

Deporting me from Singapore It will not help

Brian Senewiratne

MA MD FRCP FRACP

As many people will know by now, I was deported from Singapore on 14th December 2012, when on my way to Malaysia to address meetings on the humanitarian situation in the Tamil areas of the North and East of Sri Lanka from where people are fleeing as asylum seekers. They are taking horrendous risks to flee from the brutal repression of the Sri Lankan (Sinhalese) Armed Forces and the murderous regime of President Rajapaksa and his even more murderous brother, Gotabaya, who is the *de facto* President, Mahinda Rajapaksa only being the *de jure* President.

I have, in a letter to the Australian Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, set out what I was trying to do and how I was treated in Singapore. It is in the public domain – www.brainsenewiratne.blogspot.com – in addition to several other web sites.

I sent as abbreviated version because politicians (and others) are unable, or unwilling, to read more than two pages on any subject, however complex.

The many hours I spent putting the full version together cannot go to waste since, in addition to the outrage of my deportation, I dealt with the much more serious problem of Tamil asylum seekers/refugees fleeing Sri Lanka and their treatment in Australia.

I will first sum up what has already been published:

What was this all about?

I was invited to Malaysia to address two meetings on asylum seekers, the push factors from Sri Lanka, and the problem of handling refugees/asylum seekers in Australia. The meetings were in Johor (15.12.12) and Kuala Lumpur (16.12.12), after which I was to fly out to Indonesia (Bali) to do some voluntary medical work. Since Johor is literally next to Singapore, I decided to fly to Singapore and take the coach to Johor. They were for a restricted audience of concerned people who invited me.

I was going deal with:

1. What was going on in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka – the ‘push-factors’.
2. The fact that despite the end of the armed conflict, Amnesty International (AI), Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), and all independent observers and the media are still not allowed into the area.
3. What the world hears which is what the Rajapaksa regime wants heard. They are pathological liars, documented even by the UN Secretary General’s Expert Panel which was appointed by Ban ki-Moon to look into accountability in the closing stages of the war.
4. The plight of the asylum seekers and their handling by Australia which was in breach of the UN Refugee Convention, the UN Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Convention, Australia’s own Migration policy and even the Australian Constitution (section 75 (v)).
5. The mental damage done to asylum seekers and the responsibility for us, especially in the medical profession, to oppose this inhuman government policy.

Deported

On arrival in Singapore at 5 am, 14th December 2012, I was deported back to Brisbane. I was put into a locked room in Changi airport, held incommunicado for 5 hours without food, drink or even access to a toilet, I was not allowed to use my mobile phone, or contact those who had come to meet me, or even my home. I was taken by an armed police officer to an aircraft, in full view of more than 400 people, some of them my patients, and deported back to Brisbane.

My passport was taken from me and not returned to me (despite a request) when I was leaving Singapore. That is illegal.

I was refused permission to even fly to Kuala Lumpur, and even more outrageously, to Indonesia (Bali) despite having a valid ticket.

My Deportation Order:

Issued by the Immigration and Check-point Authority – “Notice of Refusal of Entry”

This is to inform you that you are refused entry into Singapore for being ineligible for the issue of a pass under current Immigration policies

*Signed CI 2 Tan Hock Guan Michael
For Controller of Immigration
Singapore
Dated 14.12.2012*

When I asked what the ‘current Immigration policies’ were which made me ‘ineligible’, the man simply said that he was a Police Officer who had been asked to take me to the aircraft, and that Immigration policies were a matter for Immigration and should be taken up with them. When I said that that was not possible because I had been served with the Deportation Order only minutes before boarding the flight, he shrugged his shoulders and left. That was it.

What was not sent to Gillard

Here is some of what I had written in the original draft letter to Gillard but which I did not send her.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr’s visit to Sri Lanka

“Prime Minister Gillard, your Foreign Minister, Bob Carr, was dining and wining with His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapaksa in Colombo, at the time when one of his Australian citizens was being deported for no valid reason, almost certainly at the request of the Sri Lankan government. Had he known this, he could have asked Rajapaksa why he was being deported. But, of course, he did not, at that time.

