14 January 2011

“detained” or kept in special camps in northern area of the country. Many of ex-combatants are youth and 40% of them are women. A well established and strategic implementation plan is needed to deal with those ex-combatants as it is not an easy task to keep them in detention camps for a long time. The relatives of those ex-combatants and international rights groups continuously raising “a comprehensive programme to address the psychological needs of ex-LTTE cadres and... an independent authority/body to monitor the rehabilitation and reintegration of detainees, so as to ensure that proper rehabilitation is conducted, and if the reintegration process is taking place effectively.”³⁸ If not, the existing situation might increase their frustration and traumatize nature against the GoSL. Furthermore, there are some possibilities of eruption of psycho-social health problems among detainees such as sexually transmitted diseases and mental disorders due to sexual abuse and exploitation by different perpetrators as well as authorities or stakeholders.

To overcome these challenges and address the root-causes of the protracted conflict, the GoSL appointed the LLRC to investigate all conflict related incidents from 2002 to 2009. The commission says that it aims to build normalcy and ensure justice for conflict victims because “the conflict situation due to the very brutality and long duration of the violence perpetrated against Sri Lanka, would have caused great hurt and anguish in the minds of the people, that requires endeavors for rehabilitation and the restoration of democratic governance complimented by measures for reconciliation.”³⁹ However, there are unanswered questions on LLRC about its transparency and accountability issues in regard to perpetrators and the security forces of the government is yet to be answered.

Hence, as the UN estimated and rights groups repeatedly mentioned, the killing of 7000 civilians has to be comprehensively investigated and perpetrators have to be prosecuted in order to ensure equal rights for all citizens in the country. However, the GoSL faces a significant challenge in establishing its accountability over a bulk of

<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=33380>).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Ministry of Defence website, May 17 2010 (www.defence.lk).

alleged war crimes by its security forces as well as enforced disappearances, abductions and extrajudicial killings and torturing remanded ex-combatants particularly in the last phase of the conflict. A bulk of complaints from relatives of victims clearly shows uncertainty of victims over the government transitional justice mechanism. Consequently, the transparency of the GoSL's LLRC is critical in reconciling thousands of war victims in the country.⁴⁰ It is noted fear looms among Tamils regarding the detained LTTE suspects' lives due to the GoSL's inability to accommodate a transparent international mechanism to investigate those suspected Tamils. Even so, the government has released nearly 4000 ex-combatants after "rehabilitation." According to a report from the international community, particularly rights groups, there has been criticism against the GoSL's restrictions and banning to enter the detention camps as well as unrevealed figures of the detainees. International rights groups further suggest the GoSL to try those suspected ex-LTTE carders in the open courts and "allowing them and witness against them full protections required by international law and permitting international oversight, or release them if there is insufficient evidence."⁴¹

Instituting an acceptable political solution for all citizens including Tamils and other minorities in the country and the implementation of democratic political process are other major and key challenges to the GoSL. Therefore, there is need to establish timely and appropriate political instruments and institutions to address the historically rooted political issues of the conflict. It is clearly proved by civil society leaders who are living in the conflict affected north making statements in front of the LLRC. These direct victims and experienced senior citizens point out that the democratic political institution "should recognize Tamil people along with other inhabitants as part of Sri Lanka, while having their own identity, culture, language, religion and traditional habitation."⁴² Those senior citizens further state that the government has to be duly recognized this reality adhering to the international laws and human rights rather than

⁴⁰ TamilNet, "146,679 Vanni People Missing within a Year of War: Bishop of Mannaar."

⁴¹ International Crisis Group, "War Crimes in Sri Lanka," May 17 2010 (Accessed on 10 August 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/191-war-crimes-in-sri-lanka.aspx>).

⁴² TamilNet, "146,679 Vanni People Missing within a Year of War: Bishop of Mannaar."

its “patriotic flavoured national agendas”. Furthermore, there should be legitimate provisions in the constitution that ensure power sharing and rights of minorities in the context in favouring for any group of the society.⁴³

However, political policy and institutional reforms are still at “snail work”. International Crisis Group highlights that “Sri Lanka has made little progress in constructing its battered democratic institutions or establishing conditions for a stable peace”.⁴⁴ Meantime, the above mentioned Tamil diaspora and international community have continuously raised the issue relating to the political solution.⁴⁵ Despite criticisms by the international community, however, the legitimate political reforms or new policy implementations are not easy due to resistance from various Sinhala patriotic political parties and groups in the country.⁴⁶ Crisis Group further states that “donor governments and international institutions should use their development assistance to support reforms designed to protect the democratic rights of all Sri Lanka citizens and ethnic communities.”⁴⁷

At the end of 2009, the provincial council election for eastern province was held and one of former LTTE rebel leaders of eastern was elected and he has been appointed as Chief Minister to the province. This political development helped former rebels (Karuna faction) to join mainstream democratic politics with other Sinhala and Tamil political parties. It is revealed that though there are some contradictions between the GoSL, these ex-rebels are playing a significant political role in the Eastern province of the country. On the other hand, the provincial council election for the Northern Province has to be held. The GoSL says that the majority of Tamil civilians do not prioritise the establishment of political institutions rather than their welfare and social livelihood activities. Also for the first time in history that the GoSL has already

⁴³ TamilNet, “146,679 Vanni People Missing within a Year of War: Bishop of Mannaar.”

