

# REGISTER OF MUSLIM LANDS FORCIBLY OCCUPIED BY THE TAMILS IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

## PROJECT REPORT

A peculiar phenomenon in the North East is that a Muslim village is interspersed with a Tamil village and vice versa. Substantial share of lands owned by the Muslims are adjacent to the Tamil villages. Due to the increase of population, Muslims and Tamils are facing shortage of lands. As scarcity of lands become acute tension between the two communities increase, mainly because of the fears of expansion. As a result of this particular socio-economic factor new rules and regulation evolved among both communities, which forbade members of one ethnic group to sell the land to the other ethnic community. This is indicative of a desire by both ethnic communities to ensure their separate identities in a situation where they had co-existed for centuries.

There have been intermittent clashes over the years on comparatively trivial issues such as Muslim farmers being harassed by Tamils when they pass through Tamil areas, waylaying of vehicles, robbing of paddy and cattle belonging to the Muslims. After 1983 ethnic violence, it was found that the Tamils in the Northern and Eastern provinces have started to forcibly occupy the lands belonging to the Muslims in areas close to the Tamil villages.

A delegation of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by its leader Minister Rauf Hakeem met the LTTE delegation led by Mr. V. Pirapakaran in the Wannai on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April and discussed the Muslim land question. The leader of the LTTE gave an assurance that all lands belonging to the Muslims that are now being forcibly occupied by the Tamils would be returned to the Muslims as soon as possible.

The land rights question is one of the most critical issues which is obstructing peace and reconciliation between the Tamil and Muslim peoples in the North East of Sri Lanka. At the second meeting of the peace talks in Thailand between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2002, the LTTE has announced that they would be interested in returning the lands and the properties to the owners soon after the harvest is over. There are about 490 locations in the North East where the Tamils are forcibly occupying about 100,000 acres of agricultural lands belonging to 30,000 Muslim Families.

Mr. M.I.M. Mohideen, the Chairman of the Muslim Rights Organization, who represented in the peace talks as an advisor to SLMC National Leader Minister Rauf Hakeem, had substantive discussions with the members of the LTTE team and came to a good understanding of the problems. The LTTE was prepared to seriously address the issue and requested that a register of claims be prepared which would then be subject to verification. Subsequently Hon. Rauf Hakeem the leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress had requested the Muslims Rights Organization to prepare a register of Muslim Lands forcibly occupied by the Tamils. The Muslims Rights Organisation had undertaken the study with the following objectives.

- Systematically enumerate the land claims of the Muslims in the East by visiting each location in the 3 districts.
- Prepare a register based on field investigations on a professional basis.

The registration exercise involved the distribution of 15,000 forms and folder by 36 enumerators, 3 District Coordinators and 3 Assistant District Coordinators, who are the residents in the areas concerned. They have filled the comprehensive questionnaire with regards to individual claims the actual date of the acquisition, the manner in which the land was acquired, the extent of the land, their deeds, permit or any other documents to the land, the extent of property and livestock kept in the land are some of the other questions which have been recorded. The Muslim Rights Organization had obtained the assistance of the North East Muslim Peace Assembly, the Ullemas – Muslim Theologians and the Trustees of the Mosques in predominant Muslim areas in Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts of the Easter Province. All forms and folders were collected, checked case by case and certified by Justice of Peace. The informations collected were fed in to the computer and documented.

Volume I: Project Report

Volume II: AM / R - Ampara District Register

Volume II: AM / DS - Ampara District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume II: AM / T - Ampara District, Title Deed Claims

Volume II: AM / P - Ampara District, Permit Claims

Volume II: AM / PLR - Ampara District, Paddy Land Register Claims

Volume III: BT / R - Batticaloa District Register

Volume III: BT / DS - Batticaloa District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume III: BT / T - Batticaloa District, Title Deed Claims

Volume III: BT / P - Batticaloa District, Permit Claims

Volume III: BT / PLR - Batticaloa District, Paddy Land Register Claims

Volume IV: TR / R - Trincomalee District Register

Volume IV: TR / DS - Trincomalee District, Divisional Secretariat Register

Volume IV: TR / T - Trincomalee District, Title Deed Claims

Volume IV: TR / P - Trincomalee District, Permit Claims

Volume IV: TR / PLR - Trincomalee District, Paddy Land Register Claims

The project was funded by the USAID – OTI and covered a period of seven months from 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003. Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe - Chairman, Foundation for Co-existence is the Consultant.