It is not too late. Now that he has established ‘friendly relations’ with Rajapaksa, Mr Carr can ask him whether he knows anything about the deportation. Given that this is the man who claims to this day, that there were ‘zero civilian casualties’ during the war, and that his armed forces carried a gun in one hand and the human rights charter in the other, I doubt if he will get a truthful answer.

Pathological liars

When I say that the Rajapaksa junta are proven liars, it is based on facts. There is overwhelming evidence from many sources, not least from the UNSG's Expert Panel¹. You do not need to read the 200 page Report. Just page ii of the Executive Summary would do:

"The Panel's determination of credible allegations reveals a very different version of the final stages of the war than maintained to this day by the Government of Sri Lanka. The Government says it pursued a "humanitarian rescue operation with a policy of "zero civilian casualties". In stark contrast, the Panel found credible allegations, which of proven, indicate that a wide range of serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.....some of which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Indeed, the conduct of the war represented a grave assault on the entire regime of international law designed to protect individual dignity during both war and peace".

The Report (page 48) cites the Defence Secretary, the President's brother Gotabaya, stating on 7 May 2010, saying that it was the first time in the world that a zero casualty principle was included in military operational orders in battle. On 18 June 2010, President Mahinda Rajapaksa said in a speech² *"we left no room for even a single bullet to be fired against ordinary citizens"*

Well, Prime Minister Gillard, these are people who have taken lying to a height that is way above Adolf Hitler and Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, who perfected the 'big lie' – that if a lie is audacious enough and repeated enough times, it will be believed by the masses (and by the likes of you, Prime Minister Gillard, and many others across the world). All of you have sophisticated Embassies in Colombo. It is laughable to believe that you do not know what is going on, and what has gone on, in Sri Lanka.

Mahinda Rajapaksa and his brother Gotabaya, are pathological liars – or, as an epistemologist might delicately put it, *'Their propositions do not correspond to the facts'*.

Here are President Rajapaksa's 'zero civilian casualties' in real terms – much of it verified by the UN Secretary General's Expert Panel:

40,000+ Tamil civilians (men, women and children) - killed (Jan – May 2009). May be double that. No one did the counting since independent witnesses were expelled by the Sri Lankan government - a slaughter without witnesses.
80,000+ widows
50,000 +orphans
146,000 people unaccounted for, either dead or 'missing'

It is information such as this (and much more) that had to be prevented from being presented in Malaysia – the reason why I was deported.

The UNSG's report uses the word *"extermination"* (of the Tamils). That, Prime Minister Gillard, is Genocide.

¹ Report of the Secretary-General's panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka. Published 31 March 2011.

² " Sri Lanka has Lessons to World on Defeating Terrorism" <http://www.gov.lk/ndex.php>

Mr Carr has enhanced the ability of this murderous regime to commit gross violations of human rights by doing what he has just done in Colombo – saying that Australia will help the Sri Lankan Navy to stop people fleeing from the murderous regime in Sri Lanka.

Rajapaksa and others claim that those who flee Sri Lanka are ‘economic refugees’. If so, why is there no flood of refugees to Australia from desperately poor East Timor, or the country that I have just returned from, Vanuatu, where the unemployment rate is 50% or more?

Realpolitik

“I have been around long enough to know that you, Prime Minister Gillard, are unlikely to ask these questions or even raise this issue with the Singapore government. That is *realpolitik*. When geopolitics and trade are pitted against human rights, the latter *always* loses.

Amnesty International recognised this years ago. I was physically there in Trafalgar Square, London, in 1961, when Amnesty was launched. I was a newly qualified doctor working just a few tube-train stops away, and I knew the founder of Amnesty, the visionary Peter Benenson. He had no illusions, but said that despite the virtual impossibility of the mission, we must try. That is what AI has done all these decades, resulting in a Nobel Prize for Peace. That is what other outstanding human rights groups, Human Rights Watch and the Brussels-based International Crisis group are doing.

Instead of bothering to find out the facts about Sri Lanka, would you rather feed on what the Nobel Prize winner Harold Pinter calls, ‘*the vast tapestry of lies*’?

What was achieved?

