

## **EASTERN PROVINCE MUSLIM POLITICS, ETHNIC CONFLICT AND DISCRIMINATIONS**

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has had a terrible effect on the Muslims. The forcible eviction of more than one hundred thousand Muslims, the destruction of more than 150 mosques and other places of worship, the confiscation of land and attacks on innocent civilians have caused fear and insecurity in the hearts of the Muslims. Therefore, the Muslims have to be vigilant in the future. Our primary concern is the safety and security of our people, rights for our areas of historical habitation, resettlement of the forcibly displaced Muslims and power sharing on the basis of internal self-determination.

The violence perpetrated against the Muslims during the last two decades has shown us that we have not succeeded in drawing attention to our problems nationally and internationally. When more than hundred thousand Muslims were forcibly evicted by the Tamil militants there was very little protest from International Human Rights Institutions. We have learnt over the years that the natural mechanisms including the Government, have failed to afford adequate protection to the Muslims. To ensure adequate protection we have no option but to make use of the protocols and instruments available to us internationally under the Charter of the United Nations. We need therefore to ensure that we represent our case in all United Nations bodies and other International fora. An active lobby must function to inform other international institutions regularly.

We are quite aware that internationalization alone will not bring practical solution to the problems faced by the Muslims in Sri Lanka. It is imperative to work out special programmes and proposals aimed at providing durable settlement of our problems and for initiating and sustaining a dialogue process with other communities and the government based on the principals of equality, mutual accommodation and pluralism.

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