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Title: Shri T.R. Baalu called the attention of the Minister of External Affairs regarding rehabilitation of Sri Lankan Tamil Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

MADAM SPEAKER: Calling Attention. Shri T.R. Baalu.

श्री नामा नागेश्वर राव (खम्माम): अध्यक्ष महोदया, मैं अपनी बात रोज करना चाहता हूँ... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अभी क्यों रोज कर रहे हैं, कॉलिंग-अटेंशन हो जाने दीजिए। अभी आप बैठ जाइये, अभी समय नहीं है इसे उठाने का। आप प्लीज बैठ जाइये।

SHRI T.R. BAALU (SRIPERUMBUDUR): With your kind permission, Madam, I call the attention of the Minister of External Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"Rehabilitation of Sri Lankan Tamil Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto."

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): I rise to respond to the House on the Calling Attention Notice regarding the rehabilitation of Sri Lankan Tamil Internally Displaced Persons and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto.

After the cessation of conflict in northern Sri Lanka in May 2009, nearly 3 lakh Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) emerged out of the conflict zone. They were housed in camps by the Government of Sri Lanka. It is understood that currently, around 30,000-35,000 IDPs remain in these camps. India has constantly held the view that the cessation of the conflict in Sri Lanka in May 2009 and the 2010 elections provided a historic opportunity to address all outstanding issues in a spirit of understanding and mutual accommodation and to work towards genuine national reconciliation. The expeditious resettlement and rehabilitation of IDPs is integral to that process.

During the recent visit of President Mahindra Rajapaksa to India in June this year, we underlined on the urgent need for the resettlement of remaining IDPs along with speedy rehabilitation, reconstruction and development in the north and the east of Sri Lanka. The President of Sri Lanka indicated that he would endeavour to resettle all remaining IDPs by end-December this year.

I would like to remind the hon. Members that, even before the hostilities concluded, India had been assisting the IDPs inside and outside the conflict zone. Subsequently, India spontaneously stepped forward to assist Sri Lanka in the rehabilitation of the IDPs. Prime Minister immediately announced a package of Rs.500 crore for Sri Lanka.

In the initial stages, since the immediate focus was on humanitarian assistance, Government supplied 2,50,000 family packs to IDPs provided by the Government of Tamil Nadu. These family packs consisted of a variety of daily-use items including food, clothing and medicine and provided the much-needed succour to the IDPs. We also dispatched an emergency medical hospital to treat the injured IDPs emerging out of the conflict zone. From March to August 2009, more than 50,000 patients were treated, including those requiring major surgical operations. Our field hospital did exemplary work under very trying conditions. We had also provided medical supplies. Given the challenges arising out of the conflict, Government also arranged for an artificial limb fitment camp, better known as Jaipur Foot, in March-April this year. The team of experts did commendable work to fit artificial limbs and other devices to nearly 1400 beneficiaries.

In addition to the humanitarian assistance, we simultaneously took up assistance to help resettle the IDPs. Seven of our demining teams are now currently working in Sri Lanka. The work of these demining teams has undoubtedly helped speed up the resettlement of the IDPs, particularly in the districts of Vavunia and Mannar where large tracks of land have been made fit for habitation and agricultural and other activities have resumed.

In order to ensure that the IDPs have a roof over their heads, India has supplied more than 7900 tonnes of roofing and shelter material. Our roofing sheets have been distributed in all five districts of the Northern Province and helped thousands of families resettle in their villages. We also supplied 4 lakhs cement bags to be distributed among the resettling IDPs to help them renovate their houses.

Hand in hand with resettlement, we had tried to address the issue of livelihood for those being resettled. A

delegation of agricultural experts led by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research visited Sri Lanka last year. We have already supplied 70,000 agriculture starter packs. We have also agreed to supply seeds, tractors and other agricultural implements. The samples of the seeds requested have already been sent to Sri Lanka and are awaiting phyto-sanitary certification. We hope that our timely assistance will help the IDPs in the forthcoming Maha season itself. During the visit of President Rajapaksa, we have agreed to take up the rehabilitation of war widows in Batticaloa in Eastern Sri Lanka with the involvement of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

As Sri Lanka transitions from the humanitarian to the rehabilitation and reconstruction stage, India has come forward with substantial and generous assistance to help rebuild Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka.

