



TV

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

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HELPING THE DISPLACED IN SRI LANKA

VIDEO

CROWDED SETTLEMENT

DIRTY CANAL / REFUGEES

S. MAHENDRAN, NEWLY
DISPLACED IN SRI LANKA,
ON CAMERA

MAHENDRAN FAMILY

MAN SITS ON GROUND

AUDIO

NARRATION

Since the beginning of the conflict, Vavuniya, in central Sri Lanka, has been a place of refuge for Tamils who escaped the violence. Thousands of the displaced still live in wretched conditions in crowded welfare centres. This is Ponthoddan, one of the oldest of such settlements. It was built in 1990. More than 3,000 people live here now.

(19.5)

S. MAHENDRAN: (Sri Lankan) **M**

"The government has been shelling this area for the past two weeks so we moved to another place for safety. When I went back to check our rice field, that's when the government troops took the first group of displaced people down here to Vavuniya." (13.5)

NARRATION

For Mahendran the welfare centre represents a welcome escape from the immediate violence. But for those who came here more than a decade ago it seems more like a prison. Because of the increased

UNHCR OFFICIAL VISITS
SITE

tensions, few of the displaced venture outside the camps. Many used to work in nearby fields, but now they feel exposed and are often searched and sometimes arrested. (21)

WELFARE CENTRE / SOLAR
LAMP POST

To increase their security, UNHCR has installed solar powered lights and a perimeter fence around the welfare centre. In addition, identity cards have been issued to the long term residents. (10.5)

SORTING OF
IDENTIFICATION CARDS

The cards are a joint effort by the government and UNHCR. Maadhaven Muthupillai of UNHCR. (4.5)

MAADHAVEN MUTHUPILLAI,
UNHCR OFFICIAL, ON
CAMERA

MAADHAVEN MUTHUPILLAI: (English) **M**

“The identification is the problem for them. The army checks and the police checks and all the other forces are checking. So at the check points they face many difficulties with their existing identity card.” (18)

BOY AND MOTHER AT
HOME IN WELFARE CENTRE

NARRATION

For the long term displaced there is little hope of returning to their towns or villages. They dream of escaping their limited life in the welfare centre where each family sleeps, eats, studies and lives in a three square metre space. (12)

COUPLE WORKING IN
VEGETABLE GARDEN

Most hope to be relocated to land under a project set up by the Sri Lankan Government, UNHCR and two local NGO's. So far, more than 300 families have been moved out of welfare centres to start a new life on land 15 kilometres away. Here, they are helped to build a simple two room house on a half acre plot.(19)

WS. WELFARE CENTRE

Unfortunately this project can only help a fraction of those displaced and each day the violence is forcing more families to flee. (7.5)

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Leigh Foster for the United Nations. (3)