



HERSTORIES:
*Mothers' voices
of resilience and hope*



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The word history itself highlights an inherent flaw in how we record it. It is most often 'his' story, and marginalises if not leaves out entirely, the 'herstory'. Particularly in Sri Lanka, because of the manner in which the war ended – a military solution to a conflict rooted deeply in social, political and psychological tensions – a masculine lens dominates the narrative of history. As this master narrative is reiterated and grows stronger, the ground realities of how a 26 year conflict impacted and continues to affect the lives of women and children (at times the most affected by conflict), will disappear from record. With the passing of this generation, future generations may not have access to oral histories and stories of how people lived, died and rebuilt their lives.

The Herstories Project attempts to fill this gap. By interviewing and building an archive of mothers' oral histories from across the ethnic and geographical divides, this project captures the voices of the voiceless. When history's master narratives aggregate an entire human experience of many, many people into facts and figures, it loses out on the individual stories of heroism, struggle, resilience and hope. Herstories, are intensely personal accounts of a time and a place - about the village, children, neighbours and even the dead - told through mothers' eyes because they are guardians of family history. Yet these personal narratives taken together, form a collection of peoples' histories that show the human cost of conflict.

The project has collected 275 oral histories through hand-written letters, photo essays, short video, mapping of collective memories and

other visual story telling methods. They have been collected from women who have shared their stories voluntarily from Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Moneragala, Ampara and Kurunegala (North, South and East of Sri Lanka). They have been translated into English, Sinhala and Tamil.

A sample collection of sixty stories in its original format was presented through a travelling exhibition in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and England. The entire collection is archived online at www.herstoryarchive.org and the original hand-written material has been presented to the National Archives of Sri Lanka for preservation.

This book is a collaboration between Radhika Hettiarachchi, a researcher who created and curated this project and Shanika Perera, who is a graphic designer by training. An original collection of mediated art based on the Herstories Project was first showcased at the Colombo Art Biennale in 2014. This book is part of the continuing creative partnership between the pair.

The project, and its heavy dependence on art as a vehicle for creating a space for stories that would otherwise disappear shows that understanding, acknowledgment and empathy for the other through a reflection of one's own lived experiences, can be cathartic. Over time, it can also open up opportunities for reconciliation between communities in the aftermath of conflict. The Herstories Project therefore begs the question *'can art compensate where historical record fails?'*

www.herstoryarchive.org
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The Commonwealth Foundation and The Prince Claus Fund for financial support for the original research project; The Colombo Art Biennale and Amit Jain for recognising the value of this project in using art, oral history and story-telling to build empathy, reconciliation and the preservation of memory; Shanthi Sachithanandam, Zahira Ismail and Viluthu for accepting this project under its wing, backing it unconditionally and making it happen despite the many challenges faced.

Herstories Project is grateful and honoured that these extraordinary Sri Lankan women shared their stories for the project. They are true heroes and this book is dedicated to their courage and resilience.

Kilinochchi කිලිනොච්චි கிளிநொச்சி

I was born and bred in Anuradhapura and I studied up to O/L there. Then in 1995 we lost all our property and came to Kilinochchi with my parents and brothers. We bought a plot of land and lived there.

A year after that my father died. My mother also died. Then my brothers and my uncle made a marriage proposal and gave me in marriage.

I have a daughter. I lost my husband when she was 5 years old. After that I faced severe hardships. I worked here and there to educate her. She studied up to O/L in Kilinochchi.

I have two elder brothers. They were both married and doing business. One got married in Kaithady and the other in Mannar. One of them died and the other is living.

I have witnessed with my own eyes, the riots that took place in Anuradhapura. It was an unforgettable incident. My father had a shop and he was also involved in cultivation. My mother was a good seamstress. I helped my mother in her tailoring work and played with my friends too.

I lost my father and after 5 years I returned to Kilinochchi. We lost all our properties and were economically affected.

On the 20th of August 2010 my daughter and I returned to Kilinochchi. UNHCR provided relief items. We got mats for sleeping, lanterns and some money. Our land looked like a jungle. We paid money and cleared our land. Later our wells were cleaned by an organization. We made temporary sheds out of tarpaulin and lived there. They gave relief food items. We got help for my daughter's education.

Prior to our displacement, NEAP provided financial assistance for a house under its scheme. After returning we constructed the foundation for a house and they gave us the balance money. Little by little we have built two rooms and a kitchen and are living in this house. I do not have a well. I fetch water from our neighbour's well, which is 100 meters away. It is difficult.

With regards to economic development, R.D.F. organization provided an advance of Rs. 10,000/- to put up a poultry shed, sufficient for rearing 30 birds. We got Rs. 500 for the month of December under

the Samurthi scheme. We are faced with economic problems. Please help my daughter and me.

The war began in Kilinochchi during the month of September in 2008. Artillery shelling continued and Kfir aerial attacks happened close to the welfare camps. We were safeguarding ourselves in bunkers. By the end of the month we loaded our household things in a hired vehicle and went to Vattakkachchi. From there, with the help of our relatives my child and I went to Udaiyarkattu. There we lost all our belongings and struggled for food. Shelling and aerial bombing continued and we were in the bunkers.

Inside the bunker we'd make rice and dhal to eat. While we were eating shells would land nearby. We could not go to the toilets. We would boil dhal in water and eat. Onions, garlic, tamarind, salt was not available. We would vomit.

Relief items were given to the people in Udaiyarkattu. When we went to get the relief items we saw many people who had died due to shell attacks. We were afraid and returned back without getting the relief items. We would stand in the queue to get 100 grams of sugar. One day a shell landed there and the area was completely burnt.

We were displaced into an area called Mulliwaikkal. There they provided rice gruel. One day while waiting for the gruel about 5 people were killed on the spot. During the last stage of the war, we lay in the bunker for three days without food or clothes to change.

My hope is that Tamils should have a better solution soon and good governance should prevail.

My hope is that my child should be educated well and do a respectable job. She should look after me. I wish that my child would become a teacher.

My wish is that our village would be well developed and become a prosperous one. I always want to live in my village

When my husband died, I learned many lessons. I learned to stand on my own two feet. Because I didn't have employment, I suffered. But I am grateful that my friend taught me a trade.

The encouragement provided by the organization Viluthu.

My child is my greatest strength.

Mahi and Samantha are two sisters from Malaysia, who studied in London. They are the ones who taught us a trade for self-employment.



Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



My brother joined the Army. He was 20 then. He had passed the exam. But because of the financial problems of the family, he joined the Army. He said he wanted to support parents. It was during the JVP terror period that he joined the Army. He worked in the office. An additional Rs. 300 was given to those who consented to serve in the North. So, he went to the North in order to get this extra Rs. 300.

He said that he didn't want to send his younger sisters to garment factory jobs, given the situation in the country. He said that it is only us who knew about our poverty. He told us to live with the salary he sent. He wanted to help the family. He didn't think about his own comfort. My parents did carpentry.

On the 29th January 1991, he came home. He promised to bring an almyrah made of ebony next time. He said that the war had intensified and it was uncertain when he would be able to come home next time. He bade farewell to everybody. He had written a letter to us, from the camp. But, by the time the letter was delivered home, he came home in a coffin. We called our brother Chooty. We were told by the Army that the body would be brought by 9 in the morning. The previous night, my father had dreamt my brother coming home in white clothes. Because of this dream we gave an almsgiving in his name. When we returned home after the almsgiving, my brother's body was brought home. It was not a scheduled trip that my brother had taken on that fatal day. The one who usually delivered the meals had fallen sick with fever and my brother had to leave the office and go to Padawiya carrying the food. On his way he had been shot.

My mother didn't know of his death till the body was brought home. Everybody said he was not dead, and would be coming home safe. Neighbours brought food. The photos hanging on the walls were turned. We were not told till then. Then we saw a black car coming. I can't recall anything that happened after that moment. He was 21 years old at the time of death. He was a very good person. His life was lost in vain. My brother...

My mother gets his salary. He always thought about us. We are sad about the war. My daughter is very good at her studies. I wish she will pass her exams well and gain

a good education. I live in my brother's house. In Ranawiru village. This house is precious to us. We have the blood of my brother. Whatever said by whomever, my brother attains merit. Although he is dead, he looks after us. My mother's surgery was also done using his money. He may attain merit. His story should be written in golden letters. It is because of my brother that my children study now.

