

Maha Veerar Naal Address
மாவீரர் நாள் - National Heroes Day
National Heroes Day - November 27, 1996

During our long journey towards liberation [we have crossed rivers of fire](#). It is our commitment to our cause that sustained us during these violent upheavals. The cause we have charted to fight for - [the right to self-determination of our people](#) - is right, fair and just. From the beginning up to now, we are resolutely committed to our cause. Our cause is our towering strength. It is because of our firm commitment to our cause that we have our importance, individuality and history"

'நான் உயிருக்குயிராக நேசித்த தோழர்கள், என்னோடு தோளோடு தோள் நின்று போராடிய தளபதிகள் நான் பல்லாண்டு காலமாக வளர்த்தெடுத்த போரளிகள் களத்தில் வீழும் போதெல்லாம் எனது இதயம் வெடிக்கும். ஆயினும் சோகத்தால் நான் சோர்ந்து போவதில்லை. இந்த இழப்புகள் எனது இலட்சிய உறுதிக்கு மேலும் உரமட்டியிருக்கின்றன.'

My beloved people of Tamil Eelam,



Today is a day of veneration. It is on this day we venerate and pay our respects to our heroes who adorn our temple of freedom as thousands of shining flames of liberty.

Today is not a day of mourning to weep for the dead nor a sad day to plunge into sorrow. Today is the sacred day of our martyrs.

Today we remember and venerate our fighters in our hearts who have sacrificed their precious lives for a noble cause. Today we salute them for their heroism and supreme sacrifice.

The price we pay for our liberation in terms of great sacrifices is invaluable. The sacrifices made by our heroes for the cause of our people to live with dignity and sovereignty are unparalleled in the history of the world. An epic of heroism unique in history has been created on our soil.

The freedom struggle of the Tamils has been a raging inferno for a long time. [Several forces have joined hands with our enemy in a continuous effort to extinguish this fire of freedom](#). As a consequence, we have been facing various crises and set-backs at different times. We are compelled to struggle alone against formidable forces without support or assistance from anywhere. Therefore, the price we pay for our freedom is immense. It is our martyrs who have paid with their lives to protect and preserve the flame of national freedom.

During our long journey towards liberation we have crossed rivers of fire. It is our commitment to the cause that sustained us during these violent upheavals. The cause we have charted to fight for the right to self-determination of our people is right, fair and just. From the beginning up to now, we are resolutely committed to our cause. Our cause is our towering strength. It is because of our firm commitment to our cause we have our importance, individuality and history.

The higher ideals of other Tamil groups could not withstand the political upheavals that swept Tamil Eelam. But no force could break our will.

The [Indian military occupation of Tamil Eelam](#) posed a major challenge to our determination. At that historical conjuncture when we were hard pressed by the military supremacy of a world power, we fought with fierce determination without giving up the cause. During that dangerous situation, determination became our ultimate weapon. It was by that moral power we were able to confront a great military power of the world.

We are now facing a new challenge, [a new war of aggression](#). Our historical enemy, Sinhala Buddhist Chauvinism, has taken institutional form in the guise of Chandrika's regime and has been conducting a genocidal war against the Tamil nation.

Having mobilised the full military might of the Sinhala nation, it has occupied the historical lands of the Tamils in the North.

The central strategic objective of this aggressive war was to destroy the military strength of the LTTE by utilising several divisions of troops and massive fire power. But the Sinhala army has failed to achieve this military objective.

The grand strategy of the army was to unleash large scale conventional modes of battles in the Jaffna Peninsula, a territorial region surrounded by sea and extremely disadvantageous to us geographically. The plan was to bog us down in the Peninsula and to destroy our military potential. We were aware of this nefarious strategy.

Subsequently we organised a counter plan to fight back effectively the advancing columns and make strategic movement of our forces so as to preserve our military strength from annihilation. As a consequence, the strategic objective of the armed forces in the battles of Jaffna turned out to be a fiasco.

In the conduct of the war it becomes a necessary condition for a liberation movement practising the art of guerrilla warfare to make strategic withdrawals and to loose areas of control. This cannot be categorised as a military defeat but can be regarded as a temporary set-back. By preserving our military power and our determination, we could launch counter offensive operations at any place and at any time chosen by us when the right objective condition prevails. By such manoeuvres we could inflict heavy damage on the enemy's military power and even regain lost territories.

This strategy is best exemplified at the battle of Mullaitivu where we inflicted heavy casualties on the army and recaptured the territory. This success was possible because we retained our military power.

This aggressive war that has been launched in the guise of a "war for peace" and as a "war for the liberation of the Tamils" has seriously disrupted the peace of the Tamils, [reduced them to refugees](#), as subjugated people, destroyed their social and economic existence and brought them intolerable suffering. Though the Government of Chandrika has been cheating the world with its [theory of peace](#), in practice it is conducting a brutal war against the Tamil people.