What was achieved by my deportation? By Singapore – evidence (if that is needed) that it is an authoritarian State. It did no good for the image of Singapore. By Malaysia – the loss of an opportunity to get to know what is going on in Sri Lanka that was responsible for the flood of asylum seekers. Probably joy to those who are putting their money in the exploitation of Sri Lanka. (Malaysia is Sri Lanka’s largest trading partner, even ahead of India). By Australia – concern, of how an Australian citizen has been treated. Internationally – a sense of rage. There were no winners, except ironically, myself!

I have had an unbelievable number of phone calls, faxes, emails, visits from people to ask me if I am alright. I am fine. I am not sure that Australia is.

Am I angry?

Am I angry? No, just amused. I realised, yet again, that the totalitarian regime that runs Sri Lanka, and the Singapore regime are brothers in arms. From what happened to me in 2009 in Malaysia, that country can be included. To be added might be the unseen faces in Australia.

None of them seem to realise that in this day and age, it is impossible to prevent communication or conceal what is going on behind closed and censored doors. There is Skype, the net, and all sorts of high-tec methods of achieving what you want – which here was to expose what is going on behind the closed and censored door of the “Democratic (ha ha!!!) Socialist(ha,ha,ha!!!) Republic (Fascist state) of Sri (=

respected!!!) Lanka, and why desperate people are risking their lives to flee President Rajapaksa's country (it is quite literally his family's private property).

It also showed in the clearest possible way, the export of terrorism, true terrorism, by the terrorists running Sri Lanka and masquerading as a 'Government'".

I have been told who in Singapore was responsible for my deportation. No prizes for guessing. He has done a 'good job' for once in his life. He will surely be rewarded which has been his game for years.

The missing toys and children's clothes

"Prime Minister, I was going to Indonesia after my talks in Malaysia to do some medical and humanitarian work among the poor, which I have done for years. I was taking some toys (mainly kangaroos, koalas and dolls) for Christmas for kids who had never had a toy, and some clothes for the street kids.

When I unpacked my suitcase after returning to Brisbane, I was shocked to find that all of this had gone. Well, the case did not leave the customs area in Singapore airport. So what was taken was taken there. Here is Singapore, one of the richest in the area, where gifts for some of the poorest children in the area have been pinched while by baggage was in the care of the Singapore customs. What can I say?

As a former don in Oxford University and a highly experienced journalist, emailed me when he heard this, "It is unspeakably. Hence I cannot 'speak.'"

The medical issues with asylum seekers

"Prime Minister Gillard, the day after I returned to Australia, the Medical Journal of Australia (3-17 December 2012), arrived on my doorstep. It had an outstanding article, the leading Editorial, ***Seeking asylum: health and human rights in Australia***. The sub-heading was, "*The medical profession must advocate for a humane response to asylum seekers*". It is by Dr Louise Newman, Director, Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology, Monash University, Melbourne. Prior to that she was the Chair of the Detention Health Advisory Committee. As such she knows what she is talking about. Prime Minister, you should get this paper from her (louise.newman@monash.edu) and read it to know why I, as a doctor, am involved.

In the same medical journal, on the very first page, Ann Gregory and Ruth Armstrong, Acting Editor and Senior Deputy Editor, in "Editor's choice", in an article: "*On Earth, peace and good will and a fair go for all*", reminds us of our obligations. They say that the asylum seeker issue has become one of the most contested social issues of the past half century in a nation built on immigration. They hope that wherever individual doctors stand in the current debate, "*we can see our way as a profession, to support initiatives that ensure fair and just access....for those who seek refuge in our shores*".

That, Prime Minister, is what I have been trying to do for years, and have been threatened, abused, insulted and now deported. I was doing this as a doctor and as a concerned human being".

Politicians

“As for politicians such as yourself, Prime Minister Gillard, I will quote Harold Pinter, the winner of the 2005 Nobel Prize for Literature. In his Nobel lecture, *“Art, Truth and Politics”*:

“...the majority of politicians.....are interested, not in truth, but in power and the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power it is essential that people remain in ignorance; that they live in ignorance of the truth.....What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed.”

Everyone knows what happened, and is happening, to the Tamil civilians in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Scores of publications from internationally credible human rights groups, Amnesty International (AI) – a Nobel Prize winner, Human Rights Watch (HRW), and the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG), have documented this thoroughly. So has the UN Secretary General’s Expert panel that has called what is going on in Sri Lanka an “extermination” (of the Tamils).