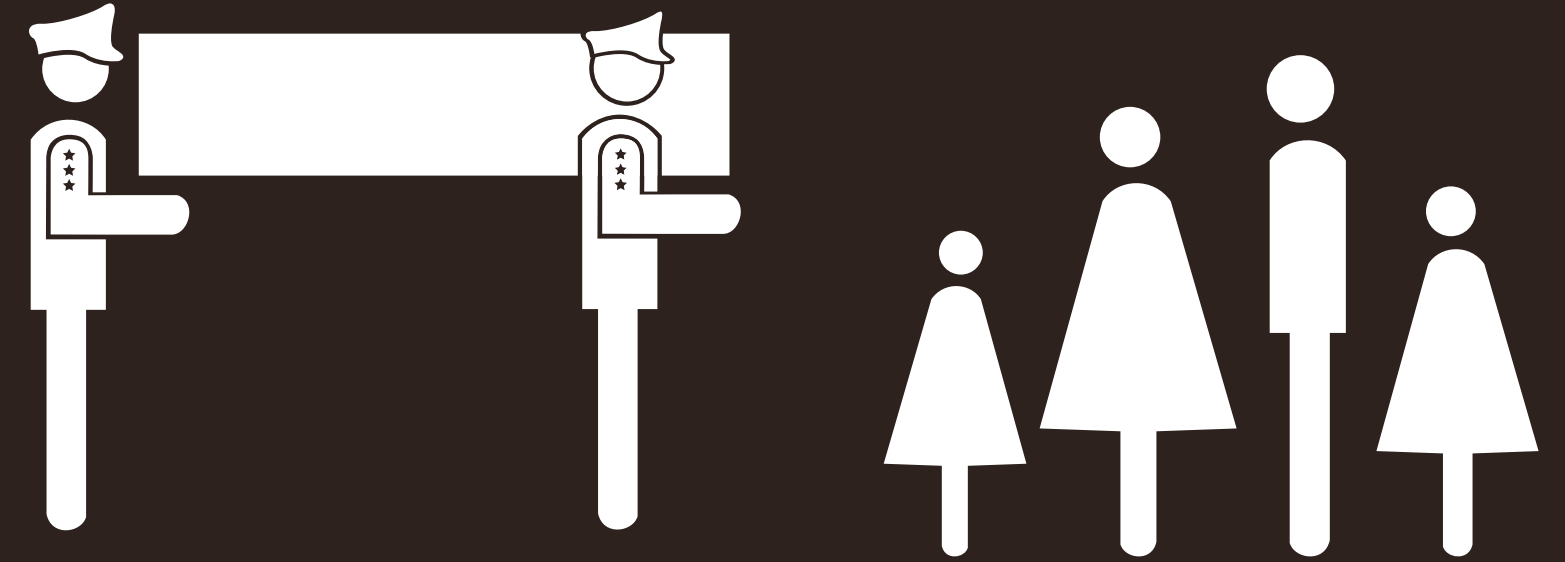
Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Kurunegala

කුරුමෙහි

குருநாகல்



Mullaitivu

මුලතිවු

முல்லைத்தீவு

My name is Kiruthika. My native place is Point Pedro. I have 3 brothers and 1 sister. My father's name is Arulrajah and my mother's name is Jeyakumari. Our father does not provide us food. He consumes alcohol and assaults our mother.

We go to our aunt's (mother's elder sister) place and tell her about our grievances. The love she showed towards us is the one thing that makes us live happily today.

She is our life and without her help, we would have been on the streets. Our food and education are all what she gives us.

As at present we are living on the plot of land provided by Sri TELO. I live together with our maternal grandfather and grandmother, uncle and aunt and their children (brother and sister) and my own elder brother, younger brother and younger sister. Because our difficult living conditions my mother has gone to work in Saudi Arabia. My brother, sister and I are studying in the grades 8, 10 and 11 respectively.

Since my mother is not with us, I am writing this on behalf of her. The family with which I am living, looks after me well. Their expectation is to fulfill my dreams.

The earnings of my brothers and the money sent by my mother is helping us a lot. However the income that we get is not sufficient for our school education and external classes. As a result of the Indian army's attacks earlier, our uncle is unable to any work. RWF organization is helping us for our education.

The continuous sound of explosions and the fearful sight of people were running helter-skelter used to horrify me. The sounds of people screaming and weeping, and my school mates becoming wounded made me so sad. There was bloodshed everywhere. My mother carried my brother and myself and ran.

We were hungry and severely affected by sleeplessness, starvation and sickness. My mother would pull us onto her lap and weep. After hearing that bread was being distributed in a co-op society, we went there at 1.00 a.m. to stand in the queue to get bread. Sometimes elders will come and chase us and they will get the bread. Then we will go back to our mother crying. At that stage even our relatives were not helping us.

Once while returning after shopping there was a deafening sound of explosions. My mother carried us and ran with the sound of explosion behind us. She carried us into an old ruined building and held us close to her. My mother's wish was to educate us and make us good children. She was telling this even during the war. Our mother's state made us feel very sad. We were always posed with a question whether we would survive.

I wish that, peace should prevail in our country, the people of this country should co-exist and live in solidarity without any differences. The grievances of all the people in our village should be addressed. I hope that the sorrows of all the affected children like me and that of the affected population will be overcome in the future, and people can live happily again.

I hope that my dreams will come true one day and the situation of my family will improve. I will support my brother and sister in all their difficulties. I have not lost hope. I will fulfill all of the expectations of our family and make them happy. My sister (daughter of my aunt) has been very helpful towards all my attempts.

Our village should have good roads, irrigation facilities and all the people should be provided with proper houses. The people of our village should also have the right attitude.

I pray that all the difficulties in our family would be over. My mother, younger brother, sister and elder brother should live happily. They should be educated and be good citizens of the country. They should keep in mind that there is nothing that is impossible. They should think that it is possible.

The most important person in my life is my aunt (my mother's sister). Her advice was the driving force for our improvement. The fatherly affection shown by our uncle was very helpful.

The support given by my elder brother and sister were very encouraging that we never lost hope. The support provided by them has really changed us.

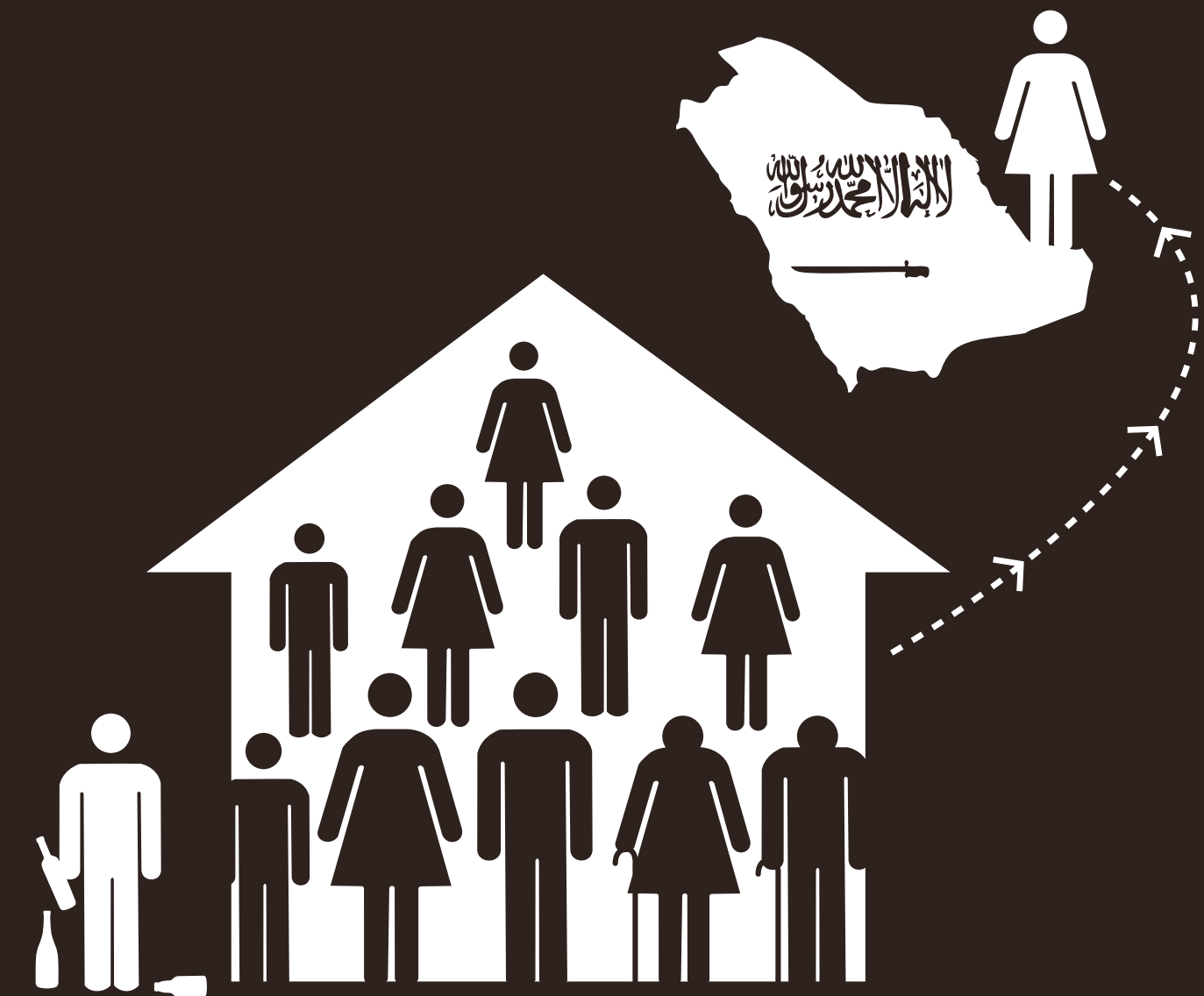
We could easily pursue our studies as a result of the assistance provided by the Sri TELO. We had to stay in the school

at times, when there were no buses. I was a little frustrated because of this.

As a result of the assistance provided by the Sri TELO we were able to get a land and construct a house for us. We live there today.

