

Sri Lanka's East turns into a hell hole as Pillaiyan runs amok

Munza Mushtaq in Colombo, December 24, 2007, 10.55 p.m.. TamilEela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) Deputy Leader Pillaiyan and his cadres are running riot in the Eastern Province, especially in Batticaloa, turning the entire district into a virtual hell hole for the civilians living there, highly placed sources disclosed, The Nation newspaper reported on Sunday.

Grave atrocities, including murder, abductions, extortion and land grabbing continue unabated in the east, with civilians living in Batticaloa having to bear the major brunt. Also, the activities of Pillaiyan and his cadres have now even begun to spread to Ampara.

“Pillaiyan, who has now been nicknamed ‘Billa’ (child snatcher), took over the TMVP leadership after virtually overthrowing its founder, renegade LTTE leader Karuna Amman, who is now in British custody. However, Pillaiyan’s rhetoric to put an end to all atrocities committed before his time, now appears to be an utter farce, with reports emanating from the eastern districts disclosing that Pillaiyan’s activities are as bad as Karuna’s, if not even worse,” sources from the east, who spoke on condition of anonymity claimed.

They also claimed that the situation in the east at present is far worse before the province was ‘liberated’ from the LTTE by the government. The situation has become extremely severe that even civilians who are harassed by the Pillaiyan gang have now stopped complaining to the police, as law enforcement officers also turn a blind eye to the growing phenomenon.

The weekly reports from the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission confirm

the number of atrocities committed by the present TMVP leadership and his cadres with the group allegedly involved in at least 18 abductions during first week of December. SLMM Spokesman Pia Hansson told The Nation, “We have noticed a large number of killings and abductions in the east and we are concerned about this trend.”

Sources from the province charged that Pillaiyan cadres wear half masks and enter houses at night to take away valuables and warn the victims if they utter a word, they will have to face the consequences.

The Pillaiyan problem has also affected the Muslims in the province, with sources claiming that Pillaiyan is now encroaching into the lands that belong to Muslim civilians by force and is settling his supporters in those lands.

However, when The Nation contacted TMVP Spokesman Azad Moulana, he slammed the SLMM charging that the Mission was only making baseless allegations against his party, but at the end of the day, never produced any proper proof. “If the Mission can produce us the evidence, we will hold an inquiry and then take action against any cadre who have committed wrongs,” he assured. (www.nation.lk)

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