Channel 4 (UK) has produced visual evidence in two videos, which has shocked the world. One of these was shown at the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva. It was aired here in Australia, on ABC “Four Corners”. Kerry O’Brien said, *“Last week we showed you the slaughter of cattle. This week we will show you the slaughter of human beings”*.

It was an appropriate introduction to the shocking video which showed bound naked Tamil man and women being executed by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, of hospitals being bombed and civilians being herded and killed by these Forces. O’Brien ended the program with another appropriate comment, *“I don’t know what more evidence is needed (of war crimes)”*.

Everyone knows that when President Mahinda Rajapaksa says that what was conducted by his Government was a war with ‘zero civilian casualties’, and that his Armed Forces went to war ‘with a weapon in one hand and the Human Rights Charter in the other’, he is not only lying but getting into the ridiculous. Yet, he has not been challenged, let alone held accountable, for committing war crimes, crimes against humanity, even genocide of the Tamils.

So was the previous President of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, who happens to be my cousin. She carpet-bombed Jaffna, in the Tamil North with half a million civilians. The then UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed serious concern. She had the temerity to say (to an international audience) that during her tenure as President, only one Tamil girl had been raped. I wrote to her asking for the *name* of this girl, so that I can assure the mothers of the hundreds of Tamil girls who have been raped in Sri Lanka, that it was only a ‘pretence rape’ and if they got pregnant it was a ‘pseudo-pregnancy’. The child, when born, was ‘pure imagination’ – a ‘phantom child’.

I am just about to publish a paper on this, *“An epidemic of Rape of Tamil women and girls in Sri Lanka by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces”*. This is not irrelevant when dealing with the problem of asylum seekers, since it is to escape being raped that so many Tamil parents are sending their daughters away as refugees, or getting them married at an early age.

Of serious concern is what is going in Sri Lanka today – more than three years after the end of the war and the ‘victory’ of the Sri Lankan government – if mass murder of civilians is a ‘victory’. In the just concluded UN Universal Periodic Review

(November- December 2012), where human rights in Sri Lanka was specifically taken up, the AI Submission was devastating:

“Sri Lanka: Reconciliation at a crossroads: Continuing impunity, arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearances.”

The incidence of rape of Tamil women and girls has escalated. That is one reason why AI, HRW and ICG are banned from visiting Sri Lanka, the Tamil North and East in particular. It was to prevent me from presenting this and other highly damaging information in Malaysia, that I was deported. Of that, there can be no doubt.

It is from this disastrous situation that people (Tamils) are escaping, if they can (and only very few can). There are hundreds of thousands who cannot afford the not inconsiderable cost. Those who can, are the lucky few, except for those who sink to the bottom of the Ocean – Australia’s ‘Indian Ocean solution’ to asylum seekers.

If, as the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) claims, the Tamil civilians have been ‘rescued’ from ‘terrorists’ and been successfully rehabilitated, and that there are now only happy smiling faces, how come AI, HRW and ICG and all independent observers, are still barred from visiting the area so that these claims can be checked? The GoSL cannot have it both ways. It has got away with it. This is unacceptable.

Let me quote Pinter again:

“It never happened. Nothing ever happened. Even when it is happening, it wasn’t happening. It didn’t matter. It was of no interest”.

Prime Minister Gillard, what happened in Sri Lanka, and is still happening, is of interest. Your Foreign Minister is visiting President Rajapaksa right now as I write this letter to you. Did he ask the President what happened in the closing stages of the war? Did he ask why internationally credible human rights groups cannot enter the country even now, three years after the end of the armed conflict? Did he say that he wanted to go to the North and East and see the Tamil people who, given half a chance, would be on the next boat out of the country? Are they ‘economic refugees’ or people fleeing a murderous regime?

Neither you nor your Foreign Minister really know, do you? You don’t because neither has been to the North and East of Sri Lanka and spoken to ordinary people to make an assessment of the terrifying life they lead under a brutal, murderous Armed Forces and Police, who are Sinhalese, 99.9% and 95% respectively, who treat Tamil civilians as the ‘spoils of war’ – to be used and abused with impunity. You simply accept what the notoriously dishonest Sri Lankan government releases to the world.