I am grateful for the love and affection shown by our family members, their encouragement and attitude and the help from our mother.

I receive some consolation by writing this today.



Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Asallamu Alaikkum

My Dear Aunt,

The story which I am going to describe, is full of undeniable and unforgettable incidents and tells of a period of great challenges during 1990. Yes, I am going to tell you about few things which may provoke your thinking.

In 1990 during the peak of terrorist activities, we were so afraid to come out of our houses. Families would meet together in a house and remain there in utmost fear. There was no electricity supply at that time and we all were in the dark. What to do, our fate was such!

One day at about 6.30 p.m a group of thugs and rogues came into the house and dragged our cousin outside the house. She was crying and shouting in agony. A man who was feeding his children in the house opposite ours heard this scream and came out of his house to get her released. She escaped from them and found refuge in our mosque. She was unconscious and her face was bleeding. The man, a father of 3 children, who came to save her was lying in a pool of blood with gun shot wounds. The thugs had killed that man and ran away. There happened, not one or two incidents like this, but so many. One day a fight broke out between the Army and the LTTE, and the time was about 8.30 p.m. In fear, we converged in the mosque and the school. We could hear the sounds of the guns and shell explosions all around. We were plunged into untold fear and horror. That day could be termed as a black day and there should not be a day like that in future.

The following day the villagers and prominent people met and decided to leave the place because our lives would be under threat if we continued to remain there. All the villagers left the place like refugees with whatever they were wearing leaving behind most of their belongings. We all started walking with each of us carrying a shopping bag of things, and we reached Ikkirikollawa through Vavuniya. There we saw a lot of people who had come from Jaffna and Mannar as refugees. We stayed there for about a week with severe hardships, without proper food and drinking water and sanitation facilities. After two weeks we were all taken to a place called Pamunugama in the electoral division

of Kekirawa in the Anuradhapura district. Initially we were staying in a school there but later all the villagers were very helpful to us. Furthermore they had gone to the hill side to cut the required timber and poles for us to put up temporary sheds. We spent nearly three and a half years in those huts. Our children's education was affected. After living with severe hardship in that place, we all returned to our native place in 1994.

Our prosperous and beautiful village was completely ruined. Our houses, bunkers and jungles had been completely destroyed by shell attacks. We received a small amount of money as resettlement allowance from the Government. The NGOs too provided cooking utensils and other essential things. However these were insufficient for us to live there. We did not receive any more help other than that. We are faced with so many difficulties and we continue to live here. These things I am telling you. Let me know of your experiences briefly. We shall meet again.

Thanks

Sincerely

Daughter of your elder sister

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Vavuniya වවුනියා வவுனியா



Moneragala

මොනරාගල

மொணரா கலை

I was born in Okkampitiya. Mother is from Kurunegala and father is from Bemmulla. They had come to live here after the marriage.

I am Sinhala Buddhist. I do farming for a living.

I have three children. Two sons and one daughter.

I did A/Ls in Okkampitiya Maha Vidyalaya.

My husband's name is Thilakarathne. He used to work in a mine and those days, he stayed at my parent's place. We fell in love with each other and with the blessings of parents, we got married in 1987.

Father worked in the farm as a labourer. He died in 1986. I was 14 when my mother died.

I am 49 years old. I live in Galpeella village. I live in a two roomed house. Myself, my son, my daughter, my daughter-in-law and the grandson live in this house together.

This time we are cultivating corn. Since we have enough rain this time, they will grow well. The land is not a large one. But I cultivate it on my own.

My son has a three wheeler. He joined the Commando Regiment in 2007. He left the Army after brother's death. So, he doesn't receive a salary from the Army now.

I always remember my deceased son. I feel sad then. But when I see the little baby, I feel happy.

My younger son joined the Army during the war. He still says that if there is a war again, he will join the Army. He likes it.

He feels that after the war ended, ex-soldiers are not treated with dignity or status. Therefore he prefers to live with the war.

My daughter could not bear the sorrow after the death of her brother. She could not sit for the exam. Now she is waiting for a job. Sometimes, she may sit for the exam next year. She passed O/Ls with good results.

My son joined the Army when he turned 19. He joined the Army because of the financial problems family was facing after father's death. That day, my daughter and

I were in the house. The neighbours had received the news of his death and they came to our house. I was told that my son had been shot and he would be brought home. Later I got to know that he has died.

My son was serving in Uliyankulama, Killinochchi, at the time of his death.

My son's tomb is in the public cemetery. I wanted to build it in my own land. But my sister didn't let me do it. She thought that every time I saw the tomb I would think of him and get depressed.

Since this a border village, those days we lived in fear. LTTE killed three people very close to our house.

It was raining that day. I saw it with my own eyes. I saw two people were sitting by the road eating. Tigers hacked them and another girl to death. The plates they were eating rice from were full of holes. The rice had become red with their blood. I was terrified and very sad.

Another incident happened close to my house. I saw the lady's bloody hand prints on the walls after she had been hacked. Blood had become thick. To get dressed to go to the hospital, I had to pick her clothes through a window with the aid of a stick.

We didn't even light a lamp those days. We closed the doors early in the evening, and didn't open it for anything.

Our village should be provided electricity.

A job centre should be established for the youths in the village.

There should not be problems between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in future.

I wanted to fix the roof of my house. I wish my daughter gets a permanent job. Now we live on my son's salary. I am worried for my daughter's future.

I wish there will never be another war in this country.

Samurghi Development Officer is very important to me

My elder sister and her son are important people in my life. My son, daughter and daughter in law are important people to me.

My neighbours are the ones who helped me most. The Grama Sevaka officer is important to me.

Army officers helped a lot for the funeral of my son. Last year also they came and gave us a clock. They occasionally visit us.

I am thankful for my courage to live alone with the children.

I receive the salary of my deceased son. It is a great strength for me.

It is good that I can release the pressure in my mind by telling my story.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Assalamu Alaikum

Dear Friend,

I am well here. How are you? I'd like to share my sad story with you.

When I was an 11 year old girl, I was naughty, I would usually play with my friends. I have 5 brothers and 3 sisters. I am the last in my family.

One day when I was coming after school, I stopped to play in the jungle with my brother and friends. Then suddenly we heard the sound of shooting and saw helicopters in the air. We screamed in fear. Then my mother came there quickly and took us with her. After that we were afraid of what might happen at any moment. At night time, the men in our village didn't sleep in their homes. They guarded the females and children by keeping watch all night under the trees. I couldn't understand why our lives went on like this.

In 1990 my father and the neighbours decided that nothing further was going to happen here and so decided to sleep in our homes again. For the first time in two months we all slept together. Then early one morning someone rapped on our door loudly. I hid behind the door in fear while my mother opened the door. It was my brother, carrying the one and a half month old child of my elder sister. Then he wailed "Are you sleeping? The whole village has been destroyed, our sister's family has also been killed. Don't shout, for a long time I have been searching for you." Then mother and father ran to the place where my sister was killed. I held onto the injured baby and kept him with me. The baby's hand was bleeding. Then he was taken to the hospital. No one was at the village. Then my mother came back and took me with her. On our way we saw the dead bodies of my sister, her husband, their 2 sons, 2 daughters and neighbours. We wandered here and there as refugees with unbearable sadness.

Later we built a small hut close to one of our relatives' homes and lived there with difficulties. Eventually we went back to our own place. Everything in the house was robbed and the house was also damaged. My father seems like he has gone mad since all this violence happened.

I stopped my studies as I have no support.

So when I was 13 and a half years old (in 1992), I went to a foreign land as a house maid. My age was shown as 26 years in my passport. I have borne all the disturbances that happened to me there because of our poverty. I worked there 2 ½ years and returned with Rs. 20,000. Then I bought a sewing machine and earned a living. It was not enough to manage the day to day life of our family. So, I went abroad again. When I came back I got married in 2000.

Now I have 4 children of my own. At this time I lost my father. Now my husband, 4 children, my old mother and I are all living with great difficulty. Our village is also still under developed.

Who will help our village and our family survive? This really is the big question.

Yours faithfully,

Rufiyah

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Batticaloa

මඩකලපුව

மட்டக்களப்பு



I am 66 years old, Sinhala and Buddhist.
I live in Panama. This is my testimony.

In 1965 Kiribanda Sellabandara married me. We were farmers but we were very happy. Then we went to Thadagodamala jungle area to live. There we started cultivating maize and Kurakkan to make a living.

We had a son and then a daughter. A few years later, this became a house of five children – 2 sons and 3 daughters. We lived in a cadjan hut with many difficulties. My elder son and last son were killed on the same day by terrorists. On 25.10.1995 my husband's elder brother also was killed by terrorists. Later my husband's younger brother too was killed by them.

We had to face many problems and difficulties. So we collected honey from the jungle and sold it to make ends meet. One day my husband went to collect honey as usual. On 02.09.2008 my darling husband disappeared without a trace. I looked for him everywhere. We couldn't find even the body. We filed the case in the court. According to the court order the death certificate was given. We never received any financial support. Even now, I am sad and cry for him. Only this small hut is my property. Nobody is here to look after us. So if anyone can help us, it will be a meritable thing.