During the recent visit of President Rajapaksa to India, we announced a major initiative to support a programme for construction of 50,000 houses. We will soon launch a pilot project of 1000 houses. We have set aside an amount of nearly US\$ 800 million as Lines of Credit for undertaking the reconstruction of railway infrastructure in northern Sri Lanka. Contracts for three of these railways lines have already been signed. Just as the work on the Indian-assisted railway project between Galle and Matara in South Sri Lanka is ahead of schedule, I am confident that these railway projects will also be completed expeditiously.

Developments of human resources in Sri Lanka have always received the priority attention by Government. Apart from the two vocational training centres established earlier at Hatton and Puttalam, Government has decided to assist Sri Lanka in setting up vocational training centres in Northern, Eastern and Central Sri Lanka in tune with their requirements. India would extend assistance for the rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai harbour as well as renovate the Duraiappah stadium and construct a Cultural Centre in Jaffna to revive cultural activities in that city. As a part of our assistance for an integrated development, we would also assist in repairing schools, hospitals and other community facilities in the region. I would also like to add that our traditional assistance to the Indian-origin Tamils in Sri Lanka will not only continue but also be expanded.

I would like to assure this august House that India is doing all it can to assist the Government of Sri Lanka to rehabilitate the Sri Lankan IDPs. The establishment of the Consulate General of India in Jaffna will also help in this process. I have no doubt that our contribution has been crucial in their humanitarian and resettlement efforts and will continue to play a significant role in the future as well for restoring normalcy in the lives of these IDPs in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Madam, with great anguish and mental agony I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India, through the august House, about the sad plight of Sri Lankan Tamils.

Madam, this Calling Attention is not only intended to demand from the Government of India to extend more help but also to request the Government to prevail upon the Government of Sri Lanka to see to it that the money sent to them, or any such help that is being extended, is spent properly. The Government of Sri Lanka should be held accountable. The money that has already been sent has not been utilized properly.

The sad plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka is unheard of in the entire history of the world. The Tamilians living in Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka have suffered a lot. They were subjected to devastating miseries during the civil war that long lasted for more than 25 years. This arms struggle started because of the large scale discrimination against the Sri Lankan Tamils who were deprived of education and the employment opportunities. The Tamilians living there were considered as the second-rate citizens in their own country.

Madam, Indian Tamils, led by my beloved leader, Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, had been conducting agitations like *dharnas*, Hunger Strikes, *Rail Roko and Road Roko* to draw the attention of the Government of India and the world – but it has not been able to catch the attention of the Sri Lankan administration. He wanted to draw the attention of the United Nations to this effect. He collected one crore signatures which along with a Memorandum were submitted to the Secretary-General of United Nations but all this has not prevailed upon the Sri Lankan administration.

Madam, though the civil war has ended the reasons that led to the war still exist. The poor children of Sri Lankan Tamils are not yet given the right of education or the employment opportunities. Tamil language itself is being considered as the second-rate language. For the information of this House, the Tamilians are being treated as the second-class citizens. They are not bestowed with the normal life. About 52,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are still behind the barbed wire fencing. They are yet to recover from the trauma of war. The state of emergency still exists in Sri Lanka. The security forces of Sri Lanka say

that the threat of LTTE still exists. They are saying this to keep surveillance blanket on Sri Lankan Tamils; to keep on deploying the armed personnel in Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

On July 29, 1987, our great and a beloved leader, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, had brought Mr. Jayawardhane to the negotiation table to see that Indo-Sri Lanka Accord is made. What has happened to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord? We have lost one of the giant and the most beloved leaders of this country who sacrificed his life for the same cause. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord has not materialised. What has happened to the 13th amendment which the Sri Lankan Parliament had made? It has not been implemented. The political solution has not been achieved. They are fooling and ...* not only India but also the other world countries.