There is no doubt that in many instances these land claims will be the subject of mediation and conflict resolution. However as a first step the register of land claims lays the basis for verification and mediation.

The resolution of the land question would be of enormous significance and will establish the basis for reconciliation and co-existence between the Tamils and Muslims. It would certainly go a long way to heal one of the worst wounds which is at the heart of the relations between the two communities.

**M.I.M. Mohideen**  
Project Director

24<sup>th</sup> November 2003

**REGISTER OF MUSLIM LANDS FORCIBLY OCCUPIED BY THE  
TAMILS IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF  
SRI LANKA**

**AMPARA DISTRICT**

	Predominate Muslim Areas	No. Cases	Extent		
			A	R	P
1	Pottuvil	730	2547	3	-
2	Akkaraipattu	660	1785	3	23
3	Addalachenai	329	1072	3	34
4	Oluvil/ Palamunai	176	559	2	24
5	Ninthavur	583	2349	-	10
6	Sammanthurai	529	2513	-	22
7	Irakkamam	428	2092	-	32
8	Kalmunai	280	1433	1	33
9	Maruthamunai	496	2364	1	30
		<b>4211</b>	<b>16718</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>

**BATTICALOA DISTRICT**

	Predominate Muslim Areas	No. Cases	Extent		
			A	R	P
1	Kattankudy	447	4084	3	35
2	Eravur	2263	12712	3	34
3	Oddamavady	1856	8415	1	37
4	Valaichenai	907	3086	1	30
		<b>5473</b>	<b>28297</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>

**TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT**

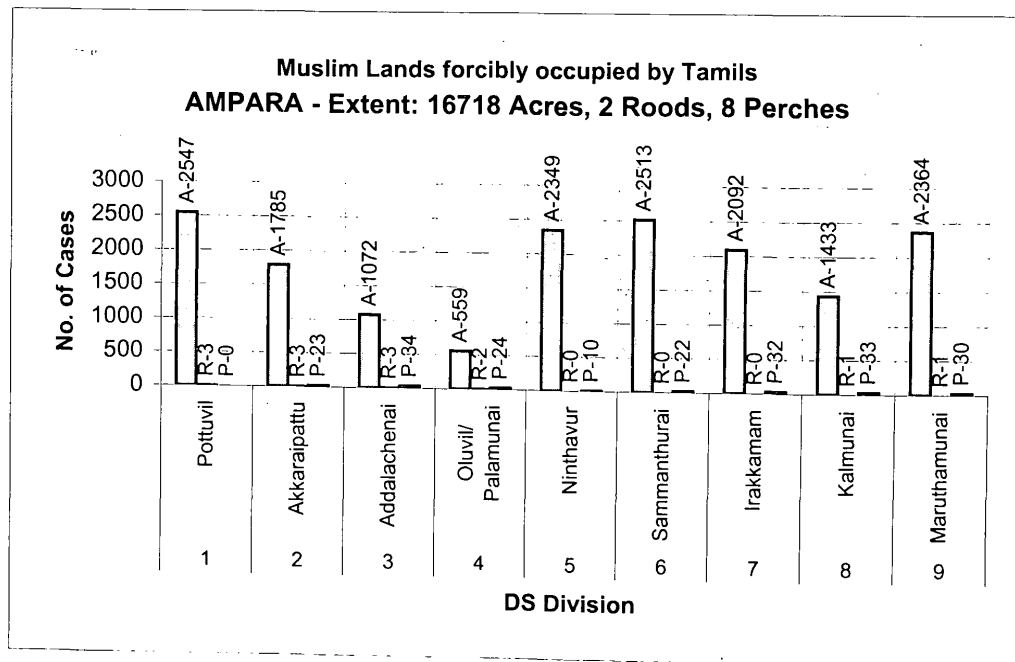
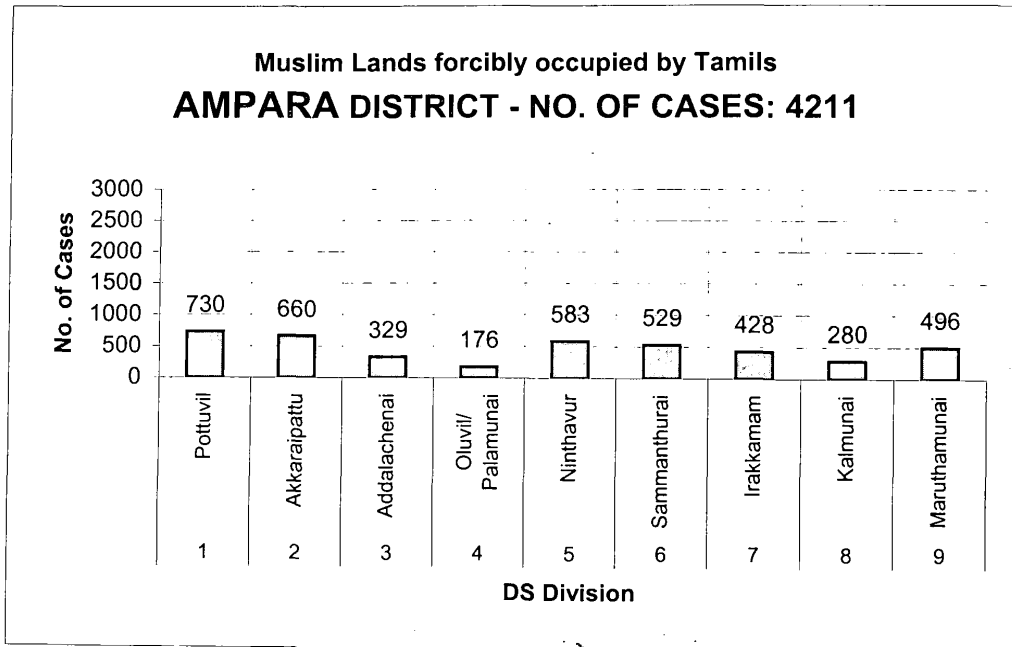
	Predominate Muslim Areas	No. Cases	Extent		
			A	R	P
1	Kinniya	2252	7209	2	6
2	Mutur	992	2577	-	36
3	Thopur	912	4617	2	17
4	Pulmoddai	566	1344	3	25
5	Morawewa	464	1343	1	22
		<b>5186</b>	<b>17092</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>