Yours faithfully,

Gnanawathi

*Scan the QR code below for Sinhala
and Tamil translations of this story.*



Ampara
අම්පාර
அம்பாறை



Dear friend,

I cannot find words to describe my situation. The trauma of displacements continue. The memory of the year 1998 still triggers intense fear in my mind. During the time of displacement I lost my husband. On 15-08-1998 I travelled with my 4 children in the midst of heavy artillery shelling, to Wattakachchi, Viswamadu, Tharumapuram and Thevipuram. We were carrying the household things as well. My eldest son who was looking after the whole family was injured in the leg when a shell exploded. He was taken to the Kandy hospital. We went to the camp.

I had no way of contacting or getting any news about my son. When I cried my other children comforted me. On the 20th April 2009, we were taken to the camp. In February 2010 we were resettled in our own village. All facilities including food, clothing, health, water and educational facilities have been provided. For a few months we received the relief food items. They provided money to help us to put up a house. The money was not enough to complete the work and we had to borrow money to build the house completely. Now we have a house but there are other problems like electricity. The children use bottle lamps to study at night. I obtain water from a well without any side walls. Every year I have to clean this well and clear the sand which keeps on falling inside and this costs money. I don't know who will do this for me. Now the cost of living has risen. We have no kerosene oil and we have no relief food items. And we have no work and there are so many problems like these.

Earlier there was a sense of discipline among our Tamil people but they act now in arbitrary and impulsive ways. The greediness of people to modernise and things like usage of phones without any respect to others, is really saddening my heart.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Kilinochchi
කිලිනොච්චි
கிளிநொச்சி



I am from Polonnaruwa. I have two younger brothers.

I met my husband while I was studying at school. I saw him for the first time when I was on my way to the water tank to swim. My husband is from Gampaha. He served in the Divuldamana Army camp.

One day he had sent a love letter through a friend. I wrote a reply to that letter, and hid it inside a school book. When I was getting ready to go to school the following day, my mother got suspicious and she grabbed the book and found the letter. I was beaten and was not allowed to go to school that day.

Later he came and asked my parents for my hand. After about 10 months, when I was 17, we got married and I went to live in his house.

I received this house in 1996. It is 4 years now since my son and I came to live here. My son goes to school in Ibbagamuwa.

We do everything with the salary of my late husband. I wanted to get a job. But there is nobody at home to look after the child when he returns from school.

My economic situation is not bad. We manage with what we have. I am even building a new addition to my house with my savings.

Some months after the marriage, I was feeling a little sick. My mother in law thought I was pregnant. The day was 25th June.

I was looked after very well those days.

On the 28th June we two went to the paddy field. When we were there my husband's younger brother came running. He told that the police had come to the house. I thought that my husband was playing a prank on me. We were asked to come to the police. We went. At the police station I was told that my husband was dead. I wailed and screamed. Then the policeman said, "don't cry here, this is an official place". I still remember that moment.

I could not look at his body. I fainted several times. I was given saline.

I loved him so much. I could not believe that he had left me.

We got married in September. It was on a 28th that my husband came to talk to my parents, that we got married and that he died.

After the death of my husband I came to Arunapura in Polonnaruwa to live with my parents. By then the LTTE terror was intensifying. We lived in fear. Some days as we started to eat, we'd hear gunshots. So, we'd run for our lives, leaving everything. I was heavily pregnant then, and it was difficult for me to run. But I always thought that my husband would protect us from everything.

In 1994 my son was born. I cannot describe the joy I felt at that moment. At the same time, I remembered my husband and felt an immense pain. I missed him so much. Everybody came to see my son. When I went to make my son's birth certificate, my heart broke again, when I had to give the details of the father.

My only hope is to educate my son well.

My only treasure in life is my son. I do my best to keep him happy. I do everything for my son. I am looking after him till he gets married to a nice girl one day.

I love my country. My husband loved my country and he gave his life for it. I wish well for it.

My mother and father are behind me all the time. I respect them so much.

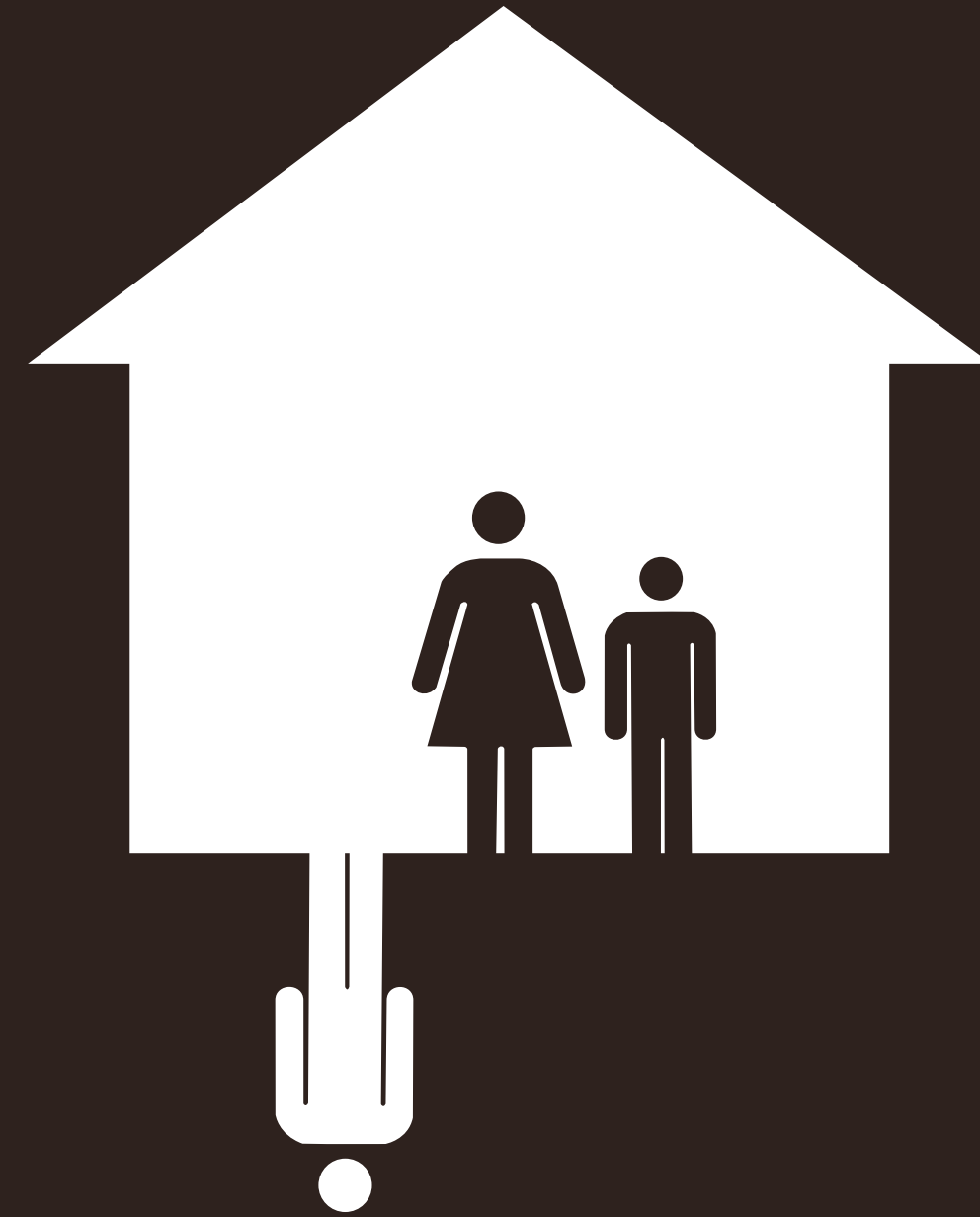
My two younger brothers, with whom I spent my childhood, are still beside me. They give me strength to live my life.

I have two neighbouring families that I am very friendly with. I admire them and appreciate their friendship and advice all the time.

As a woman who lives alone, I am vulnerable to criticism all the time. To them it's wrong if I walk alone; it's wrong if I dress well. It hurts every time but it doesn't upset me. I will continue on my journey. I will lead my life with strength.

I want to complete building the house. I am putting so much of an effort to complete this house. I tried to obtain a housing loan, but failed. But I will not give up. I will persevere.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Though I was born in Vavuniya, I live in Kokkuthoduwai. My husband is from Kokkuthoduwai. We have six children. We were displaced in 1984. As a result we live in great misery having to face many difficulties.

Since 1984, we have lived in Alampil, Thanneeroottu, Koolamurippu, Puthukudiyiruppu, Maththalan, Pokkanai and Wattuwal. In 2007 the Liberation Tigers conscripted many A/L girl students, took them to Chengchulai and gave them training there. My daughter was also taken by them. The Kfir aircraft carried out aerial bombardments and my daughter escaped with injuries. As she resumed her studies the war raged on an intensified scale. She joined us in Maththalan. We kept her in hiding. Still for all, a bullet entered her head and she died instantly.

In Wattuwal when we took cover in a bunker a shell landed on the bunker. My eldest son, my youngest son and I were injured. On 15.05.2009 my 14 year old fourth son died in an artillery shell attack. Thus many people in my family lost their lives on account of the war. Everyday thinking of them makes me cry bitterly. I have also contracted cancer. Within the space of five days I lost two of my children.