In a recent interview, Mr. Rajapaksa has said that there is no hurry to formulate a political solution. If there is a solution at all, it will be home grown. It will be home grown and not according to the Indian wisdom or the world wisdom or the US wisdom but it would be home grown. In the same interview, he has also said that they will take their own time to find a solution and that we cannot ask for an instant solution like instant noodles. This is what he has expressed in an interview. It means he is very much clear. He is not intending to go for a full political solution. The Sri Lankan President is not only ... India but also the whole world.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please expunge that word.

SHRI T.R. BAALU : India could not prevail upon the Sri Lankan Government to restore normalcy in spite of all their help of Rs.500 crore initially and of Rs.800 million US dollars for the construction of infrastructural facilities in the North-East region. Nothing is happening.

I would like to submit that on 15.4.2010, 1,94,590 persons were resettled which means they came out of the camps but not yet settled. They have not yet gone to their home towns where they want to go. They came out of the barbed wire fencing. On the request of my Leader, Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi, hon. Prime Minister and Madam Soniaji, a delegation visited Sri Lanka. The Indian Government permitted us to go there to have an on the spot study. The Congress MPs and MPs belonging to DMK and VCK of Tamil Nadu went there. We had seen the torn out plastic sheet tents there. They were leaking. Children and old people were lying on the ground and they were subjected to health hazards. Even after that, things have not improved. You said that 30,000 to 35,000 people are there. I do not want to contest the figure but even today more than 52,000 people are stranded there in the barbed wire fencing. I would like to draw the attention of the august House and the Government of India that when we, all the ten Members visited there, we were taken to the camps but not to the 14 camps wherein children aging 10 to 14 years, were kept in duress under the military custody. We were not taken to that particular areas. They say that these young children have been trained by the LTTE. Even if they were trained by LTTE, they should be treated humanly.

They should not be subjected to any coercive methods. The Government of India should supervise that. Now, if there is any real truth in that; if realistically such things are going on, then the Government of India should come forward and see to it that these people are taken care of.

Madam, the Sri Lankan Government shall be prevailed upon by Government of India to have a political solution at least now as per the 13th Amendment. The innocent children kept in duress in military camps should be released immediately. There should be rehabilitation of the IDPs. Around 52,000 people living behind the barbed wire fencing and should be sent back to their destinations. There were around 30,000 Muslims kept separately, in the district of Puttalam during the struggle. They now want to return to their homes. Those people should be sent back to their homes safely and their re-settlement should be done properly. The Government of India should send an Emissary so that he can go and see as to what is happening there and also assess the ground reality and report to the Government of India so that proper action can be taken.

Madam, it is now the monsoon season and there are torrential rains especially in the northern end of Sri Lanka. So, I would like the Government of India to see that these people are settled quickly; settlement means not shifting the people from one camp to another camp. The re-settlement as is being said by the Sri Lankan people is not actually re-settlement in the true sense. People are being shifted from `x' camp to `y' camp. The same kind of conditions as prevailed in the `x' camp is there in the `y' camp as well.

Madam, I would like to thank the Government of India for having done so much. The pragmatic approach of the Government of India is appreciated. But at the same time the Government of India should prevail upon the Sri Lankan Government to see that normalcy is restored immediately for a better life of Sri Lankan Tamils.

*SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI (ERODE): Madam Speaker, While thanking you for this opportunity I would like to put forth certain points to call the attention of the Government and to know whether the displaced and distressed Sri Lankan Tamils have been sent back to their homeland areas inhabited by them prior to their being put in the makeshift camps within the confines of barbed wires.

Both the Minister and Baalu came out with certain statistical figures. It has been stated that the Sri Lankan Tamils have been sent back from the refugee camps to their traditional areas where they were residing for long, but it is far from truth. The Minister has also come out with a list of help and assistance from our end and information about the fund allocations made, amount spent and rehabilitation measures taken by our Government to Sri Lanka. Our Foreign Minister's statement is like claiming to have tasted sweetness after tasting with the tongue a piece of paper having written on it the word 'sugar'. The fact remains that the displaced Sri Lankan Tamils who were forced to live in the inhuman makeshift camps have not been shifted back to the areas in which they were originally residing and leading their lives.