	No. of Cases	Acres	Extent Roods	Perches
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14870</b>	<b>62108</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

# AMPARA DISTRICT

## Muslim Lands forcibly occupied by Tamils

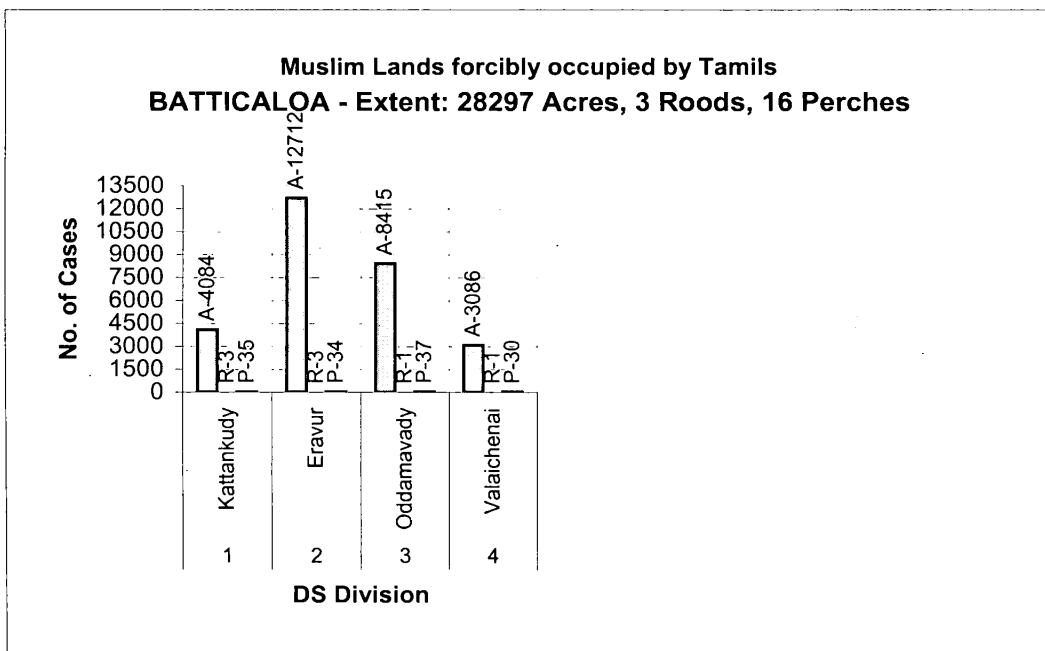
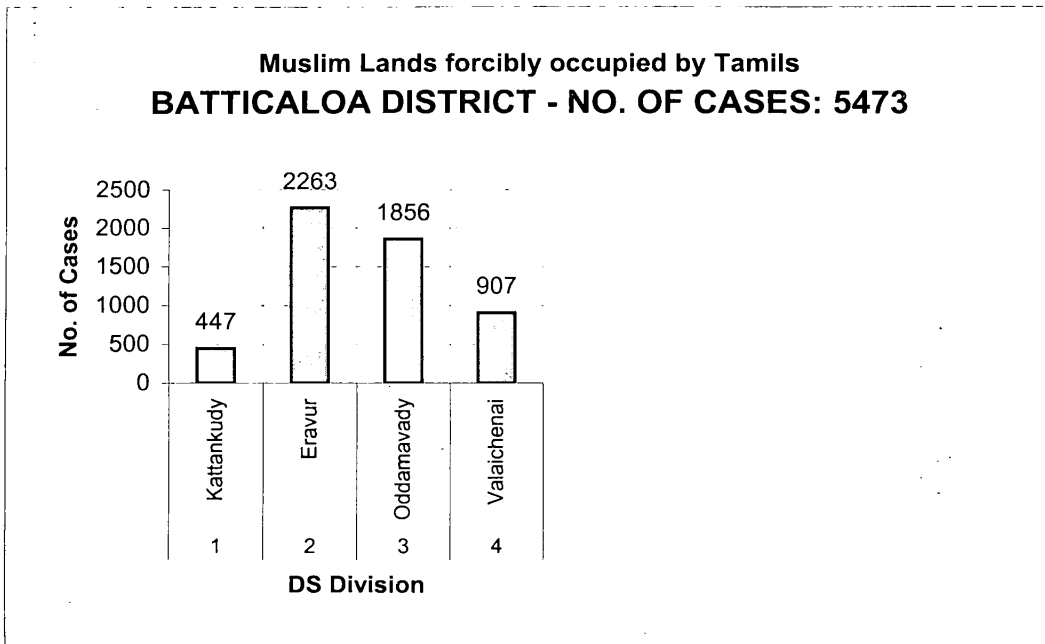
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# BATTICALOA DISTRICT

