

# Heroes die while pseudos thrive

**W**e have had threatened villages being invaded by marauding LTTEers and poor villagers hacked to death before. But never have we felt the impact so severely, the shock so stunningly, the sorrow so immediate and lasting, as when we read about the massacre at Gonagala.

We are told why the innocent villagers were massacred and who did it, but we cannot quite take it in - that humans can be so dastardly. Why had these poor villagers to suffer just because civilians used as shields by the LTTE were killed and injured by bombing in Periyamadhu. That is war and the wages of

continue going on with their orgies of killing. They are far beyond the pale, far, far beyond redemption. But we can improve conditions for those who live on the outskirts of the war zone.

We were told in newspaper reports that two pregnant women and sleeping infants and children were hacked to death. Would even an enraged animal do such injury to sleeping persons? "The two pregnant women's stomachs were slashed by the attackers. One was expecting her first child in December. Police said one of the women was raped before her murder. We were also told there were Tigresses with the marauding Tigers - deadlier by far than the male, they say.

Can a human being kill and hack to death a woman obviously with child? Husbands have been known to abuse, kick and push their expectant wives but there is anger between the two of them, probably a cause for the man to get enraged and his drinking aggravates the situation. Tigers do not take alcoholic drinks. They are dedicated to serve their leader and their cause. So how do they stab, rape, slash sleeping children and disembowel a woman with child? Most of these killers are teenagers. They should be enjoying the rights of childhood such as schooling, leisure time and love of family; not invading villages with blood lust.

A doctor cousin spent a lakh of rupees within a month to save expectant cows from the Kandy abattoir. She is horrified that the butchers show not one iota of concern whether a cow is to calf. The victims, it must be mentioned, are animals and the butchers seasoned slaughterers of animals for money, unlike in the case of the human prey.

A thought that instantly springs to mind, or rather a question, is why aren't more trained police or armed forces personnel posted to guard these threatened villages. One home guard from Gonagala had gone to the adjoining village for duty. He returned in the morning to find his family packed to death.

The men should be guarding their homes, their part of the village, while the entire village is guarded by trained personnel, professional soldiers and policemen.

### GUARD THEM, NOT US

This is not possible since so many of them are in Colombo guarding VIPs and strategic buildings. The day our President was chief

**Can a human being kill and hack to death a woman obviously with child? Husbands have been known to abuse, kick and push their expectant wives but there is anger between the two of them, probably a cause for the man to get enraged and his drinking aggravates the situation.**



Victims of LTTE brutality

guest at the ceremony at Police Park there were, along the roads, uniformed servicemen to civilians in the proportion of 4:1. The question that people asked; those snarled up in traffic jams and missing flights and appointments, and mothers returning home after work four hours late; was why Madam President did not have herself helicoptered to the venue. The roads would then have been free, only the Police Park area cordoned off. People would have been able to get about fairly normally and the threatened villages out of Colombo would have been sufficiently guarded.

If you can see and appreciate the President in a motorcade and have her giving us a queenly wave of her hand, we could understand her riding around. But she is whizzed past at dangerous speed, and miles of roads are blocked

for hours, throwing us all into confusion.

### BEGGARS AND BETRAYERS

The second thought that comes to mind is of "peace beggars" and groups that refrain from naming culprits, who slide past laying blame, who, like the Women and Media Collective say: "Who killed Rajini (Tirragama)? The answer to this question is not as important as the answer to the query: why did she have to die?" She had to die because she fell out of favour with those who killed her and to know why she had to die we must know her killers, not hide their identity. Why is this deception and glossing over the guilty ones and not naming them resorted to? For personal gain, for continuation of fund-

ing for their NGOs, for 'hidden agendas' as some. So succinctly term the covert motive.

The editorial in the Sunday Island of 19 September and Nayana's Legal Watch column must be read, reread and preserved. In them are sensible, balanced, un-strident, rational thinking and writing on the two issues I have been dealing with: danger to threatened villages and so-called peace makers and do gooders who choose whom to name and whom not to name.

The money spent on peace marches, on seminars held in Colombo in starred hotels, on mass meditation in Victoria Park on celebration of 5th anniversaries could so well have been spent on recruiting more guards to protect our threatened villages or to arm better the persons already there.

### FETE THEM

The real heroes of the land are among the armed forces and within the threatened villages who keep out the terrorists from marching southwards. Let the marchers and preachers and meditators go to the threatened villages and give comfort and succour unto them. Give them packets of food and freely distributed money, not to those from the safe South who are conscripted to march, meditate or celebrate. The celebration should have been to fete the villagers living in places like Gonagala who create a buffer between the Tigers and us. How long will it be impenetrable with mass murder going on so consistently?

The hypocrisy, the self-centredness, the ploy to do anything to hold position and have the money rolling in, is unbelievable. Believable it is that the true pioneers, the real heroes, the people who are actually doing something to preserve the integrity and sovereignty of the country are being sacrificed and massacred, whether in uniform or otherwise.

Are they disposable sacrifices - to use a cynical phrase in parlance as of now? They certainly and definitely are not, but treated as such. The armed forces and people in threatened villages are the backbone of this nation at war. They need to be treated as such and the villagers protected. Great pronouncements today of the sacrifice they have made and the protection they deserve; forgotten tomorrow. These too are paradisaical promises.

## PEOPLE

### and Events

by Nan

war that people get killed, both armed forces and civilians. This is so more particularly in a guerrilla war when the army fights according to certain rules, most of them international, which are completely ignored by the enemy. The cunning enemy sets up its bases in the most populated of places within its forcibly held territory. We cannot expect the LTTE to think this way or act with one iota of mercy. What has to be done is that we must demand the threatened villages be protected.

### GORY DETAILS

The newspapers gave us minutiae of the bestiality committed, and quite rightly too since the public should know, should sympathize, should get angry and should try to do something to stop these senseless murders, but for goodness sake not more peace marches or whitewashing of what has been done. I have my serious doubts about people rising up and getting the government to prevent such atrocities. We will get shocked, perhaps interrupt our daily routine, specially a lazy Sunday routine to feel sorry for the dead, shed a crocodile tear and then just go on with our safe lives. But there are a few people who ask serious questions and are terribly disillusioned and angry with the way things are being done - not by the LTTE but by our government. The LTTE will