We get to know of this from the world media. Press freedom has been curtailed and not much is known to the outside world about the real situation prevailing over there in Eelam. Journalists are prevented from going near the camps. Even a team of our MPs who went there were not taken to places beyond a point. The facts about the real situation could not be gathered easily because there is a kind of iron curtain. There is now a world beyond the iron curtain. This is the situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka. NGOs from several parts of the world are spreading information from what they have heard and seen in bits and pieces.

Tamils who are the sons of the soil Eelam have been made to live like secondary citizens in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Tamils will not have an area of their own to live in. Justice and rehabilitation cannot be expected from Rajapakse who has stated that there will not be Tamil homeland any more.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please come up with your question.

SHRI A. GANESHAMURTHI : I am coming to it, Madam. Before that, there is a point to make. I would like to see for yourself as to how they can rehabilitate and how they will restore the lives of Tamils and how they will send them back to their traditional areas where they have been living all along. Tamils are denied of their rights. The Sinhalese Army is occupying the areas where Tamils used to live down the years. Sinhalese people are being settled to live there in the Tamil-dominated areas. I would like to know from the Government what supervisory or monitoring mechanism was evolved to watch the way in which our relief and rehabilitation assistance were spent. We know that they have not been spent on Tamils for whom we had sent help. It is gathered that it is being spent on Sinhalese who are being settled in the places from which Tamils have been displaced. I urge upon the Government to understand the ground reality that our rehabilitation measures are not really rehabilitating the Tamils but only the Sinhalese people who are being settled there with the patronage of their Government. So, I urge upon the Government to immediately stop sending the relief materials and extending assistance.

The Government in Sri Lanka has resorted to genocide and is busy in wiping out the Tamil race displacing them from their birth places and traditional areas where they used to live. The Sri Lankan Government doesn't have a mind to help the Tamils to get back their life and livelihood again. There is a Government in Sri Lanka that denies permission even to a UNHCR team to visit those refugee camps. The fact remains that even UN teams are not allowed to ascertain the truth and the ground reality. We need to assess the human rights violations inflicted against the Tamils. At a time when even the UN teams are refused to monitor, how can the Government of India monitor and review the way in which our assistance is spent on the needy Tamils who continue to remain as Internally Displaced Persons still? What are the efforts you have taken so far to ascertain facts? They are out to see that there is no race as Tamil race in the Sri Lankan soil. They are being systematically wiped out to perish once and for all.

The Government there is being charged as a Government of war criminals. Even the Government of India has been notified of this, but still our Government is extending assistance which is not really reaching the Tamils. Why do we hesitate to extend assistance to ascertain war crimes and human rights violations there? Our assistance, in fact, will be used against the Tamils and how can we continue to extend assistance? Will the Government of India realize that they have a responsibility to put an end to the elimination of a race in the neighbourhood? What is the yardstick you have with you to measure and ascertain the extent to which the assistance extended by us has been spent by the Sri Lankan Government? Will the Government of India take steps to send a fact finding team along with a Special Emissary to Sri Lanka? I would like to know whether the Government would include the representatives of various political parties, NGOs and human rights organizations.

SHRI P.R. NATARAJAN (COIMBATORE): Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity which you have given to me to draw the attention of the House towards the fate of the Sri Lankan Tamils who are Internally Displaced Persons.

As mentioned in the statement of the hon. Minister, the team of experts did commendable work to fit artificial limbs to nearly 1400 persons and rehabilitation for war widows. Regarding infrastructure, railway work has been undertaken and India would extend assistance for the rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai harbour as well as renovate the Duraiappah Stadium and construct a Cultural Centre, new schools and hospitals. These are the things which have been assured towards the infrastructure of the Sri Lankans.

I would like to ask a question through you, Madam, to the hon. Minister. A nation is part and parcel of the United Nations Organisation. The UNO has decided to have an inquiry on the war crimes committed by the Sri Lankan Army during the civil war whereas the Sri Lankan Government is not prepared to accept that inquiry. Will the Minister tell the House whether he believes the statement given by the Sri Lankan Government regarding the figures like 35,000 and so on? Do you believe that the figures are correct?