## Muslim Lands forcibly occupied by Tamils

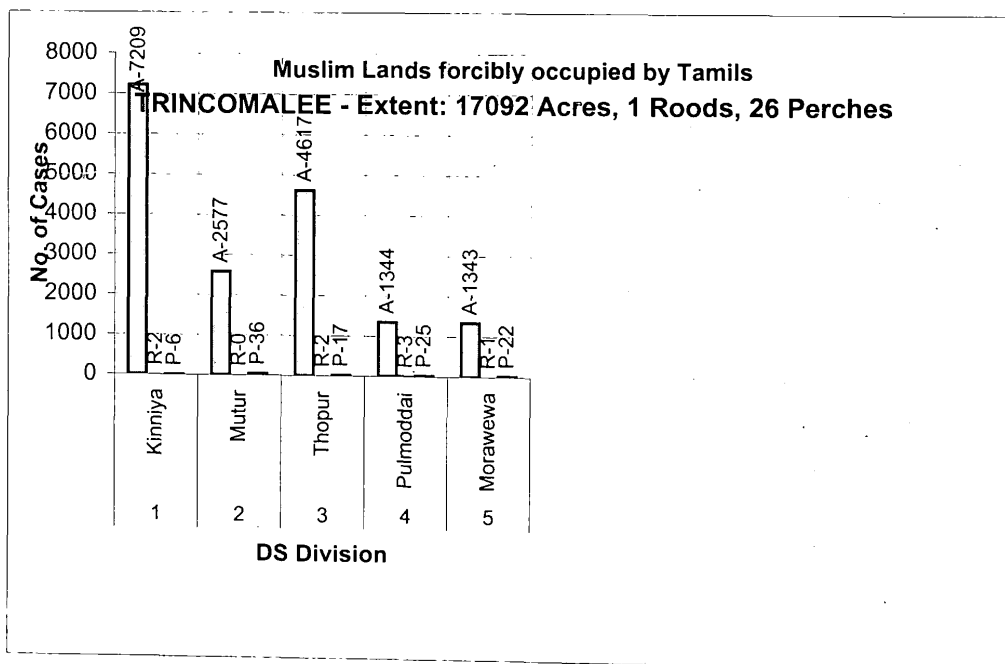
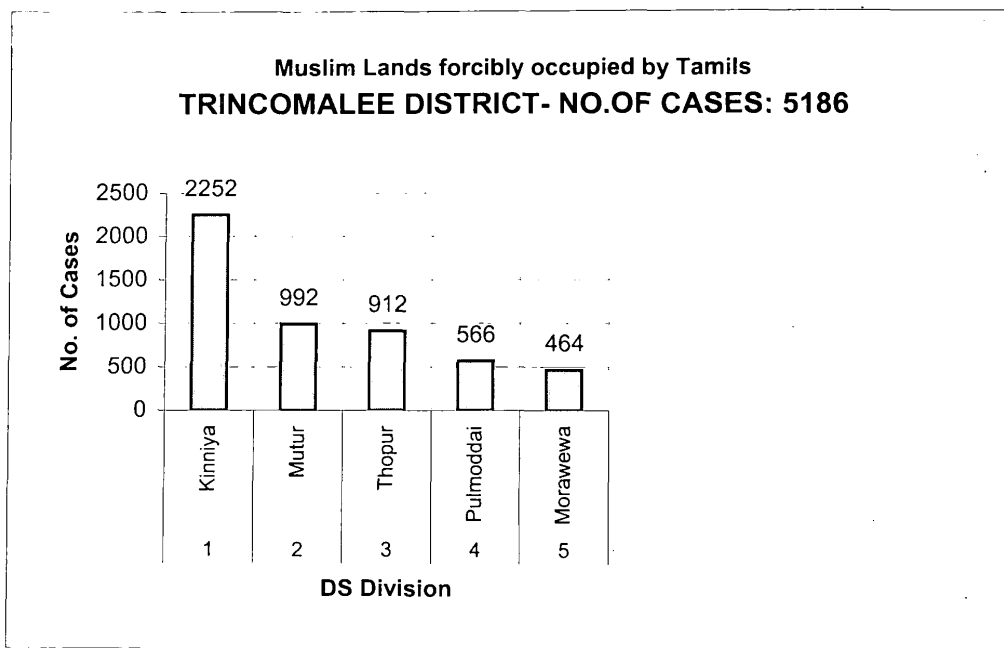
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# TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

## Muslim Lands forcibly occupied by Tamils

	Predominate Muslim Areas	No. Cases	Extrent		
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		<b>5186</b>	<b>17092</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>26</b>



# PROJECT TEAM

## PROJECT HEAD OFFICE, COLOMBO

Project Director:

Mr. M.I.M. Mohideen – Chairman/ Managing Director, Muslim Rights Organisation

Consultant:

Dr. Kumar Rupesinghe – Chairman, Foundation for Co-existence

Office Assistant/ Accountant:

Mrs. W.B.P. Devika Fernando

Computer Assistant:

Mr. H.H. Suhail Mohamed

Computer Operators:

Mr. M.R.M. Farzan Farzan

Mr. M.L. Ajwad

## AMPARA DISTRICT

District Coordinator

Mr. I.M. Ibrahim

District Assistant Coordinator

Dr. S.M.A. Jabbar

Enumerator:

1. Mr. M.H. Abdul Rahman
2. Mr. A.L.A.M. Jalaldeen
3. Mr. A. Ishaque
4. Mr. M.H. Yauqoob
5. Mr. A.G. Mohamed Rizzath
6. Mr. M.I. Mohamed Mansoor
7. Mr. M.K. Mohamed Ashar
8. Mr. A. Mohamed Rafeek
9. Mr. S.L. Mansoor

Enumerator Assistant:

