

Allow 100,000 evicted Muslims to return to their homes. (1993, November 28). *Sunday observer*.

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ORMON appeals to LTTE Allow 100,000 evicted Muslims to return to their homes

By Sugeeswara Senadhira

The Organisation for the Rehabilitation of Muslims of the North (ORMON) has appealed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to allow nearly 100,000

Muslims evicted from the four northern districts to return to their homes. They said that the LTTE action would cause irreparable damage to the good relations between the Tamil and Muslim communities.

ORMON Secretary A.C. Iqbal said that a large number of Muslims forcibly evicted by the LTTE from the North suffered immense hardships, as a large number of them lived in refugee camps and homes of friends and relatives. He pointed out that three years had passed since the entire Muslim population of Jaffna, Mannar and the other northern areas were forcibly evicted by the Tigers. He pointed out that more than 75,000 had to plead for their lives leaving their homes and valuables and most of them now lived in camps like paupers.

Mr Iqbal urged the LTTE to allow the northern Muslims to return and live in the land of their birth. "Words are inadequate to describe the enormous hardships and suffering they experienced during the last three years. Even today the overwhelming majority of them live in refugee camps," he said.

Mr Iqbal said it was not too late for the LTTE to accept the futility of their short-sighted policy. "We asked the LTTE to consider for a moment how the deprivation of the basic civic rights of one minority community by another minority community can be regarded as just", he asked.

ORMON also appealed to the LTTE to release the 37 Muslim youths under detention by the LTTE since October 1990. Mr Iqbal pointed out that the Amnesty International, Quaker International and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also had asked the LTTE to release the detained Muslim youths.

London-based *Tamil Times*, a news magazine, also made an appeal to the LTTE on behalf of the evicted Muslims of the north. It recalled that the Muslims had lived in the North for generations. In September 1990, the LTTE had forcibly driven them out. They were given just two hours notice to leave their homes. "They were herded into trucks and deposited outside the 'frontiers of Eelam'. Even by the standards of brutality that have characterised the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, one cannot find another previous example of this type of deliberate and premeditated collective cruelty perpetrated upon an entire community people", the editorial in the latest (Nov 15) issue of the *Tamil Times* said.

It has pointed out that

spokesman for the LTTE said that the Muslims were evicted to prevent communal clashes between the Tamil and Muslim communities after the killing of Tamils by Muslims in Ampara in the East in 1990. "Once the war ends and a peaceful atmosphere prevails, we will permit them to settle again in the north", the spokesman had claimed. Dismissing this statement, the *Tamil Times* said "What was perpetrated upon the defenceless Muslim civilians was inhuman and immoral in the extreme".

The editorial said by driving out the Muslims from the north and carrying out physical attacks upon the Muslims of the east, a substantial section of the Muslim community had been alienated and the case for a merged Northeast region had been seriously weakened.