According to us, figures are honestly disclosed by our hon. Member, Shri T.R. Baalu. Even after six months, a team has visited Sri Lanka but they have not disclosed the facts before us. Now, our friend, Shri Baalu, has disclosed some figures honestly. Being second largest ally in the UPA-II, they have given some figures in the august House and I thank Shri Baalu for it.

Before I conclude, Madam, I request the Government through you that a team of Members of Parliament belonging to all political parties should be formed to monitor the rehabilitation work done by the Sri Lankan Government with the monetary help of the Indian Government. We request the hon. Minister through you for a formation of a Delegation consisting of Members of all parties to be sent to Sri Lanka to monitor the rehabilitation work there.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI (KARUR): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me an opportunity to express my Party's views about the rehabilitation of the Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Everybody knows that lakhs of Sri Lankan Tamils are suffering there. During and after the civil war, most of the people disposed of their properties and they are suffering a lot. But the Sri Lankan Government is not giving any importance to the rehabilitation of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The human rights organisations, the Red Cross and even the United Nations have not been allowed to see them.

I heard the Minister and I also read his Statement. I am disappointed with his Statement. It looks like a Statement not of a Minister, but of a Governor of Rotary Club, Lions Club, etc.

What exactly we want? This was made clear by my leader Hon. Amma Ms. J. Jayalalithaa when she said that "rights of Tamils living in Sri Lanka should be honoured, their rights should be respected and they should get equal status as that of the Sinhalese majority. The Government should ensure that the Tamils in the Island lead a peaceful life." This is our demand.

Towards this end, our beloved leader Rajiv Gandhi took a lot of efforts. In 1987, Rajiv Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord was signed. What happened to that Accord? What is the Government doing in that regard? Rajiv Gandhi lost his life because of his efforts to settle this Tamil issue.

The present Government must take some initiative to see that this problem is solved. Extending an assistance of Rs. 500 crore would not solve this problem. We have to see that Sri Lankan Tamils get equal rights and we have to see that they are properly settled there. Then only the problem will be solved.

Then, regarding the Army camps, what is now going on there? Now-a-days the Sri Lankan Government is doing it in a different way. In the name of defence, etc. they are occupying the Tamil areas and are setting the Army camps there. The Sri Lankan Tamils are opposing that. But the Sri Lankan Government is not at all bothered.

Regarding the Rajiv Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord, they are not doing anything. Rajapaksa is ridiculing that. This is an insult to the Indian Government. Therefore, the Indian Government must become serious about this.

The United Nations' Secretary-General constituted a Tribunal and sent a team to Sri Lanka to see what is happening to the Sri Lankan Tamils and also to inquire into the killings of the innocent Tamils. But the Sinhala forces obstructed that. They have not allowed the Tribunal to go and see them.

Therefore, what I am requesting is that the Government must insist upon the Sri Lankan Government to allow the UN team to go and see what is happening there.

Some kinds of doubts are persisting in our minds and a sort of impression is being created in our minds. For example, the Indian Government gives an impression that it wants to promote bilateral relations with Sri Lanka bypassing the settlement of this issue. It appears that it wants to see this issue die a natural death. This is what I feel. Therefore, we have to see that the interest of Sri Lankan Tamil is safeguarded. That is more important. For that we have to take steps. An impression is being created that India is pursuing a strategy towards Sri Lanka at the cost of Tamils. That is the impression we are getting.

Our hon. Member said that a delegation of Tamil MPs had gone to Sri Lanka. Who were the Members of that so called delegation? Did it include Members from other parties? ...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Please let him speak.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI : You are telling that it was a delegation. ...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(*Interruptions*) â€! *

MADAM SPEAKER: Let us have the Calling Attention.

...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI : Please listen to me. ...(*Interruptions*) Give me a chance. ...(*Interruptions*) There was no Member from the Opposition parties; there was no journalist; and there was no representative from the human rights organizations in that delegation.