1. Mr. S.M. Mohamed Shafideen
2. Mr. A. Mohamed Nisthar
3. Mr. U.K. Mohamed Jahan
4. Mr. M.I. Mohamed Ihsan
5. Mr. A.H. Mohamed Hismy
6. Mr. A. Mohamed Nawas
7. Mr. U. Pakkir Mohaideen
8. Mr. U.L. Mohamed Tastakeer
9. Mr. A.H.M. Mohamed Fuath

## BATTICALOA DISTRICT

District Coordinator:  
Mr. U.L.M.N. Mubeen

District Assistant Coordinator:  
Mr. U.L.M. Mohideen Bawa

Enumerator:

1. Mr. R. Mafas
2. Mr. C. Asanar
3. Mr. A.C. Dilshan Cader
4. Mr. C.L. Issadeen

Enumerator Assistant:

1. Mr. M.I. Mohamed Rafeek
2. Mr. Y.M. Rakeeb
3. Mr. H.M.M. Aroos
4. Mr. A.L. Jawath

## TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

District Coordinator:  
Mr. M.A.C.M. Jazeem

District Assistant Coordinator:  
Mr. M.A.M. Anvar

Enumerator:

1. Mr. P.K. Muneer
2. Mr. M.K.M. Vissardeen
3. Mr. A.C. Junaideen
4. Mr. A.L. Kaizer
5. Mr. N.M.A. Majeed

Enumerator Assistant:

1. Mr. M.M. Jawath
2. Mr. M.K. Noorulla
3. Mr. M.H. Ifthikar
4. Mr. S.T. Nowfer



## **VILLAGE LEVEL ADVISORY COUNCIL – AMPARA DISTRICT**

### **Pottuvil**

1. Mr. S.M.A. Kareem Moulavi
2. Mr. I.L. Mohaideenbawa
3. Mr. M.M. Hazan
4. Mr. K.M. Hazan JP
5. Mr. M.A. Moosalebba G.S.
6. Mr. A. Alifkhan G.S.

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1. Dr. S.M.A. Jabbar
2. Mr. U.L. Uwais
3. Mr. S.H.A. Gafoor
4. Mr. Pallithambi Master
5. Mr. M.I.M. Ziyavudeen

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1. Mr. A.M.M. Jamaldeen
2. Mr. J.M Samsudeen Movlana
3. Mr. A.L. Ibralebba (Re AGA)
4. Mr. M.S.M. Raseed
5. Mr. S.M. Jifri (ACC)

### **Oluvil**

1. Mr. A.M. Ismail
2. Mr. A. Aboobucker
3. Mr. Mohaideen Pichai

### **Palamunai**

1. Mr. K.M. Haneefa
2. Mr. Mahroof (P.M.)

### **Ninthavur**

1. Mr. Jabbar ALI
2. Mr. Nazeer Ahamed
3. Mr. Manzoor (G.M.)
4. Mr. S.L. Majeed
5. Mr. A.M. Yakoob

### **Irakkamam**

1. Mr. M.L.A. Majeed (Pr)
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3. Mr. A. Ishaque
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1. Dr. Farook
2. Mr. Rizad Sareef
3. Mr. M.H. Yaqoob

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1. Mr. I.M. Muhaideen
2. Mr. U.K.M. Musajith (Eng)

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1. Mr. A. Abdul Gafoor

### **Sammanthurai**

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2. Mr. S.A. Razik (Pr)
3. Mr. Y.B. Saleem
4. Mr. I.L.M. Musthafa Moulavi

### **Central Camp**

1. Mr. A.C.A. Nazar    Central Camp

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1. Mr. A.L. Jawath LLB.
2. Mr. M. Majeed JP
3. Mr. M.B.M. Meera Shahib JP
4. Mr. M.I.M. Mohideen JP
5. Mr. Mohideen JP

### Eravur

1. Mr. Y.M.M.A. Cader
2. Mr. S.H. Abu Hanifa
3. Mr. A.R.Z. Moulana
4. M.Y. Abdul Latheef LLB.
5. Mr. T.M.M. Mohideen Bawa Moulavi

