

'Senior commands of Army, Navy have a lot to answer'. (1993, November 17). *The Island*.

Ruhunu Rata Bhikku Peramuna on Pooneryn disaster —

'Senior commands of Army, Navy have a lot to answer'

The Ruhunu Rata Bhikku Peramuna is shocked and saddened by the disaster at Pooneryn which has cost the lives of more than 500 young men.

"We cannot understand how such a strongly manned Naval and Army base could have been so swiftly overwhelmed by an enemy who was said to have suffered a severe setback a few weeks before on the other side of the Jaffna lagoon itself. The Senior Commands of the Sri Lanka Army and the Sri Lanka Navy have a lot to answer for and we insist that those accountable for this disaster must take the consequences and be relieved of their commands and commissions. Apart from the specific failure to anticipate this kind of attack and the total unpreparedness to deal with it when it did take place, it is obvious that the basic reasons for this tragedy and humiliation are (1) the complete absence of a political objective on the part of the government in dealing with the problem of Tamil separatism translated into Tamil terrorism and (2) the equally culpable absence of a strategy on the part of our Military High Command".

This was stated by the Ruhunu Rata Bhikku Peramuna in a statement.

The enormous casualties at both Kilali and Pooneryn highlight another tragic absurdity committed by the government and the International Committee of the Red Cross acting in collusion with each other. The Teaching Hospital at Jaffna is staffed and maintained by the government of Sri Lanka and its operation is supposedly supervised

by the ICRC. The doctors and nurses and all other staff are paid from public funds. All drugs, medicines and equipment are supplied by the government which also maintains the buildings and other amenities of this institution which is equal to if not better than the Colombo General Hospital. The services of its staff and the provision of its facilities are however not available to the government's own soldiers wounded and requiring urgent treatment in the battlefields of the North. They are reserved for the casualties of the enemy only! This must be the only example at any time or place in world history where medical facilities and treatment are provided to treat the enemy only while they are denied to the casualties on the side providing the facility.

What is the use of the ICRC if it cannot even modify the absurdity by ensuring that facilities of this hospital are made available to the government's own security forces as well. If the ICRC is unwilling or unable to perform this task they should be sent out of this country forthwith. The Government for its part must stop healing the enemy with public funds and thus helping him to fight our soldiers while condemning so many of the latter to die or be killed while lying wounded on the battlefield (as happened at Kilali, where the wounded were shot through the eyes by the LTTE who dispatched their wounded to the Jaffna Hospital to be treated there to fight again).

The statement was signed by the Peramuna's President Bhikku, Omare Kassapa.