Did Mr Carr insist on going, unaccompanied by a Rajapaksa stooge or a man with a gun, to speak with Rt Rev Bishop Rayappu Joseph, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Mannar, in the Tamil North West? I bet he did not.

Did he (you, and your Government) think it better to feed on ‘*the vast tapestry of lies*’ of the Rajapaksa junta, give them \$35 million of Australian taxpayer’s money to swell their already swollen bank accounts in Sri Lanka and abroad, shake the blood-stained hands of President Mahinda Rajapaksa, and the blood-drenched hands of his brother, Gotabaya, ‘Defence Secretary’, but in effect, as I have said, is the *de facto* President - his brother only being the *de jure* President? And leave.

It is important that you, and even more so, the decent people in this country, Australia, know what is happening in a country from where people are seeking asylum. It is important for them to know what has happened to a fellow Australian, who attempted to address this problem, in Malaysia (at the request of concerned people in that country).

Let me quote Barack Obama who in his famous Cairo address said:

“There is one rule that lies at the heart of every religion –

that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

This truth transcends nations and peoples – a belief the isn’t new; that isn’t black or white; that isn’t Christian, or Muslim or Jew. It’s a belief that pulsed in the cradle of civilization, and still beats in the heart of billions”.

Prime Minister Gillard, this is what it means to be a human being, and share this world with fellow human beings. If this simple concept is grasped and the sentiment expressed implemented, the world we share will be a better place for all of us to live in.

This is particularly so for the 42 million refugees in the world – the shocking fact that one person in 115 on this planet is a refugee. They are people fleeing wars and brutality, for no fault of their own except that they were born in the ‘wrong’ place.

Despite alarmist language, irresponsible suggestions and downright lies, that Australia is “a generous taker of refugees”, Australia is one of the most ‘non-generous’. The number of refugees taken by Australia in relation to its population and wealth is abysmally small. Only one refugee is taken for every 1,600 people in Australia (per capita GDP \$35,677, the 13th highest in the world), while one is taken for every 40 people in a miserably poor country, Tanzania, per capita GDP \$1,263, 144th from the top.

Like Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and many in your government and your Party, I am a Christian, living in a supposed ‘Christian country’. Excuse me while I laugh! It is a most un-Christlike Christian who disregards the ‘*When I was homeless you took me in*’ provision, when those in need of a home have a brown skin’. That, Prime Minister, and Hon Kevin Rudd, is not Christianity but hypocrisy.

What is the game?

Prime Minister Gillard, I have a question for you and your Government, for which I do not expect an honest answer. What is your game? I have worked out the game of your Opposition under that dreadful Tony Abbott and his Liberal-National party, who will replace you – for sure. They have learnt nothing from John Howard. They will take Australia even further into the abyss of inhumanity.

I have worked out India’s game of ‘supporting’ the Tamils to keep Tamil Nadu quiet, and also being in President Rajapaksa’s bed, for economic and geopolitical reasons – to hell with the human rights of the Tamils.

I have worked out China's game to establish a military base in Sri Lanka – one of China's 'String of Pearls'³ to ensure the safety of the oil supply from the Middle East and manufactured goods going the other way. Being allowed to plunder Sri Lanka is a bonus.

I have worked out the game of the USA, to keep China out and establish a firm footing in Sri Lanka for geopolitical 'needs'. It was a US Admiral Alfred Mahan who said a hundred years ago that whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. That is the US game.

I have worked out the British game. The same as the rest – to be in bed with the Rajapaksa regime rather than sort of the mess that they left behind when they left Ceylon in 1948 leaving the country in Sinhalese hands. Are the British playing a game? Of course they have. Why else would they not kick Sri Lanka out of the (British) Commonwealth – which is fast becoming a joke?

I have, of course, worked out President Rajapaksa's game – to make Sri Lanka into a Buddhist country, get rid of the Tamils or make them non-people, plunder the country as never before – even more than what my cousin, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga did, to establish a Rajapaksa dynasty (as his brother Basil recently said), and to remain in power for ever.

