

Tamils brawl in the streets of London. (1995, October 29) *The Island.*

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Tamils brawl in the streets of London

From our London Corr.
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The rivalry between Jaffna and Batticaloa asylum seekers in London has culminated in violent street fighting.

Two incidents of gang warfare between the rival Tamil factions were witnessed on the streets of London on October 23, according to a news bulletin of Sunrise Ethnic Radio. The bulletin reported that both

incidents had occurred in the heavily Asian populated outskirts of London. The first incident took place in Ealing Road, Wembley in a densely populated Sri Lankan Tamil refugee area. When eight Tamils got involved in a brawl, alerted by neighbours, a number of police vans and cars rushed to the scene to find Tamils armed with handguns, baseball bats and lethal CS Gas canisters. Soon

the police successfully managed to stop a BMW car, with five youths, which was trying to make a desperate attempt to make a quick get away from the violent scene. Inside the BMW the police detected a Tamil youth who had sustained head injuries and was rushed to hospital for urgent medical attention.

The second incident occurred in a residence

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at Alperton, also in the Wembley area. At this residence the police found five Tamils with clubs, knives, baseball and cricket bats in their possession. Five youths were apprehended by police, taken to the police station and subsequently charged under the Public Order Offences. They were later bailed out, with orders to present themselves again at the Police station at a later date. The Wembley Police Liaison Officer, described it as, an incident of inter-gang fighting". Since the charges were not framed against the Tamils at the time 'The Island' contacted the police, The Liaison Officer was unable to divulge the names of the Tamils involved.

In the recent past many have seen a rapid increase in the number of Tamil youths joining various gangs similar to the Chinese Triad Gangs who operate within China Town in London. These groups are said to be involved in organised crime, drug trafficking, prostitution and extor-

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tion. The Tamil youth who join these gangs belong mainly to the category of asylum seekers. These factions also make their presence felt at various Sri Lankan functions where they often intimidate people and invariably try to get involved with confrontations with Sinhala and other Tamil youth.

Prior to this latest outbreak of inter gang violence various slogans have been appearing on bus stops in Wembley area criticising the Batticaloa Tamils. The slogans spelt displeasure to the Batticaloa Tamils and had demanded that they be sent back to Batticaloa immediately. It is also a well known fact that there have been frequent friction between the Jaffna and Batticaloa Tamil communities in London and the two incidents are an indication that Tamil youth in London have taken their inter community squabbles out of Jaffna and Batticaloa on to the streets of their new chosen haven — London.