The hon. Prime Minister has not responded to that. ...(*Interruptions*) They never mentioned as to what has happened there and whether any solution was found to this problem. ...(*Interruptions*) The delegation went there. They got some rewards and mementoes. That is all. They have not solved any problem. ...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing will go on record.

(*Interruptions*) â€! *

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri P, Lingam.

...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

...(*Interruptions*)

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI : India should take into consideration the aspirations of 6-7 crores of Tamil population. It will be counter-productive if we do not respect their hopes and aspirations. Sri Lankan Tamil issue should not be allowed to die a natural death. India should necessarily take up the matter with the Sri Lanka Government and find an amicable political solution to the Sri Lankan problems, and to rehabilitate the suffering Tamils living in refugee camps in that Island nation....(*Interruptions*)

Madam, as my hon. Leader Hon. Amma J. Jayalalithaa requested, we would request the Government to send a delegation, consisting of all the parties, to see the suffering of the Tamils there and try to remove them. ...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri P.Lingam.

*SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Madam Speaker, in our neighbouring Sri Lanka, Tamils have been rendered as Internally Displaced Persons languishing in refugee camps maintained by their army and I would like to draw the attention of this august House about the plight of Tamils who have been rendered so in their own country as secondary citizens. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government and make certain points.

Violating international norms meant for refugee camps and subjecting the inmates in an inhuman condition ignoring human rights, the Sri Lankan Government has put behind the barbed fences in the open their own Tamil citizens. Through this august House, we have apportioned funds and sent to Sri Lanka to carry out relief and rehabilitation measures much required by the hapless Tamils there. We now find that the Minister has come out with a statement mentioning about the works that are going on as stated by the Sri Lankan authorities. It is evident that proper supervising or monitoring or a review has not been carried out by our Government about the way in which the funds sent from here have been spent to benefit the Tamils there. Through this Call Attention Motion, we would like to know whether true attention is paid to the problems of Sri Lankan Tamils languishing in IDP camps.

When we are pointing out that more than three lakhs of Sri Lankan Tamils are suffering, the Minister himself accepts that more than 35,000 people are yet to be rehabilitated and moved away from the IDP camps which are like concentration camps. I would like to know from the Government whether we can remain mute spectators to the sorry plight of Tamils there when they are made to remain still as displaced persons in their own country even after one year of the end of the war waged by their Government.

Hon. Speaker, our Foreign Policy to help establish peace in the lives of the people of the world, as carved out by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru must guide us. Through Non-Aligned Movement, we have strived hard for world peace and harmony. When Sri Lankan Tamils are facing hardship and when peace has not been restored in their minds, how can we afford to ignore and how and why our Government seems to remain not bothered about the conditions prevailing there which does not augur well for our own political situation in our country? There are people of two races in Sri Lanka and the Tamil race has been deprived of all its rights. When such a thing is going on in our own neighbourhood, in Sri Lanka, I cannot resist a question to ask of this Government as to what is our stand in the international affairs. I urge upon this Government to ensure a political settlement there. ...*(Interruptions)* I also urge upon the Government to send a Delegation consisting of Members from all the parties to visit Sri Lanka and to see the situation prevailing there for themselves. ...*(Interruptions)* At least, Madam Speaker can send a Parliamentary Delegation to see that our funds are spent properly on the Tamils there.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please conclude. Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions) â€¦**

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Please conclude. Thank you so much. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

Nothing will go on record. Hon. Minister.

*(Interruptions) â€¦**

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record. Please take your seat.

*(Interruptions) â€¦**

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record except what the hon. Minister says.

*(Interruptions) â€¦**

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Nothing is going on record except what the hon. Minister says. Please sit down. It is not going on record.

*(Interruptions) 'â€' **

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Madam, Speaker a few concerns, with reference to the well-being of the Tamil Minorities in Sri Lanka, have been expressed by the hon. Members. The Government shares the concern of the hon. Members and it is our endeavour to see that a just and fair settlement of all the outstanding issues between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Sri Lankan Government will be arrived at so that there is amity, peace and harmony amongst the people of Sri Lanka.