But what is your game and the game of the Labor Party that I have supported for the past 36 years that I have been in Australia? When you sent Foreign Minister Bob Carr who arrived in Colombo on the day I was deported from Singapore, to cooperate and train a brutal dictatorship that has committed crimes against humanity and even Genocide of the Tamil people, he was carrying out your agenda and that of your government. What message were you sending the Tamil people, thousands of them, citizens of Australia. To say that it is to help Sri Lanka, is laughable. That is for kids – fairy stories. It is an insult to the intelligence of all of us to expect us to believe these fairy stories. You and your fellow politicians and bureaucrats will be held accountable some day (I hope).

The Tamils do not have the might to fight all these international forces, political adventurers and opportunists, people who have no concern about human rights, whatever the façade. All the Tamils can do is to flee a dreadful regime in Sri Lanka, get to Australia, and then be treated as criminals or sink to the bottom of the Ocean in dozens of unseaworthy boats that have sunk or been sunk by the Sri Lankan Navy that you are supporting so strongly.

To get you out of your comfort zone, Prime Minister Gillard, I have just this past week had an email from a clergyman in the Tamil North asking me to urge Australia not to send any refugees back to Sri Lanka. Every one of the asylum seekers sent to his area by Australia, without exception, has been tortured, put into detention, killed or have 'disappeared'. That is what happens in the Tamil North, which is a military/police state run by the Sinhalese military and Police.

It concerns me greatly that the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has just sent officers to question (intimidate) the outspoken Rt Rev Dr Rayappu Joseph, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Mannar in the Tamil North. The next step will be that he

³ The term was used in an internal United States Department of Defence report by Christopher Pehrson: "*String of Pearls: Meeting the challenge of China's rising power across the Asian littoral*". It describes China's rising geopolitical influence through efforts to increase access to ports and airfields, develop special diplomatic relationships, and modernize military forces that extend from the South China Sea through the Strait of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean, and on to the Persian Gulf.

will 'disappear' in a white van – be 'white vanned'. That is why the world must be informed, which is what I have been trying to do.

The Pope will have to act. After all, it is one of his flock who is under (real) threat. Will he? I doubt it. I have a photograph of the Pope clasping the blood-stained hands of Mahinda Rajapaksa - clasping it not with one hand but with both!

Vatican diplomacy has blessed many of the tyrants and torturers of recent history, betraying Catholic idealists in Singapore to Lee Kuan Yew, and secretly exerting pressure on the British government to free 'Torturer-in-Chief', former General Augusto Pinochet, who was arrested in Britain and was wanted by Spain to face charges of murder and torture. The Vatican's unfitness for any role in world affairs could hardly have been better illustrated.

So I am not holding my breath that the Vatican will act even though Bishop Rayappu Joseph we may well be the Sri Lankan version of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador who was executed by government gunmen when he raised the Chalice celebrating Holy Communion.

Before I wish you a Merry Christmas, let me remind you of what that Irish statesman, politician, author and philosopher said so many years ago:

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

You are doing much worse. You and your Government are helping evil people, the Rajapaksa totalitarian regime, to commit even more atrocities. This is far more serious than what the Singapore government did to me.

Let me wish you

Since Christmas is round the corner, I wish you and Bob Carr a Happy Christmas. Being an atheist, that might mean nothing to you but it might to others, including some of the asylum seekers who are Christians. It is absurd to wish the asylum seekers a Happy Christmas. All I can do is to say, *"May the Good Lord be with you"*, since no one else will.

More than meaninglessly wishing you a Merry Christmas, I will ask you what you are going to do about the outrage that I have been subjected to – I a citizen of this country of which you are the Prime Minister – for now?

Yours sincerely

Brian Senewiratne"

That is the end of my (original) letter to Gillard.

Now let me address you in the international community

Do I expect Prime Minister Gillard to act?

No, I do not. At most, I will get a short meaningless note from one of her numerous scribes:

Dear Mr Senewiratne (not 'Dr' despite my doctorate. In the Deportation order issued in Singapore, they could not even get my sex right. It was to 'Mr Mrs Miss Ms Brian Senewiratne')

*"Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister. It will be considered.
Thank you again for bringing it to her attention.*

*Joe Bloggs
Director, Do-Nothing Department,
Prime Minister's Office
Canberra.*

Knowing this, why did I write?

