

LTTE officials work with Sri Lankan government after civil war

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Former Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) member Selvarasa Pathmanathan's career exemplifies how the Sri Lankan government has used Tamil nationalists to police the Tamil working class, after it militarily crushed the LTTE in 2009 at the end of the Sri Lankan civil war.

Pathmanathan, a founding member, was the LTTE's chief procurer of arms and fundraiser. In the final months of the war, LTTE leader Vilupillai Prabhakaran appointed Pathmanathan as LTTE head of international affairs.

In this position Pathmanathan negotiated with intelligence agencies and state representatives of Western countries, including Norwegian peace mediator Eric Solheim, over a possible surrender of the LTTE leadership. Publicly he issued impotent appeals to the US and other imperialist powers to intervene to stop the war.

The Sri Lankan military overran the last plot of land held under the control of the LTTE, murdering the entire top leadership, including Prabhakaran.

The LTTE initially denied reports of Prabhakaran's death, claiming he was in a safe place and would "appear" in a "suitable" time. Pathmanathan later abandoned this statement and confirmed the death.

He appointed himself as the leader of the LTTE, renouncing armed struggle and declaring that the organisation would continue to fight for self-determination. He announced the formation of the so-called Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), appointing New York-based constitutional

lawyer Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran as interim leader. Later Rudrakumaran became the prime minister of the TGTE.

Pathmanathan's four-month political career as LTTE leader came to a sudden end when he was apparently arrested and handed over to Sri Lankan intelligence in Malaysia. Brought to Colombo, he collaborated with the Sri Lankan government, providing information on the LTTE's overseas organisation and assets.

At his initiative, several delegations of exiled Tamil leaders and businessmen, including LTTE members, met with President Mahinda Rajapakse and Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapakse. With government approval, Pathmanathan set up the North East Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (NERDO), supposedly to help in the resettlement of the displaced, and rehabilitate former LTTE fighters.

NERDO's real purpose is to use Pathmanathan's extensive contacts among the LTTE factions to convince them to collaborate with the government and transfer the LTTE's assets to Sri Lanka.

In a recent column in Sri Lanka's *Daily News*, D.B.S.Jeyaraj praised Pathmanathan's transformation, writing: "NERDO also liaises with representatives from the Global Tamil Diaspora. These representatives working on a voluntary basis have been greatly responsible for collecting and providing the bulk of funds to implement NERDO projects. These representatives are based mainly in Britain, Australia, Canada, USA, Norway, France, Switzerland, Germany and a few Middle Eastern and South East Asian countries."

Last month the Sri Lankan government officially freed Pathmanathan from protective custody. *The New York Times* reported on the release, quoting Defence Ministry spokesman Lakshman Hulugalle: “It’s a victory for us, because a Tamil leader who fought against the government is now working for the country’s development.”

Pathmanathan moved into the house of Paramu Thamilselvan, the former chief of the LTTE political wing, in Killinochchi, the former administrative capital of the LTTE-controlled areas in Sri Lanka. Media reports indicate that the government is preparing to stand him in the Northern Province elections as the chief minister next year.



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