### Oddamavadi

1. Mr. S.I. Ahamed Mohideen
2. Mr. A.C. Iyobkhan
3. Mr. A. Athem Bawa
4. Mr. T.L.B Buhari
5. Mr. M.A. Rasheed

### Valaichenai

1. Mr. U.L. Ahamed
2. Moulavi A.L.M. Ismail
3. Mr. M.S. Abdul Cader
4. Moulavi M.A.C.M. Buhari
5. Mr. I.L.A. Gaffoor

## **VILLAGE LEVEL ADVISORY COUNCIL – TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT**

### **Kinniya**

1. Mr. A.C.A. Samad
2. Mr. M.S. Mahroof
3. Mr. S.M. Sali
4. Mr. M.I. Ansar
5. Mr. M.Y. Hathiyathulla
6. Mr. M.S.M. Niyas
7. Mr. A.M. Anif Lebbai
8. Mr. M.I. Raizudeen
9. Mr. A.C. Nizardeen
10. Mr. S.M. Husain
11. Mr. A.C.M. Museel
12. Mr. M.I.M. Nizar

### **Mutur**

1. Moulavi Kareem
2. Mr. A.W. Jihath
3. Mr. K.A. Rahman
4. Mr. K.M. Siraj
5. Mr. Jawabdeen
6. Mr. A. Abdeen
7. Mr. Jawahir
8. Mr. Unais
9. Mr. Ramees
10. Moulavi Harees
11. Mr. A. Fareed
12. Mr. I.M.S. Vahardeen
13. Mr. S. Raseek Fareed

### **Thoppur**

1. Mr. A.J.M.A. Safeer
2. Mr. M.M. Rafeek
3. Al Haj Buhari
4. Mr. Mappillai





Rauff Hakeem MP  
Leader, Sri Lanka Muslim Congress

Minister of Port Development & Shipping  
Minister of Eastern Development & Muslim Religious Affairs

20<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Mr. M.I.M. Mohideen,  
Chairman,  
Muslim Rights Organization,  
57, Norris Canal Road,  
Colombo 10.

Dear Mr. Mohideen,

**MUSLIM LAND QUESTION IN THE NORTH EAST**

A delegation from the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress led by me met the LTTE delegation led by Mr. V. Pirabakaran in Vanni on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2002 and discussed various matters pertaining to the problems faced by the Tamil and Muslim Communities due to the war in the North Eastern province.

Mr. Pirabakaran gave us an assurance that all lands belonging to the Muslims that are now being forcibly occupied by the Tamils will be returned to the Muslim Land owners as soon as possible. This matter was again taken up with Mr. Thamilselvan and Mr. Karuna during the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of Peace Talks in Thailand during 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2002. They agreed that this matter could be effectively implemented only if we could provide them with details of such lands that are now being occupied by the Tamils.

Since you are a Licensed Surveyor from the area and a person who has a thorough knowledge of the Muslim Land question in the North East, I wish to entrust this task of identifying and preparing an up to date list of lands in question to you.

I shall therefore be grateful if you could please take up this challenging task immediately and submit a comprehensive report at the very earliest.

Thank you,  
Sincerely yours,

**RAUFF HAKEEM MP**  
**LEADER, SRI LANKA MUSLIM CONGRESS and**  
Minister of Port Development, Shipping,  
Eastern Development and Muslim Religious Affairs.



## Muslim Rights Organization - MRO

Muslims have not resorted to arms to protect and advance our interests. Our only protection and security is in advancing our cause through international solidarity and respect for human rights. Sri Lanka is now entering a decisive moment in its history where the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE will be engaged in negotiations to end the protracted war in Sri Lanka. The question of power sharing, protection and security for the Muslims will be paramount in the minds of the Muslim community. The MRO intends to be fully involved in the debate as it sees the ongoing negotiations as a crucial component in terms of human rights protection. MRO is dedicated to promote the rights of Muslims by ensuring a systematic monitoring of the ongoing situation, establishing a documentation center and ensuring the peoples of Sri Lanka and the International community are fully informed about the situation.

### **The Mission:**

- **To protect and promote the rights of the Muslims in Sri Lanka.**

### **Objectives:**

- **To ensure peace and security for the Muslims in Sri Lanka.**
- **To ensure suitable power sharing arrangements for the Muslims in Sri Lanka.**
- **To internationalize the Muslim question by an effective lobby campaign**
- **To document the human rights violations committed against the Muslims.**
- **To ensure that positive co-existence prevails between all communities in Sri Lanka.**

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has had a terrible effect on the Muslims in the North East. In the South, Muslims have been victims of riots and pogroms. In the North East the forcible eviction of more than one hundred thousand Muslims, the attacks on the mosques and other places of worship, the confiscation of land and attacks on innocent civilians has caused fear and insecurity in the hearts of the Muslims. Muslims need to be vigilant in the future.