Very recently, President Rajapaksa was in Delhi and the Prime Minister did take up with President Rajapaksa the need for a meaningful devolution package, building further on the 13th Amendment and beyond. We will certainly stay engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government will continuously monitor the situation there. Shri Baalu mentioned about the figures, the people who are in the camps but the figure, as has been conveyed to us, is around 35,000-40,000.

Then, there are other hon. Members who have given a picture saying that still there are much more than the figures that I have mentioned here. Well, we will continuously monitor whatever is happening on that front. I would like to reiterate that the assistance that is given by India reaches to the beneficiaries. Let us not forget that we are dealing with a friendly Government. Sri Lanka is a friendly country with India with whom we have various generational contacts.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI : May I submit one point?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Let me complete and then you can speak. ...*(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat. Let the Minister reply. Thambidurai Ji, let the Minister reply.

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA : Madam Speaker, I am not yielding....*(Interruptions)* Let me complete.

You can certainly, with the permission of the Chair, ask question.

Now, doubts have been expressed whether the beneficiaries have received the aid which has been sent by the Government of India. Well, we are heavily depending upon the International Red Cross and then the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to constantly monitor whatever aid that has been given by India to the Sri Lankan Tamils. So, they are closely monitoring the aid that has been given by India to Sri Lanka and then we depend upon them, and then based on their assessment, which is being given to us periodically, we take it up with the Government of Sri Lanka.

A mention was made that the Government should keep engaged with the Sri Lankan Government. A senior official from the Ministry of External Affairs is visiting Sri Lanka very soon and then, I myself am planning to go to Sri Lanka some time in the course of the end of the month or certainly next month which will certainly give me an opportunity. Perhaps, the senior level officer, who will be going before me to Sri Lanka, would be given an opportunity to find out what exactly the facts are, and then based on those facts, which will come to our notice, and then depending upon whatever information that has been provided to us by the hon. Members in the course of their statements made on the floor of this House, I will certainly take it up with the Government of Sri Lanka.

There was a mention about a delegation of Members of Parliament who went to Sri Lanka.

Let me clarify that the Delegation was sent by the political parties – the Congress and the DMK. Nothing prevented the other political parties also from going to Sri Lanka....*(Interruptions)* When an occasion comes, you do not offer yourself to go there but you always try to find fault whenever somebody goes to act in order to help the Tamils in Sri Lanka....*(Interruptions)* So, as a result of this - my visit there and then the senior official from the External Affairs Ministry visiting Sri Lanka - I do not think the time is ripe for the Parliamentary Delegation to visit Sri Lanka at this point of time....*(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: Now, the House will take up the next item, Item No.17 – Shri P.K. Bansal.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.R. BAALU : Madam, I want to ask a question....*(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: The hon. Minister has replied to that. You have already asked the question.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI T.R. BAALU : All that we wanted is to have a political settlement and the implementation of the 13th Amendment. What is the reaction of the Central Government? I would like to know whether the Government has got any reliable information from the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.â€¦ (Interruptions)

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Madam, I did point out that the hon. Prime Minister made particular reference to the 13th Amendment and beyond when President Rajapaksa visited India. So, the Government of India's stand is that a settlement which is acceptable to the Tamil minorities of Sri Lanka within the ambit of the 13th Amendment and beyond has to be worked out so that peace and tranquility is restored in Sri Lanka....(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: The House will now take up Item No. 17.

...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: I gave him a chance because he is the one who has raised it.

...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: This will go on endlessly. Everyone will ask a question now. You were supposed to ask a question when you were speaking. At that time, you gave a long lecture and did not ask a question.

...(Interruptions)

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI : Madam, my point is this. The hon. Minister himself has stated that the time is not still ripe for the Parliamentary Delegation to visit Sri Lanka. ...(Interruptions) It means that still the situation is in a fluid condition and the Tamils are not properly treated and have not properly been rehabilitated....(Interruptions) In that case, I would like to know when the time is going to be ripe to take an All-Party Delegation to Sri Lanka to see that the Tamils are rehabilitated....(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: All right. In future, I suppose you can take care of that during the next visit. Thank you very much.

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