We came to the welfare camp on 19.05.2009. Here also we didn't get proper food, water or sanitation facilities. My eldest son was injured in a shell attack in Wattuwal. He was admitted to a hospital and treated. A shell fragment has not yet been removed from his chest. As a result he cannot do any heavy work. I was admitted to Maharagama hospital and received treatment. Now I attend a clinic once in 3 months and get my drugs. Thus my life is full of tragedies and problems.

Though now we have returned to our own place we don't have even a temporary house and we have no employment. We live with great difficulties.

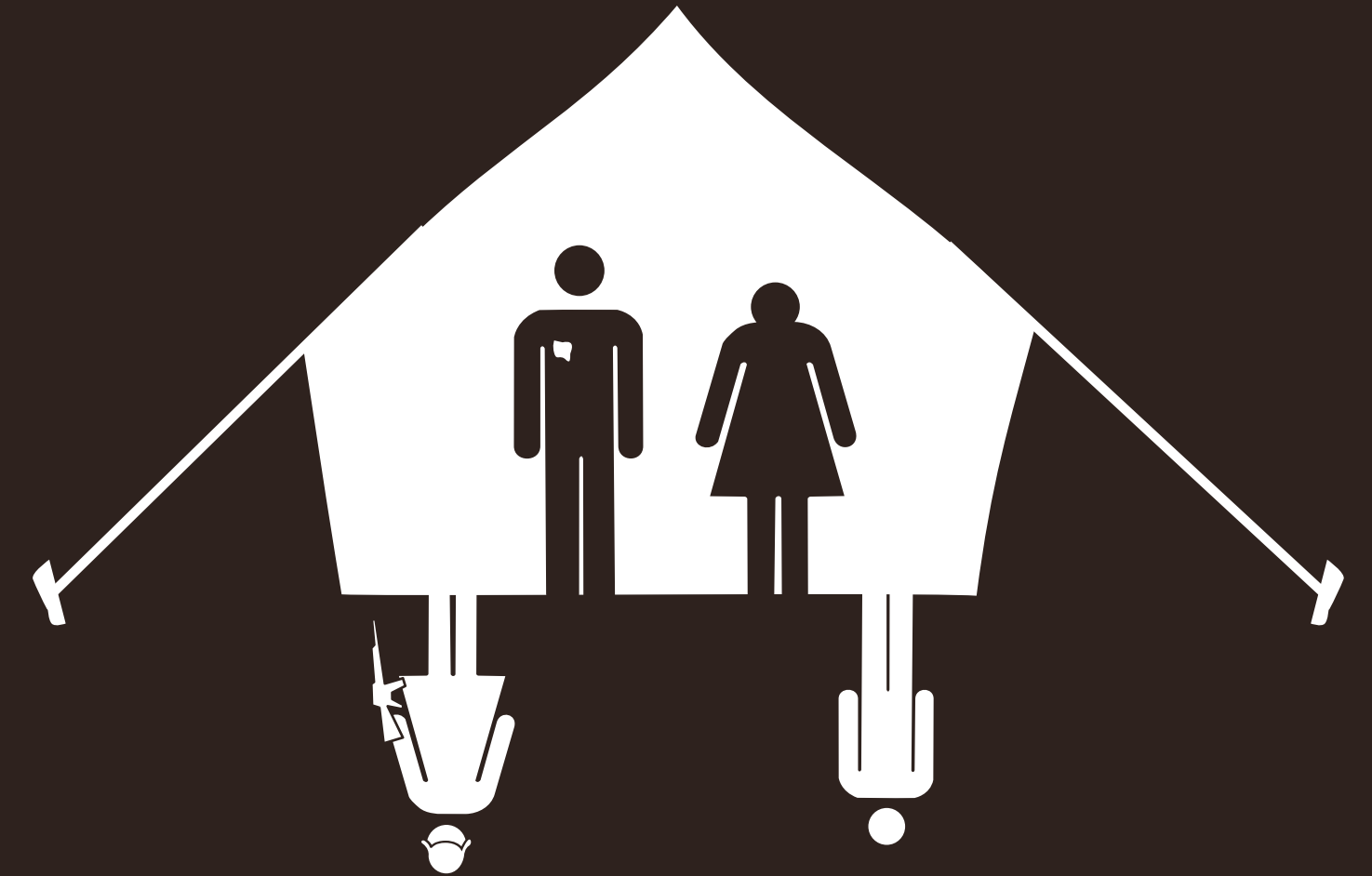
Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Mullaitivu

මුලතිවු

முல்லைத்தீவு



Dear friend Paari,

I am keeping fine and I would like to hear of your health. I have not written to you for about a month. You might have wondered why and would have been longing to hear from me.

It was about 9.00 o'clock in the evening on a Thursday during 1990. We had finished our dinner and were about to go to bed. There was no electricity supply to our village. My parents and three sisters and myself were at home. Suddenly we heard the sound of gun shots. We were hugging our mother in fear and crying. Gun shots were repeatedly heard. We could not go out because of fear of being killed. After some time we heard people crying from the neighbouring house. We found not only an elderly person was shot dead but also small children were found dead in a pool of blood. Some pregnant women were also found unconscious. Though I was a small girl at that time but I could still remember those horrific moments. After hearing about so many people killed we were informed to gather at a school in the morning. We were in a state that we could not carry any of our belongings but we took some of our important documents and went to that school. We were all boarded in a bus and set out as refugees toward an unknown destination. It was a very pathetic situation that we lost our relatives, property and belongings. We were not even be able to perform the burial of the dead. We were crying and mourning and we were displaced from our own village.

The bus in which we were boarded left our village Pavatkulam and reached the village Samanankulam. We started walking along from there, carrying our bags and baggage on our heads. It was an unforgettable sight. We faced many difficulties while walking and finally reached Medawachchiya and stayed in a school. As refugees we were provided with bread and dhal curry. After spending the night in that school, we were transported by bus in the morning, to another school in Ganewalpola in the Anuradhapura area. There we were provided with meals and later with temporary sheds within the school premises. We were faced with so many difficulties without proper food and toilet facilities. All our relatives were scattered and living in different places. Because of the harsh experiences our father became mentally weak. We all were four girls and capable students and our mother

didn't know what to do. She was wondering whether to look after her husband or to educate her children. However she managed to send us to school while we stayed there. After living there for 4 years as refugees we returned to our own village in 1994. Later our mother was engaged in self-employment, educated us and we made a living on what she earned. However we couldn't get back whatever we had lost. We continue to live amidst a lot of difficulties through our faith in God. But what about our future?

Ok my dear friend, I told you of all our sad experiences. If I made you cry, please forgive me and forget it. I am awaiting your reply.

Assalamu Alaikum.

Your friend.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Vavuniya
වවුනියා
வவுனியா



Dear Madam,

I have 8 sons and one daughter. My youngest son died in 1983 when he was small. All of my sons work with the security forces. My younger son went for a job with the security forces in 1995. Our family was drowning in economic problems. Amidst difficulties, we tried our best to give to our children education. We didn't even have a proper house to live in. We lived in a small house made of clay. My younger son, who knew how much we suffered due to poverty, joined the army, with expectations of uplifting our lives. By then his brothers had got married.

Later, my other son also joined the army. The two of them built a house for us to live. When we heard the lists of names of the deceased soldiers on the radio, we lived in severe pain. Those days, the radio often broadcast news of the war. We listened to them, and we had no relief at all.

My younger son got shot, while serving in the Mankulam operation. His elder brother had told my other son, that he had got injured. He had asked him to go home. So, this son, returned to the village. On his way home he got news of his brother's death.

My elder son came home in a coffin. By then, our house had been built partially. Today, I live because of this son. I receive his salary. I perform religious rites in his name. A wall was built around the Bo tree in the village temple, in his name. A gate to the Dageba, was made. Wherever I go, I always do charitable things in the name of my sons.

All of my children live well now. All of my children work in the security forces. Today, I live without any trouble, because of them. Since there is no war now, my children live with no fear. But the loss of my dead son, cannot be replaced by anything. Every day, I do charitable things and ask for merit to be bestowed on him in the afterlife.

Now, we live much better than those days. We wish there will never be war again. We wish for a country without war.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Moneragala

මොනරාගල

මොණරාකலை



Dear Friend,

I am well here and hope that you are too.

There is nothing to mention about me specially. But it is difficult to forget my beloved uncle though he passed away some years ago.

There were nine children in my mother's family. My uncle was the fifth. Since he had no permanent job to take care of his four sisters, he joined the security forces. That was his misfortune. His life ended brutally before completing his five years of service. He was smart and fit which is why he was accepted into the special forces.

03.11.1995 was the last day my uncle was alive. The previous day he came home and stayed with us and then returned to duty. When he left that day, he asked me what I wanted him to bring me the next time he came.

The Government had sent 7 soldiers to Ampara district for the safety of the farmers who were working in the paddy field. One of them was my uncle. The LTTE had known this earlier and strategically hidden in the paddy field. As soon as the soldiers had arrived at a certain location, they were ambushed and the LTTE started to shoot at them. Though the soldiers shot back, they lost the battle. My uncle continued to fight even though many bullets had hit his body. Then my uncle was hit in the head with shrapnel from a mortar attack by the LTTE. He had fallen down. We received the dead body of my uncle thanks to another soldier who brought it back.