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, “Sri Lanka: A Bitter Peace,” January 11 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/B099-sri-lanka-a-bitter-peace.aspx>).

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, “Sri Lanka: Events of 2009” (Accessed on 12 August 2010 <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2010/sri-lanka>).

⁴⁶ International Crisis Group, “The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE,” February 23 2010 (Accessed on 20 July 2010 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/186-the-sri-lankan-tamil-diaspora-after-the-ltte.aspx>).

⁴⁷ International Crisis Group, “Sri Lanka: A Bitter Peace.”

recruited 450 Tamil youths as national police officers and to other ranks to integrate Tamil youths into the government as providers of national security in a unitary state. Focusing on these initiatives the article argues that the GoSL's key policy level reforms and implementations have to be speed up to restore the normalcy of conflict affected civilians in the country.

In the aftermath of the first anniversary of the ended conflict the government discussed some amendments to the constitution in order to decentralize power on selected subjects. According to the rights group report on establishing lasting peace "Sri Lankan government must address the legitimate grievances at the root of the conflict: the political marginalization and physical insecurity of most Tamils in Sri Lanka."⁴⁸

The other challenge to the GoSL is how to counter Tamil diaspora backing international pressure to establish an international investigation panel on alleged human rights violations and war crimes during the last months of the conflict. Even though the LTTE was military defeated, its international supporters and their financial capabilities still remain globally. The diaspora still plays active roles, advocating for European countries to take action (sanctions, holding donor assistance, and etc) against Sri Lankan government's war crimes and propaganda to boycott Sri Lankan products as well as establish "Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGoTE)." "In the last months of the war and months immediately following, there were self-immolations by Tamil protesters... and increased communal tensions between Tamils and Sinhalese abroad."⁴⁹ The GoSL has to allow onboard Tamil diaspora in post-conflict peacebuilding activities to establish new opportunities for Tamil civilians and to free them from traumatized conflict memories. Though this is not an easy task for both government and the Tamil diaspora, it is one of prime responsibilities of the government to try to win over the Tamil diaspora especially in European countries. It would be a great opportunity to the GoSL to restore the positive peace in the country. So the GoSL would be able to foster a positive relation with the diaspora and get

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ International Crisis Group, "The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE."

beneficial from their resources and expertise in comprehensive manner.

As a nation, Sri Lanka needs to strength its core national capacities to win all citizens of the country. The GoSL needs to regain its economic capacities to address nationwide economic issues. Therefore, this situation creates another major and significant challenge for the GoSL. Without proper socio-economic development, it might be difficult to address all structural issues to the conflict. Proper education for younger generation and appropriate employment opportunities will help them to engage in positive national capacity building rather than negative involvements. To do so, the GoSL has to be sincere in eliminating malpractices and ill treatments against any ethnic or specific group of the country. Furthermore, “Sri Lanka must complete its transformation into a society and polity with which all Sri Lankans can feel a sense of identity and belonging.”⁵⁰

6. Conclusion

It is clear that as the winner of the conflict, the GoSL faces significant challenges rather than opportunities in the process of post-conflict peacebuilding. However, the majority of civil society’s support has created a great deal of confidence for the GoSL. Most of Sri Lankan post-conflict activities are nationalized to reconcile all citizens in Sri Lanka. It proves that the GoSL and particularly the President overlooked the word “minority” from the verbal dictionary of the Sri Lankan community. The GoSL further emphasizes, that there are two groups which are patriotic and non-patriotic to the county. Following these developments, the government has initiated reconciliation and rebuilding activities including both policy oriented political processes and reconciliation and national harmony to prevent a recurrence of the conflicts.

Even though the GoSL resettled almost all IDPs in their home districts, as mentioned above, multiple issues are still there to be addressed. According to rights groups reports and particularly the appointed UN Secretary General’s own advisory

⁵⁰ Bose, *Contested Lands*, p. 54.

panel, reveals that the GoSL has to deal with community rooted structural and human rights issues of war affected civilians in the country. The article argues that the GoSL as a winner of the conflict has to deal with all citizens of the country equally rather giving any advantage to a certain ethnic group or interests. Nevertheless, the GoSL is proceeding with its own model of post-conflict peacebuilding project, as Lotze and Coning emphasize the “peacebuilding to be effective, it must not only develop the head, but also the heart and hands as well.”⁵¹ Thus, the GoSL has to face those highlighted challenges by taking advance from its limited opportunities to win the hearts of all citizens in Sri Lanka.

⁵¹ Lotze, and Coning, *op. cit.*, p. 111.