



Preface

The Monstrous Tidal Waves that engulfed the coastal areas of northeast and south of Sri Lanka claimed thousands of precious lives. The worst hit country in the Southeast was Indonesia where the death toll rose to over 0.2 million. The second hardest devastated country was Sri Lanka where the Government official report shows the death toll as 30,718 but the eventual figure is likely to be more.

As the confirmed death toll of Muslims from the sea invasion catastrophe topped 12,000 the real figure is likely to be more, due to a high number of persons reported missing which accounts for nearly 2,000 islands wide. Ampara, Hambantota and Galle Districts are among the most affected areas in which some coastal belt villages were entirely washed away by the rampaging waves. Over 40,000 Muslim families are displaced. The tragedy of such magnitude has caused destruction of properties in Muslim areas worth billions of rupees.

Displaced Muslims have taken refuge at schools, community centres, mosques, and relatives' houses. It appears that the government's effort to put on track relief operations in the affected Muslim areas has reached an impasse, thus Muslims are in some areas still suffering from having not even temporary sanitary and other infrastructure facilities.

The post - Tsunami relief and rehabilitation work in the devastated coastal region appears to be under way with the large scale participation of international agencies. However, the government's role in putting on the track the reconstruction

process in the Tsunami ravaged coastal areas seem to have met major obstacles, primarily due to the absence of a rational approach for relocation of the affected people. The rather ethnic based perception has further contributed to this confusion.

According to statistics around 40% of those affected by the tsunami in Sri Lanka are Muslims who have been living in the coastal regions of the East and the Down South. They accounted for 12,000 out of 30,000, the island wide death toll announced by the government. It is significant that the coastal zone accounts for as much as two thirds of the total Muslim population in the country. It means that the coastal Muslim entity is the biggest segment of the socio-political map of the Muslim community. It further accounts for a considerable economic source.

It is regrettable that the media has deliberately or otherwise, left out the Muslim dimension of the catastrophe. Muslim concerns were not given due prominence in the media. The media campaign is downplaying the enormity of the Muslim issue. It is widely criticized that government has not treated the affected peoples equally. This fact is very outstanding in reconstruction activities in the southern coastal region where nearly 5,000 Muslim lives have been claimed by the tsunami, which caused the destruction of properties worth millions of rupees. Thousands of Muslims have been languishing in several camps without enough food, medicines and other basic facilities. Muslims who are trying to resettle in their own land are still confronting threats from the side of the government bureaucracy. In fact they are deprived of their fundamental human rights. To sum up, biased and discriminatory measures are being



undertaken on the ground. This is the scenario of post tsunami Sri Lanka.

What we urgently need now in a bid to map out an effective action plan is to get a first hand account of the damage and a scientific loss assessment. Data and information are two key factors, primarily contributing to design a constructive action plan. But it is very unfortunate that Muslim organizations undertaking reconstruction work on the ground have not adequately taken this fact into account. As the assessment exercise becomes a must to redeem the society from the plight it has fallen into, MIC is heavily involved in the post Tsunami scenario in terms of collecting and disseminating information. *As national figures are collected and published by Government bodies, this report restricts itself to deaths, damages and losses occurred to Muslims or in predominantly Muslim areas, unless otherwise stated. Some figures stated in this document may defer from those quoted by the government. MIC has taken extra effort to verify such figures through independent non-governmental means and we are satisfied that our figures are correct.*

MIC has continuously been trying its best to collect information and data on every aspect of the destruction. While we run a website (muslimguardian.com) with fresh updates and findings, our documentation process is also in progress. MIC Sri Lanka has updated news items including the latest information on the tsunami's impact on an area basis as well as on a district basis.

We are pleased to publish this interim report on the post Tsunami impact on the life of Muslims of Sri Lanka. Complete information is yet to arrive mainly due to practical impediments in the way of collecting information. We will continue to collect information from the ground with a view to publishing a full report on the disaster shortly.

With a high sense of responsibility, MIC was very keen on maintaining the authenticity and accuracy of information in its interim report. Most of the information has been received from our own reporters network and fact finding missions in the field. It is notable that the data on which this report is based has been authenticated by government officials and Mosque officials in the Tsunami affected areas.

We take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Coordinating Centre for Relief and Rehabilitation (CCRR), Muslim People Action Forum (MPAF), Al-Muslimath, YMMA, MFCD, Sri Lanka Jamath-e-Islami, Al-Kafala, Human Care Foundation, Jammithush Shabab, Ceylon Baithul Mal and all other organizations and individuals who have supported us and cooperated with us in numerous ways in preparing and publishing this report

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