The forces helped us, but it is not equal to my uncle's life. In his 19 years he bore the pain of poverty. Still we are suffering from that sad event. Who will help me in the future?

Yours faithfully,

A.H. Moussoha

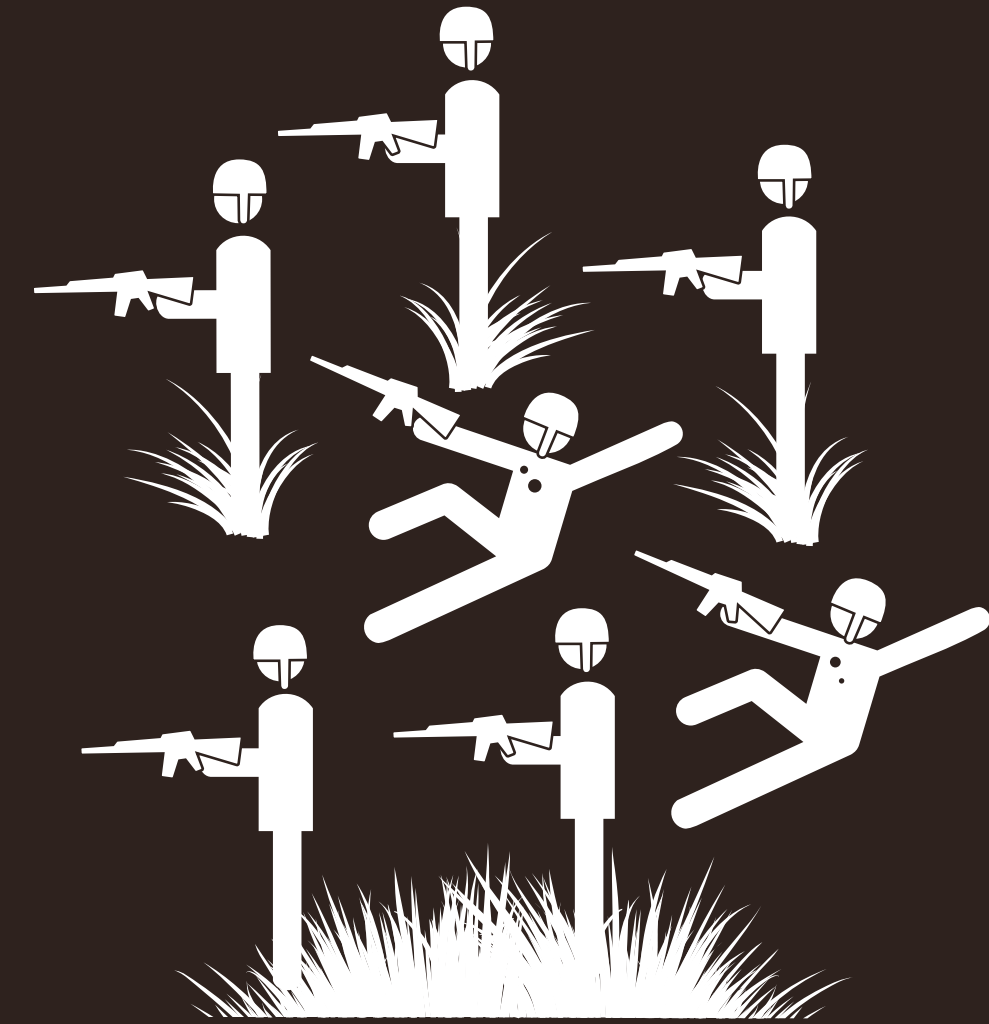
Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Batticaloa

මඩකලපුව

மட்டக்களப்பு



Dearest little son,

My son, you are now 18 years old. There were lots of incidents in the past and I had to undergo severe hardships. The time has come for me to tell you about the bitter experiences of my past.

When you were yet to be born, on the 25.10.1995, as usual your father and two other uncles went into the jungle to work as day labourers. Your elder brother was just 6 years old. Your father loved your brother more than life itself. Similarly, he was eagerly awaiting your birth and loved you even if he had never laid eyes on you. One week before your birth, your father was brutally killed by the terrorists. They snatched him away from us.

Your father and two uncles had gone to cut firewood that day. Your father's body and the body of one of the uncle's were sent back to the village in the bullock car stained full of blood. They were killed brutally by the terrorists and hacked into pieces. Your father had beautiful eyes and a long nose. That beauty was inhumanely cut up.

Your father's sudden death was a great loss to us. You were born 7 days after your father's death. It was a very sad situation. I am still only living because of you and your brother. Otherwise I would have died too.

The Government gave us Rs. 50,000 in compensation. We were able to build two rooms with that money. The way people suffered at that time due to poverty, we couldn't fault anyone for not being able to help us forever.

I was really upset. I had to undergo untold hardships to get admission for your brother into a school. He became the bread winner of the family while still a student. I too had to go to work in paddy fields but I couldn't do much because I was ill. After your brother completed his O/L exam, he had to join the security force to support us. It is only after he did, that I was able to provide for you better. After his marriage he left us, but he is making his own life. My son, you have to make your own life too, so study well.

Now we are helpless. We are in need of financial help. I'd be grateful if anyone can help us or find a job for my son.

Yours,
M.W

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Ampara
අම්පාර
அம்பாறை



To my husband,

A letter from your wife.

We were displaced in 2008 and we were in great distress. We went to Chundikulam, Tharumapuram and Suthanthirapuram. The army continued the shell attacks. We were in a bunker for 20 days and we found it very difficult even to find food. Then I set out with my children at 9.30 p.m. and walked till 2.00 a.m. We slept on the roadside. Around 5.30 a.m. we would start to walk again. We were carrying our things on a bicycle. We stayed in a hut in Thevipuram for 10 days.

Since artillery shells landed nearby, we left that place and went to Iranaipalai. A shell landed in the adjoining tarpaulin tent and all the people in the family died. We went to Pachchaippulmoddai and we stayed there for 10 days. The shelling continued. Then we went to Puthumaththalan and stayed there for 3 months. There were terrible shell attacks day and night and we were hiding in the bunker. We had rice and dhal only once a day. My second son fell ill. Then I went into the army controlled area with my children. We were taken to Arunachalam Camp.

Now we are resettled in our own village.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Kilinochchi
කිලිනොච්චි
கிளிநொச்சி



Kurunegala

කුරුමෙහි

குருநாகல்

I'm from Kandy. I'm 43 years old and I'm a Sinhala Buddhist.

At 25, I got married. It was an arranged marriage to a distant cousin.

After marriage, we lived in Anuradhapura in a rented house as he was stationed there. My daughter was born there.

There are 10 children in my family; 7 boys and 3 girls. I'm the eldest girl.

My father was a driver and my mother looked after us.

My husband has never scolded me or beaten me. We live very happily no matter what challenges comes our way. He never tells me what to do. I have absolute freedom to do whatever I want. Because of this, I don't misuse it. I have 2 daughters and 1 son.

My husband served in Saliyapura earlier. We received a house here and came to settle there on the 30.08.1995. The day I came here I cried saying that I can't live here. The house had two small rooms and a kitchen. While my husband was at work, I lived alone in the house with my two and a half year old daughter.

During the war we lived in great fear. Those days the JVP terror was rising up. One of those days, when I was living in Galagedara, a letter had been slipped into the house. That letter said ' Ask him to leave the Army immediately'. When I was living with my parents, I was not even let out to put washing on the line outdoors. We lived in such a fear.

Our children see the disabled soldiers every day. So, they know about their sufferings. Since their childhood they had seen the soldiers without limbs. There are some people in the country who don't respect these war heroes. Sometimes people don't even offer a seat on the bus to a disabled soldier.

I currently live in Ranavirugama. I am 43 years old. I am Sinhala Buddhist.

We live a very busy life today. We have lot of financial constraints. But I live happily.

The house is not completed yet. We have to spend a lot for the education of our children. My husband is a disabled war hero. Therefore he cannot do hard work.

I grow ornamental flowers as a means of self-employment. Sometimes I face problems, due to the fluctuations in the market.

When there are serious financial problems, I feel so burdened. I have sent letters to various organizations requesting assistance to support my children's education.

My future hope is my elder daughter.

My daughter is the head prefect in the school. My only dream is to see her becoming an engineer one day. Currently she is a teacher at the Sunday school.

