

Sri Lanka: Mahinda, the UNHRC - Red herring swims in the face of international pressure

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As Mahinda 'expected and dreamt' the UNHRC has voted for an international probe that could lead to suspects being named and prosecuted. One would have thought this could be a prospect that should put Mahinda on edge; they are all wrong. He wanted the announcement of the international probe, to launch his political project of chauvinist agitations. Mahinda has no alternative but to go for this attack in fascist style. It is not a sign of desperation that the Rajapaksa government moved to proscribe as foreign terrorist organisations, all Diaspora groups involved in campaigning for an international war crimes probe - certainly not! This was planned well, when they realised that the chauvinist mass base was slipping away.

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As the UNHRC prepares for the international investigation the dramatic case of Gobi appears and Mahinda's 'game plan' is revealed! Jayakumari's incarceration in Boossa under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (and the fact her daughter Vibushika has been placed in the custody of the Probation and Child Care Services) are parts of the drama of the Mahinda regime. Mahinda needs a 'Prabhakaran' and an 'armed insurrection' for his political survival. Unless the bogey of Tamil terrorism is spread, it is difficult to calm the rural masses who are the most hit by the development programme sanctioned by the IMF.

Masses hit by the government's policies, including peasants, fisher folk, workers and students, have launched struggles one after the other. This was in parallel to the fearless struggle of the Tamil people for freedom which brought series of defeats to the Mahinda regime in the Tamil homeland. On the other hand, Mahinda wants to undermine the UNHRC resolution and already gained the support of the Indian leadership. With Indian support he plans to neutralise Americans. So while 'American Imperialism' is checked, his fascist-style regime will continue to work according to the IMF-backed development programme. Anti-US in HR but pro-American in economics!

"Because even simply meeting with these banned groups would be enough for Sri Lankan citizens to be arrested under PTA. Insurgencies arise due to grievances not being addressed for decades"

Many Tamil leaders believe - since not only the Americans are serious but with UK's position also as clear as crystal, an international investigation is inevitable. In spite of the Sri Lankan government playing out a drama that is typical of its deceitful behaviour, introducing a red-herring with the appearance of the spurious case of Gobi to divert attention and even wriggle out from international scrutiny, the latter will take place. So they believe. It is good if so-called liberal democracy could bring justice to the Tamils. But I am unable to believe that global masters are looking for justice, even within the frame work of a market economy.

On the contrary, already they are looking for an avenue to bring about a compromise between the

Mahinda regime and the Tamil leadership. They know that there is no possibility of another rig-rag guerrilla Tamil insurrection in this country. Also, a super technological war with mini atomic bombs is impossible without the support of India. India does not want to invade - directly or indirectly - this country when the Mahinda regime acts along their suggestions, except probably on the Tamil national issue. On socio economics there is no serious clash between Manmohan Singh and Ajith Cabraal - both dance according to the IMF music.

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In other words Terrorism defined as the unlawful use, or threatened use of force or violence by a person or an organised group, against people or property with the intention of intimidating or coercing societies or governments for ideological or political reasons, is now not in the agenda of Sri Lanka . The clamour of the Mahinda regime is created for the benefit of the fascist-style politics of this regime. It is plain to any political analyst that none of the organisations listed are involved in violence or terror. If that is the case, India will support the action of the government. In other words it is a vindictive exercise directed at the Tamil leaders for supporting the fight for an international investigation and still holding on to achieving a just political solution in the Northeast. In sharply criticising the ban, human rights groups have said the ban was based on no verifiable evidence, though it effectively criminalised these Tamil groups.

Clearly the government’s objective is to prevent the flow of information, funds for social, cultural and democratic projects and to prevent the involvement of these groups with the investigation. Some are accused of discussing “secessionist agenda”, as if it was a crime to discuss the right of self-determination of the Ilankai Tamil nationality.

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In this sense the ban is a very serious and negative development, effectively criminalising legitimate democratic dissent within Sri Lanka and making it harder to challenge government policies from outside the island. No doubt that the ban is a political attack on the government’s Tamil critics, rather than a legitimate response to a genuine threat.

Because even simply meeting with these banned groups would be enough for Sri Lankan citizens to be arrested under PTA. Insurgencies arise due to grievances not being addressed for decades. They are strengthen from persecution, discrimination, marginalisation and violence perpetrated against a social or national community. Thus the oppressive state produces a need to fight back when all peaceful means are exhausted.

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