

Short Communication

Is Ban ki Moon heading the UN's demolition squad?

Satheesan Kumaaran

Editor-in-chief, Voice of Voiceless Newspaper, E-mail: satheesan_kumaaran@yahoo.com.

Accepted 13 July, 2009

The United Nations failed to stop the hostilities between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. When thousands of Tamils were dying in the hands of the Sri Lankan state through aerial and artillery shelling for more than six months without a break, Ban ki Moon failed to stop the hostilities between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces. The UN failed to bring the perpetrators of the war crime to book. Over 280,000 civilians have been put in internment camps established by the government in Vavuniya without allowing the international media or UN agencies or any other non-governmental agencies to help despite outcries that the government armed forces were torturing civilians, but the UN is acting as a mute spectator. The UN can no longer act as a global organization for the betterment of humanity. Their officers are self-serving subservient to states that maintain them financially. Many international law and international relations experts argue that the UN should be completely reorganised, as all the administrative bodies, except the Social and Economic Council, are biased and lack the fortitude to bring global peace. Sri Lanka, a tiny island, in the Indian Ocean, is a classic example. Although not a major powerhouse for attracting the interest of global powers, with very little military power and receiver of military supplies from other countries, the corrupt behaviours of the UN's top officials and their servile team could bring UN to its knees due. The global society needs to think that any single, powerful country can use nuclear weapons against one another, and even if the UN sends emissaries and the UN Secretary General visits, their support still goes to the violators in the end. Ban ki Moon has made sure that there would be no justice to the oppressed even from the highest citadel of humanitarian justice.

Key words: Ban Ki Moon, United Nations, The League of Nations, Sri Lanka liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam, Tamils, genocide, civil war in Sri Lanka.

INTRODUCTION

"This is one of the most unprincipled and shameless resolutions ever adopted by anybody of the United Nations in the history of that now benighted Organization. It would be as if the U.N. Human Rights Council had congratulated the Nazi government for the 'liberation' of the Jews in Poland after its illegal and genocidal invasion of that country in 1939," --- Francis Boyle, professor of International Law at the University of Illinois College of Law, referring to the resolution passed at the United Nations Human Rights Council on the Sri Lanka war. (Tamilnet. Available at: <http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=29474>) The peoples of the world are now witnesses to the actions of the United Nations (UN) in their duty to stop hostilities, prevent human rights abuses and to bring peace to any member states. The most recent events in Sri Lanka are the latest example of the UN's inability to intercede and require member nations to follow the international law which they have to safeguard. In Sri Lanka

over 30,000 Tamils were killed while over 280,000 Tamils are currently contained in camps similar to the ones set up by the Nazi Germany against the Jews. But the most global face of the UN, the Secretary General Ban ki Moon, visited Sri Lanka and witnessed the evidence of atrocities and instead of chastising Sri Lanka, he spoke in favour of those who committed them rather than the victims. The UN failed in the 30-year battle between Sri Lanka and the Tamils. Before more atrocities occur the world over and more people suffer, the UN must be re-vamped into a true global authority. Considering the fact that Ban was part of a government headed by Roh Moo-hyun the former president of South Korea who recently took his own life when accused of corruption while heading a government tainted with corruption, Ban ki Moon's behaviour comes as no surprise (Access My Library. Available at: http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-3545407_ITM). It is, however, a tragedy to the future of

the UN.

League of Nations failed

For the failure of the League of Nations, many reasons were attributed including that it did not have a socio-economic plan, it represented radical and conservatives, it did not intend to unite or build a genuine society, etc. Many countries were then controlled by European countries. The League of Nations did not achieve anything positive for the prosperity of people, but it served for the high powers in particular governments, and more importantly, it helped the great economic depression in the 1930s. It also stated that all countries should disarm, but it is impossible to disarm as the armoury is fundamental for the security of a state in order to protect itself from foreign occupation. The League of Nations had three organs: The Assembly, The Council (permanent 5 and non permanent 6) and The Secretariat (History Learning Site. Available at: <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/leagueofnations.htm>) All these bodies had done nothing to empower the people around the world or help to end the conflicts. So, the failure of the League of Nations was inevitable; however, the necessity for an effective international body arose. As a result, leading powers played a major role in forming the UN.

Steps to the formation of UN

The eight major steps in the process to form the UN are: The first step came with introducing the name 'U.N.' at the London Declaration in 1941. The second conference was called "Atlantic Charter" to discuss on the following issues:

- (a) Right of Self-Government.
- (b) Sovereignty and Equality of the States.
- (c) Oppose any kind of aggression.
- (d) Fixed territorial boundary.
- (e) Establish international economic cooperation.
- (f) Arms control.
- (g) Peaceful settlement of disputes.