The Muslims have always sought to resolve issues through non-violent means. Diplomacy has been the instrument of Muslim relationships based on the principle of coexistence between all communities living in Sri Lanka during the past thousand years. Unfortunately however, the violence perpetrated against the Muslims in the last two decades has shown us that we have not succeeded in drawing attention to our problems internationally. When more than hundred thousand Muslims were forcibly evicted from the Northeast by the Tamil militants there was very little protest from International bodies. Further, the refugees did not flee to other countries and they found refuge in our own country. We have learnt over the years that the natural mechanisms including the Government, have failed to afford adequate protection to the Muslims as also the leadership of the Tamil people, who were keen to win back their rights by suppressing 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. The Charter provides for protection of minorities and several other United Nations instruments can be utilized to internationalize the Muslim question. We need therefore to ensure that we represent our case in all United Nations bodies and other International fora. A lobby also must function to inform other international institutions regularly.



While intending to reach out to the world in this manner, we are also 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 such 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.

**The Muslim community is unfortunately fractured within a competitive party politics. The unity of purpose and the cohesion of its goals are currently not manifested. Young Muslims are getting disillusioned with their political leaders and are very much concerned about their future security and ethnic rights.**

**Muslims should consider more seriously the present trend and unite irrespective of party politics to safeguard our legitimate rights in an appropriate manner. If proper safeguards are not secured now it would amount to be the biggest betrayal of not only the present generation but also those yet to be born in this country as Muslims in the future.**

**Hold fast, all together, by the (unity) rope of Allah and be not divided among yourself –**  
(Al-Quran, Chapter 3, Al-Imran, Verse 103)

The task before us is enormous. We hope that the MRO will be a torch in a confused and perplexing future. It is our belief that the best guarantee for our future lies with ourselves, through the conscious commitment to follow a path of non violence and pursuit of human rights for all.

We firmly believe that all the communities can live together in coexistence. We believe that we all have healthy traditions of cooperation and coexistence. It is only through positive coexistence that we can all live in peace and harmony. We hope that the international community will provide us with an umbrella of support and share our aspirations and grievances.

## **ACTIVITIES**

The Muslim Rights Organization will engage in the following activities:

- It will establish a documentation centre, which will systematically collect information and data on the Muslim question. This data will be obtained through an established network of information monitors.
- MRO will conform to the international standards in documentation established by the Human Rights Information Documentation, International, and HURIDOCS. We will also seek the assistance of other human rights organisations to guide us in our future work.
- It will establish a database of all relevant information with regard to the Muslim question. The database will develop a chronology of events with regard to the evolution of the Muslim question, maintain a record of media reports, and develop standard formats for the recording of human rights violations.

- A situation report will be published monthly to be sent to all relevant organisations, such as international bodies, foreign diplomatic missions, media and international and local human rights organisations.
- The Organization will also create a lobby for representing the Muslim question internationally particularly in the Human Rights Commission and also donor community and other relevant International organisations. The Organization will hold periodic seminars educating the Muslims with regard to the Muslim question.
- MRO will also work with other likeminded organisations in promoting coexistence and reconciliation in the region.
- MRO will also evolve feasible programmes and proposals intended to find lasting solutions to the problems affecting the Muslim Community and will set in motion dialogue process with organizations and leaders representing other communities and the government.
- The Organization will have an Advisory Council, which would consist of eminent human rights and peace activists as well as International dignitaries in order to achieve all its objectives, MRO will also develop and expand a civil society base, which could take forward initiatives on the Muslims questions.

**Mr. M. I. M. Mohideen,**  
Chairman / Managing Director

**Mr. M.D.M. Vazeer,**  
Director

**Mr. M. Ansar Jabir,**  
Chairman, Advisory Council

**Subscribers:**

**Dr. A.M. Jameel,** Kalmunai

**Mr. M.M. Abdul Rahman,** Kattankudi

**Dr. S.A. Jabbar,** Akkaraipattu

**Mr. U.A. Wahab,** Kattankudi

**Dr. K.M. Zahir,** Muthur

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