Jaffna Peninsula has been transformed into an open air prison. Having dismembered the region into different security zones with defence bunds, barbed wire fences and innumerable

check-points, this famous historical land of the Tamils has been brought under the rule of military terror.

[The incidents of arrests, detention, torture, rape, murder, disappearances and the discovery of the disappeared in mass graves reveal that a covert genocidal policy is practised in the army controlled areas.](#)

The military atrocities occurring in the occupied areas and the anti-Tamil persecution taking place in the South have exposed the real racist face of the Government. Compared to previous Sinhala Governments, it is Chandrika's regime which has inflicted a deep wound in the soul of the Tamil nation.

From the beginning we realised the Government of Chandrika would not do justice to the Tamils nor would it resolve the Tamil national problem. We were deeply dismayed when her Government adopted [an intransigent and bellicose attitude during peace talks with the LTTE](#). The talks ended inconclusively when the Government refused to grant even meagre concessions to the urgent day-to-day needs of the Tamils and gave primacy to the interests of the military establishment.

Since the Government believed in military supremacy, in military approaches and in a military solution, it did not treat the peace talks seriously and deliberately created conditions for the failure of the negotiating process. From the beginning until today the deepest aspiration of this Government is to achieve military hegemony in the Tamil homeland and to subjugate the Tamils under military domination.

This approach pre-dominated by militarism and chauvinism has complicated the ethnic conflict and firmly closed the doors for peace. It has aggravated the armed conflict. It has seriously disrupted the Sri Lankan economy. In totality, Chandrika's Government has been caught up in an insurmountable crisis. The international community is now beginning to realise that Chandrika's "war for peace" is not only destroying the Tamil national life but also plunging the entire island into a major catastrophe.

To distract the world's criticism from her hard-line military approach and for the escalation of the war, Chandrika is sending peace signals. While issuing statements that she is prepared for talks with the LTTE through third party mediation she has also laid down ridiculous conditions that we should surrender arms before talks. No liberation movement with self-respect could accept such humiliating conditions.

Having unleashed an intense propaganda campaign categorising [our liberation movement as a "terrorist" organisation](#) and our freedom struggle as "terrorism" this Government is making every effort to ban our organisation locally and abroad.

Furthermore, the Government is making [massive military preparations](#) to escalate the war and issuing statements that the LTTE would be wiped out within next year. In these circumstances, we have grave doubts about Chandrika's peace gesture. We are not opposed to peace, nor are we opposed to a resolution of the conflict by peaceful means.

We want an authentic peace, a true, honourable, permanent peace, a condition in which our people can live with freedom and dignity in their own land without external

coercion determining their own political life. We have grave doubts whether the forces of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism will allow such a peaceful life to the Tamil people.

Chauvinistic Sinhala Governments committed to repression and military solutions will not resolve the Tamil national problem by peaceful means. [Historically the Tamils have learned this lesson](#). We do not believe that Chandrika's regime, which is the guardian and the political representative of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism will bring authentic peace to the Tamils by resolving the ethnic conflict. Because of this distrust we sought third party mediation.

We have made statements a year ago, calling for international mediation if possibilities of peace talks arise in the future. At that time, the Government of Chandrika did not favourably consider our suggestion. Instead, it escalated the aggressive war in the North, intensified the ethnic conflict and undermined the conditions of peace.

The Government may entertain a notion that it has gained military hegemony by the occupation of Tamil lands and that this position could be used as a mode of pressure to its advantage in the peace talks. As far as we are concerned, peace talks under such conditions cannot be free and equal.

We cannot expect justice from a Government that attempts to barter the rights of our people with military power as its trump card. It is for this reason, we want peace talks to be held in a congenial environment free from the pressure of military aggression. Our position is that political negotiations should be preceded by creating conditions for de-escalation, withdrawal of troops and normalcy. We are prepared to talk and reach an agreement on these issues.

We do not expect Chandrika's Government to accept our just position. [For years the forces of Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism believed in and practised a policy of military domination and oppression](#). Chandrika's regime too, is functioning under the shadow of military power. Therefore we have serious doubts whether Chandrika's Government will give up the policy of military domination and resolve the conflict on the basis of moral power and justice.

We cannot gain our rights by pleading with the Sinhala rulers. We must fight and win our rights. History has not recorded any liberation struggle that has won without fighting, without bloodshed, without death and destruction, without sacrifices.

Therefore let us struggle. Let us struggle facing set-backs as challenges and victories as inspirations, let us continue to struggle with confidence under any difficulties and hardships. Let us struggle with unfailing determination until we drive the occupation army from our soil, until we achieve the liberation of our nation.

Let us remember and venerate our martyrs today with a solemn pledge that we will wipe the tears of our beloved ones who are suffering under military occupation and repression.