Twenty nine countries agreed in October 1943, the third conference was called "Moscow Declaration" held where operation plan was made and formally the name 'United Nations' was announced, the fourth meeting was called "Tehran Declaration" in November 1943 where the countries participated endorsed the plan of Moscow. The fifth conference was called "Bretton Woods Conference" which was held in New Hampshire in the U.S in July 1944 where parties decided to form three organizations – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB). Later, GATT was renamed World Trade Organization (WTO). The sixth conference was "Dumbarton Oaks Con-

ference" held in Washington in the U.S in August and September of 1944.

Two steps were taken, one of which was inviting all the countries for feedback and the second was only for selected countries (U.K., France, U.S.S.R and U.S.A) in a closed door meeting where they came up with forming Security Council, the seventh conference was called "Yalta Conference" which was held in Yalta (capital city of Crimea), and a final meeting was held in San Francisco in April 1945 where 50 countries participated and decided to abolish the League of Nations. They also decided to form a social and economic council, and establishment of international court of justice. Finally, the Charter was signed on June 26, 1945.

The U.N. officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, with the headquarters in New York City after the five permanent members ratified the Charter along with 46 other member states. It had faced many hurdles throughout its lifespan (Guy, 2001).

UN played little role

As of now, 192 member states are registered members of the U.N. Five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, each of which has veto power, while 15 temporary members for the Security Council. From its headquarters, the UN and its agencies decide on administrative and other issues in regular meetings held throughout each year. The principal headquarters of the UN are in New York, but some leading other agencies of the U.N. including regional headquarters of the U.N. are located in Geneva, The Hague, Vienna, Montreal, Copenhagen, Bonn and Thailand.

The Secretary General is the most recognized post throughout the world. The Trusteeship Council was included in the UN in order to inquire into the background information of any nation and make suggestions to the U.N. that would help decolonize the countries which were colonized by the European powers; as a result, many countries became sovereign states. However, the Trusteeship Council suspended all its operations in 1994 with the independence of Palau. Although it remains as one of the main bodies of the U.N., it is no longer active.

However, the UN has failed to realize that the Trusteeship Council is really needed in the post-colonial period because many nations were brought under one umbrella by the Europeans for their own administrative convenience and those nations still feel that they should be liberated from the majority and returned to their initial independence (United Nations: Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/>).

For instance, Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka are two totally different cultural entities. They do not share common cultural, linguistic, religious, historical, political or economic ties. As a result, both ethnic groups have been in conflict since independence from Britain in 1948. At first, they fought through peaceful political agitations

until, in 1983 when the Tamil militants rose to fight militarily for independence when talking proved futile. Were the Trusteeship Council effective, they could have sent monitors to study the situation before identifying Tamil aspirations. This would have avoided the deaths of over 100,000 Tamil civilians, in addition to over 20,000 LTTE cadres and over 20,000 Sri Lankan soldiers.

The only body that is effective is the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), who reach out to the people around the world through various programs through the WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR and others. However, these organizations were pulled out from the war zones in the case of Sri Lanka and other powerful hegemonic bodies of the U.N. failed to assist the ECOSOC. They failed to help the suffering civilians, which makes the entire U.N. system a failure.

Ban ki Moon talks in platitudes and his statements are merely academic and irrelevant when thousands of Tamils were dying in the hands of the Sri Lankan state through aerial and artillery shelling for more than six months without a break, Ban ki Moon failed to stop the hostilities between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan armed forces. He issued statements and sent his aid to Colombo for talks, but the UN failed to stop the hostilities. As a result, there were more than 30,000 Tamil civilians killed since January 2009 to May 2009. Over 280,000 civilians have been put in internment camps established by the government in Vavuniya without allowing the international media or UN agencies or any other non-governmental agencies to help despite outcries that the government armed forces were torturing civilians. The Inner City Press reported on June 2, 2009 quoting U.N.'s Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as its source: "Between the May 27 and May 30, over 13,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) simply disappeared from the internment camps in Vavuniya (Inner City Press)."

Some of the horrendous injustices and abuses are carried out by the Sri Lankan armed forces and their sponsored paramilitaries: Children under the age of 18 are taken into camps, separating them from their families; another group of youngsters put in another set of camps; another set of camps allocated for young women; another set of camps for married women; another set for married men; separate the infants from mothers; separate the elders from their children. So, the relatives, although they may be living in the same region, cannot meet or find out where they are because the armed forces are guarding them behind barbed wire. Physical and mental tortures include: demanding women to bathe naked in front of the soldiers, kill them and take away their kidneys and other human organs, raping women in front of their close relatives, taking thousands of youths to undisclosed locations on the pretext that they were members of the LTTE or their supporters with their whereabouts still unknown, and many other unspeakable tortures and abuses.