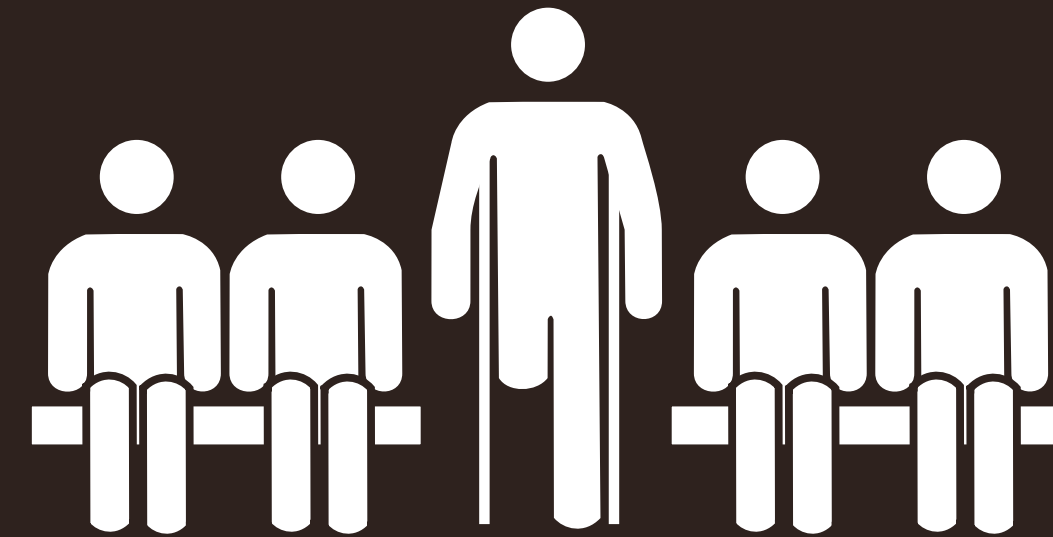
If my elder daughter takes the correct path, then other two will also follow her. So, I have no worries about that.

All of us who live in this country have the same blood.

If we live happily with everybody, we can die in peace, without fear one day.

I like to see my village and country developed and people living in unity and harmony as the children of one mother.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Mullaitivu

මුලතිවු

முல்லைத்தீவு

I was born in 1978, in this small village of Kokkuthoduwai. My father was a farmer and my mother was a tailor. There were 7 children in our family, 4 males and 3 females. I am the third child. We were living there very happily. In 1994 I was 5 years old and leaving our native place was an unforgettable event for me.

I started my primary education in the Semmalai MahaVidyalayam and studied up to the 5th grade. Then I studied up to grade 10 in Kilinochchi. I finished my grade 11 in Kokkuthoduwai secondary school and stayed for my O/L examination. I passed 5 subjects in the O/L exam. Though my parents were poor, their encouragement to study is something unforgettable for me.

I could not sit for the O/L examination again because of the problems in the country. Since I was the eldest in the family they wanted to give me in marriage and therefore started looking for a partner.

I was married in 2007 when I was 27 years old. I have a daughter of five years. She doesn't know the face of her father. She was only three months old when her father died.

At present we have returned to our native place, cleaned up the shrubs and trees and made fencing around the land. We were resettled on 7.02.2012 and within two weeks of our return, UNOPS provided a temporary house with cement floors, roofing with tin sheets and roofing with cadjan thatches. My daughter and I live in this house. We don't have income but they provided relief items for 6 months. Now that also has been stopped. The destitute allowance for this year has not been provided. Samurthy programme also has not commenced. They provided chicken under the livelihood assistance scheme but many have died. We still have a balance of 10 chickens left and we are rearing those.

I have become a member in the women's society which has been organised recently. I hope that we would be able to get some help and with that I would try to start up some self employment project. The women's society has now been registered and hence an organization has come forward to help our people.

We have to go to Mullaitivu to go to the A.G.A's office for whatever matters concerning

our village. Even to get medical facilities we have to go to Mullaitivu. Grocery shops are 16 miles away. If we have to go it would cost Rs. 75/- for a single journey. So up and down it would cost Rs. 150/-. We do not have any employment even to earn this Rs. 150. We started vegetable cultivation but all were washed off by the rains.

My child was terrified by the deafening sound of explosions. It was so difficult to leave the child safely in the bunker and go out to buy things for cooking, washing clothes or to talk to someone and we were so afraid to move around. The child developed phlegm and was suffering from fever. We have no way to even buy Panadol syrup. By God's grace she recovered.

The severe hardships that we underwent were far more intense. No work, no income and not even the possibility to go to work. Like thunder and lightning, bombs fell from the air, the shelling and the roar of the guns on the ground. Though we have survived these ordeals we do not have a peaceful life. When my child cries when she is hungry I curse God; When we were experiencing untold hardships the displacement of people continued; When we couldn't get any medical facilities or milk food for the child; I'd say "why God, did you create us?"

I was 27 years old when I got married and my first pregnancy was at the age of 30. I was in dire poverty and I did not have proper meals. After the child was born I could not breast feed. I was giving milk powder. I would dissolve Lactogen milk powder in the feeding bottle and feed the child. She would cry. We had to go far in order to get the injection after 2 months. There were instances that many had died, when they had gone to get the injections for their child. The number of days we did not have anything to eat was more than the days we ate. I never expected that we would survive this.

I saved my child by keeping her in the bunker. When we were displaced from one place to another, it was the duty of my husband to construct bunkers in those places to save my child and me. Even though we did not have anything to eat, the priority was to construct a bunker. How many bunkers we would have made in different places...? Medical facilities were not available at all en route.

Even in such a situation I pray to God daily that our future should be better and that of my child would be brighter. I am hoping for a better life for my child, I wish that she would become a good citizen in society. I wish that, she would get all the skills and the resources for a better life.

Though our village was smaller in size, it was a prosperous village then. My desire is that our village should become prosperous again. When the village improves only, the children's growth will improve.

When the villages and towns develop, our country also would develop. All the people in our country should live in peace and unity in the future without any ethnic or religious differences. Then we all can live happily.

It was an artillery shell that killed my husband and shattered my hopes in life.

The saying that consoles me is "it is fate, which is to blame". It is the same for all the people in the village.

I lost my husband but not my confidence. I am determined to bring up my child.

The only wealth I have got is my daughter. In the welfare camps, I saw many that had become mentally weak when they had no children and had lost their husbands in the war. After seeing this I consoled myself that the wealth I have is my child. Therefore I consider my child as a gift.

My only strength is my confidence. When I went from the war-torn area to Cheddikulam, I only had my child. Only when I am strong enough, I bring up the child.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Vavuniya වවුනියා வவுனியா

My native place is Manattkudiyiruppu in Mullaitivu. I have two brothers and two sisters. My mother Rasammah is from Point Pedro and father Nadarasa is from Mullaitivu. I am the second child and I love all my brothers and sisters. One day a coconut fell on my head and my whole family was scared and for me this incident is unforgettable. My mother was so careful that she would not allow me to even drink water from the neighbours.

I was married in 1979. My husband was from Ilamaruthankulam in Omanthai. It was a proposed marriage but we knew their family from childhood. I have four children, two girls and two boys.

The older girl studied up to A/Ls. In 2004 she got married when she was 24 years old. But they both died in the Tsunami. My son also died. At that time, my sister also came to stay with me.

As at present I am living at Katpakapuram, Vavuniya, on land provided by Sri TELO. My husband, son and daughter and the two daughters of my sister are with me.

My husband was a farmer. He is heart-broken due to the sad events in our life. He is not working anymore. I have sent my sister's daughter to a hostel in Chettikulam because of my difficulties.

I used to sew for a living but now nobody gives me any sewing now because I am old. I grind chilli powder and sell it. I was rearing 6 to 7 hens at one time but now only the cage remains because the stock died.

I got a loan of Rs. 25,000 to have that small poultry farm. I still have Rs. 15,000 pending to be repaid.

The child in Chettikulam is mentally affected. She still writes saying "Mother I would love to see you". She asks me to take her to the place her mother had been buried. I keep her in my care because I am like a mother to her. She is in grade 9.

When the war started, my sister who was living with me, took her 13year old girl and went to the Vanni. She couldn't come back again because a pass was not given by the Movement. They even tried to escape from there but the youngster who helped them was severely beaten and they were forced to return.

On the 23rd of April in 2009 when we were in a temple in Vallamadhu in Mullaitivu, a shell landed on the temple. My sister and the husband of another sister were killed on the spot. The rest of brothers and sisters together with my sister's daughter, came to a camp in Zone 4. Every week I used to meet them and provide them with food. I would weep. Later I took my sister's daughter from the hospital and got the rights to adopt her through the Courts.

When the war was intense I used to go to the camps one by one in search of my siblings. I was searching for my sister particularly, because of her daughter. I went to the Nelukkulam, Chettikulam and Ramanathan camps. There I saw people standing in long queues to obtain food. No one could come closer to the fence and talk to me. When my sister's husband saw me. He could not come close and embrace me in his sadness but he burst into tears crying out to me, "sister".

I am waiting to get some financial assistance to make improvements to my poultry shed which is in need of repair. Any assistance to give my 25 year old daughter in marriage would also be welcome.

The two children who have lost their mother are studying well. I have to educate them well so that they could stand on their own feet.

Peace should prevail in our country. I hope a day would come when our children can live on their own, inherited land. Though there is peace now, the children are not happy. I am hoping that happier times are ahead for them. I wish them happiness always.

I hope that in future, people of all the villages should be united as they have the opportunity now.

My sister who was especially attached to me and who helped bring up my children is very important to me.

Sri TELO Uthayarasa is important to us because it helped us by providing a plot of land.

Our Roman Catholic Reverend Fathers and Sisters who helped us are important to us.

My husband is very supportive and shows compassion and allows me to look after the other children that have lost their parents. All the children look after me with love and care because I am diabetic.

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Moneragala මොනරාගල මොණරාකலை

I am from Welimada. I got married in 1980. My husband was from Okkampitiya. Later we came to Niyadella. We were farmers.