Why did I spend so many hours, writing to her at all? It was written for you. It was written in the hope that you will protest. You, especially voters in Australia, whom the Hon Prime Minister will have to 'meet' in the not too distant future to win an impossible-to-win General Election. She and her (Labor) Government will be decimated and replaced by someone worse, Tony Abbot and the Liberal-National party, whose policy is to send the boats with asylum seekers back even before they discharge their human cargo. That will make certain that these unseaworthy boats will sink – the 'Indian Ocean solution' to the asylum-seeker 'problem'.

I want you to write letters, to the Australian Prime Minister (Office of the Prime Minister, Canberra, Australia ACT 2600).

What will happen to these letters? They will end up in her dustbin. I took this up with Peter Benenson, the visionary founder of Amnesty. It was 1961. When he suggested writing letters to the Portuguese dictator, Salazar, I laughed, and said, "It will end in his dustbin". To this he replied, "Yes it will if a few of us write. If hundreds of thousand do, they might still find their way to the dustbin. If so, let's fill his dustbin." That is what AI has done all these years and has continued to do – which is why its membership now exceeds 3 million, and every country in the world, including Rajapaksa's regime, is petrified of. The achievements were recognised by the award of a Nobel Prize for Peace.

By all means, lobby your (useless) politician. They all are. Pester them, harass them, irritate them, be a pain in their neck, and drive them mad, till they respond.

Business and Trade, not human rights

The Singaporean government owns several investment companies, which have invested in Australia. The two largest are: Temasek and the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation ('GIC').

Temasek owns...

- 100% of SingaporePower, which owns the entire Victorian electricity transmission network.
- 63% of Singtel, one of Asia's largest telecommunications companies. Singtel owns 100% of the Australian telecommunications carrier Optus.
- 56% of Singapore Airlines.
- 53% of Australand (through Ausprop Holdings & Austvale Holdings), which recently successfully bid to construct a distribution centre for Coles Myer.

- 19% of JetStarAsia. 21% of JetStarAsia is owned by Tony Chew (who is a Director of Keppel Corp, which is 32% owned by Temasek). Qantas owns 49% of JetStarAsia.

This is why the Australian government will not act.

Nor will it act against the murderous regime in Sri Lanka. That is why it is so important to hit where it hurts. The Sri Lankan monster has a soft underbelly. That is the Economy. That's what worked in apartheid South Africa.

When I was visiting Archbishop Desmond Tutu, I met several ANC leaders. They said that the only two things that worked in dismantling the dreadful apartheid regime was a boycott of trade and sport, especially cricket. Nothing else had the slightest effect. All the numerous UN Resolutions and the like, they were water off a duck's back.

Boycott

Don't just stop there. Act. Yes ACT. Do something. Start a boycott of all goods and services in and out of Sri Lanka, garments, tourism, tea, tourism – the lot. Till when? Till Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch is admitted to Sri Lanka.

Charge the war criminals

Collect the evidence – now readily available from the asylum seekers who were there. Send the evidence to me and I will forward it to people like Geoffrey Robertson QC in London or Prof Francis Boyle in the US, who will drag these gentlemen, mainly Gotabaya Rajapaksa, to the International Criminal Court, and charge them. Win or lose is not important. What is important is that they be dragged to an International Court.

This is by no means all that you can do. One thing you cannot do is to do nothing.

A choice

Sri Lanka has a choice: Peace with Justice or An unjust Peace with permanent hostility of the Tamil people in the North and East. If the latter is chosen, protest we must and we will. Silencing us will not work, nor will deportation – also a way of silencing. It will not work because there are more ways than one to tell the world what is going on behind the closed and censored doors of Sri Lanka. It will not work, because the Totalitarian regime that runs Sri Lanka are few, we are many. It will not work because all they have are repression and violence to settle all problems. We have the moral high ground of standing with the oppressed.

Australia has a choice: to quit the UN Refugee Convention, the UN Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and do what it wants to the Aborigines (the original inhabitants of this country who have been treated in an appalling way), and the asylum seekers/refugees. What it cannot do is to sign these various national and international undertakings, and then violate them. If it does, and decides to become a barbaric country, protest we must and we will.

Brian Senewiratne

Brisbane, Australia.

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