However, Ban ki Moon, after heavy criticisms from the EU and the U.S., went to see the ground situation in Sri

Lanka. He visited Sri Lanka on the eve of Friday, May 22, and returned to Denmark on May 23. He was given a helicopter ride by the Sri Lankan government and he managed to see the areas devastated by the war after it had been scavenged of evidence of heavy artillery bombing in advance assisted by his despicable stooge, Vijay Nambiar, whose brother was in the pay of the Sri Lankan government. He was also taken to the internment camps in Vavuniya. Actually, the government showcased their better camps. Ban ki Moon was never allowed to speak to the refugees alone. He was always accompanied by senior army commanders to ensure the refugees spoke favourably of the camps.

After the tour in the North of the island, he visited Kandy, which is the home of The Sri Dalada Maligawa or the Temple of The Sacred Tooth Relic where Sri Lankan president and his brothers along with the military leaders provided a feast to the U.N. top diplomat and others at the President's house. They told Moon about the LTTE attack on The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in 1998. After seeing and hearing all these, Moon made statements. He said Sri Lanka should resettle 80% of the displaced people by end of this year. Also, the government should fulfill the political demands of Tamils. More importantly and surprisingly, he stated that he was overwhelmed by the devastated war zone where he saw the debris of the damaged buildings, but never mentioned a word about massive human debris (Inner City Press). Over 30,000 people were killed on this stretch of land. Over 20,000 people died due to starvation and died in the roads from fatal injuries and many were shot and killed by the Sri Lankan army after capturing the areas because they thought these people were either members of the LTTE or their families. Above all, they were Tamils and that was what mattered.

The Times Newspaper, in a shocking editorial on May 29, claimed that at least 20,000 Tamil people were killed on the Mullaitivu beach by Sri Lanka army shelling. It cited evidences of aerial photographs, official documents, witness accounts and expert testimony collected by the Newspaper: "present clear evidence of an atrocity that comes close to matching Srebrenica, Darfur and other massacres of civilians." The paper further said that the casualties would be high as when international monitors, international aid agencies and even the media are given access to enter the region (Times Online). However, the government rejected access to anyone. But, Ban ki Moon was lucky enough to fly over the region escorted by the Sri Lankan military.

More heartbreakingly Ban ki Moon said he did not see heavy armoury vehicles being used by the Sri Lankan armed forces during the fighting in the region. He visited the region almost a week after the government claimed that they won military victory by capturing the areas controlled by the LTTE after killing the LTTE leaders and fighters. No one needs to be a rocket scientist to realize that the Sri Lankan armed forces can easily remove all

the heavy armoury vehicles before Moon's visit. After all, Nambiar was there in advance to advise them on the clean up lest his boss should see them.

In any event, the U.N. can no longer act as a global organization for the betterment of humanity, thanks to Ban ki Moon. Their officers are self-serving subservient to states that maintain them financially. Many international law and international relations experts argue that the U.N. should be completely reorganised, as all the administrative bodies, except the Social and Economic Council, are biased and lack the fortitude to bring global peace. Sri Lanka, a tiny island, in the Indian Ocean, is a classic example. Although not a major powerhouse for attracting the interest of global powers, with very little military power and receiver of military supplies from other countries, the corrupt behaviours of the U.N.'s top officials and their servile team could bring U.N. to its knees due.

So, the question arises as to how could the U.N. put an end to a major global crisis if any major military and economic powers are involved? The global society needs to think that any single, powerful country can use nuclear weapons against one another and even if the U.N. sends emissaries and the U.N. Secretary General visits, their

support still goes to the violators in the end. Ban ki Moon has made sure that there would be no justice to the oppressed even from the highest citadel of humanitarian justice.

REFERENCES

- Tamilnet. Available at:
<http://www.tamilnet.com/art.html?catid=13&artid=29474> Access My Library. Available at:
http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-3545407_ITM
- History Learning Site. Available at:
<http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/leagueofnations.htm>
- Guy, J. James. 2001. People, Politics and Government. Toronto: University College of Cape Breton pp. 387-392
- United Nations. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/> Inner City Press. Available at:
<http://www.innecitypress.com/untrip3may3srilanka060209.html>
- Telegraph. Available at:
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/srilanka/5374451/UN-chief-Ban-Ki-moon-visits-Tamil-refugees.html>
- Times Online. Available at:
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6383449.ece>