My mother is from Gampaha. I can't remember where my father was from. They married me off when I was 30.

I gave birth to my elder daughter in 1981. The next child was born in 1983. Then I got another two children in 1986 and 1987.

Now my son is 26 years old. He joined the Army in 2005. For a long time he served in Killinochchi. I was so worried about him those days. Now he works in the office in Panagoda camp.

I gave a good education to my daughter amidst difficulties. She studied well. She was just three marks short of being selected to university. She has no job. She is in Buttala.

She came 25th at the District Grama Sevaka exam. But didn't get an appointment.

My health condition is not bad. I don't fall sick. My husband has high pressure. He is nearly 70 now. We will fall sick when we grow older.

Living in this area is very difficult compared to our home town. But what else are we to do, other than cultivating these lands? We cultivate paddy.

There is a forest surrounding the village. We have to walk a long distance to get to the bus stand.

I feel that the people in the North are also suffering in the same manner like us. All mothers live in pain.

When we were living in Niyadella, one day in 1991, I was in the paddy field with my two children. My son was two and daughter was 4. My daughter said she was thirsty and I came home to get her some water. Then I heard a noise and when I peeped out of the house, I saw two red eyes, which looked like balls of fire.

Such an incident had never happened before.

We had never been harassed. A relative of mine who was working on a mine nearby was staying at my place.

I asked them who they were. They said they were from the Army. But by the way they pronounced the Sinhala words I knew they were Tigers.

One of them was standing at the doorway. Carrying my son, I stayed dead still. My uncle, who was in the house at that time, hid my daughter in a barrel. Then my uncle came running towards them, carrying an iron bar. But he was nearly 65 then. He was beaten by the man who was at the doorway. That man snatched the iron bar from him and hit him with it. When my uncle screamed, the daughter who had been hidden came out. Those beasts hit my daughter with a big knife. Without making the slightest sound, she fell to the ground.

Then the man who was in front of me grabbed my son by his hair. I held him tightly, and clung onto the Tiger's neck. At that moment he hit my son's neck with the knife. My son just collapsed to my shoulder like he fell asleep. Then he hacked into my head with the knife three times.

Leaving us lying on the ground, they went away. I heard gun shots very close by. My husband had heard the gun shots and rushed home leaving the other son in the field. He finds it difficult to see blood. I said 'we are finished, please take care of the remaining two children'. He ran out looking for a vehicle to take us to the hospital. The Tigers had chased him too. Then he had hidden himself in a mine.

I was lying with the dead bodies till morning. Police came and took us to the hospital. I was in the hospital for nearly 8 months.

We were given Rs. 15000 as compensation for each dead child. I received Rs. 8500 for my injuries. But I didn't get any help from anyone. I went to work in a garment factory after that.

I was so traumatised that I was not in normal mental condition for years.

My son looks like an actor. He lives happily. When I see him I am also happy. I wish the best for my children.

I request the government to give a job to my daughter. My daughter is married and lives happily. But she is worried that she has no job.

It is a great thing that the war ended. Despite being hacked by the Tigers, I lived my life with so much courage. I value that courage.

The little son of my daughter looks very cute. I feel happy when I see him.

Despite the tragic experiences we had, we somehow gave a good education to my daughter. I am happy about that.



Scan the QR code below for Sinhala translations of this story.



I had been living with my mother and father before 1990 in the Satham Hussain village. I have 4 brothers and 4 sisters. I am married now and have one son and daughter. Our lives were very simple and poor.

I am the eldest in our family. In the violence of 12.08.1990, I lost my relatives including my mother, father, 2 brothers and 2 sisters (totally 6) because they were brutally killed by the terrorists. So the rest of us left the village and went to the Eravur refugee camp. There we lived for about one year with untold hardship. We couldn't return to our own place since the terror continued. Later our home had been broken and damaged by LTTE. Many years after that, we came back to our own place. No help was given to us by the Government. With nothing to do, we left for Polonnaruwa with the kids. In the Muslim colony in Polonnaruwa we lived another one year. There also we faced many problems without any outside help. Then again, I went back to our place (Satham Hussain Village) and live there now.

My other brothers and sisters had married by this time. I live with my husband and 6 children. Upto now, no compensation has been given by the Government for the loss of our valuable lives, property and other damage.

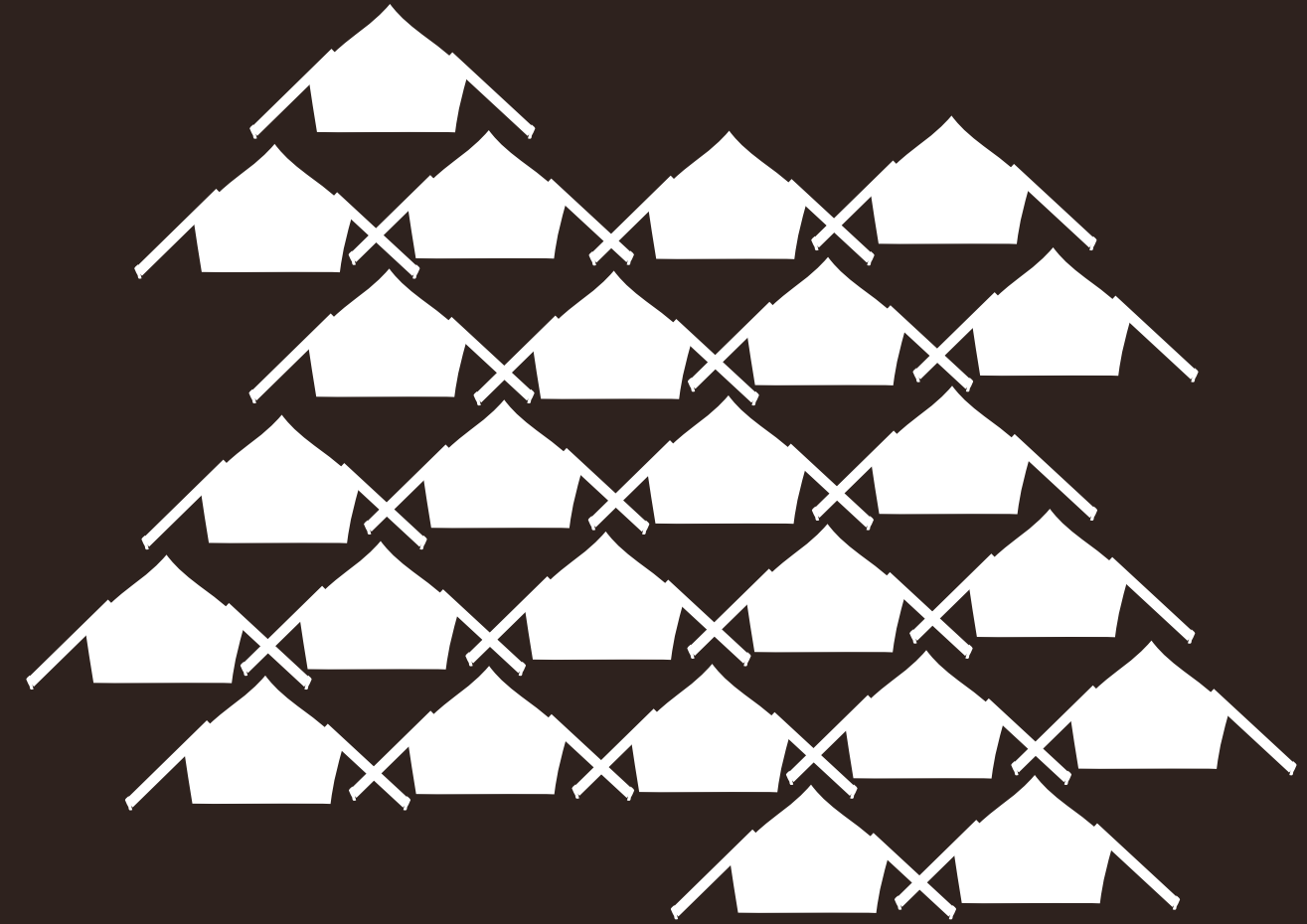
Therefore I humbly ask you to take care of our family if possible.

Yours faithfully,
M.I. Rahiya

Scan the QR code below for Sinhala and Tamil translations of this story.



Batticaloa
මඩකලපුව
மட்டக்களப்பு



Dear Son,

I am now 38. Now you are 23 years old.
I'd like to tell you something about our past
and present life.

When I married your father, I was 15 years
old. We lived doing agriculture. When you
were 6 years old, your father was killed.
On the 25.10.1990 morning he went
to the jungle to cut trees with his friends.
That evening your father did not come
home. Later we heard the LTTE had your
father and others brutally murdered. We
only received the dead body of your father
after five days.

From that day I am living with a great
many difficulties. It is to solve our economic
problems that I kept you at grandmother's
home and went to work in a garment
factory sewing clothes. I tried to make your
life beautiful, but suffered greatly for it.
About ten years passed like this. Then you
sat for the G.C.E. O/L exam.

After my son was 18 years old he joined the
armed forces. I have since left the factory
and am living on the salary of my son.
Finally now my son and I live well.

Thank you

R

*Scan the QR code below for Sinhala
and Tamil translations of this story.*



Ampara
අම්පාර
அம்பாறை



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