

# **Human Security of the Smaller Minority IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) During and After the Conflict in Sri Lanka: Case Study of Muslim IDPs**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this article is to examine the protection of the human security of the smaller minority during and after the conflict. It will illustrate the mentioned problematic with an analysis of the case of Sri Lanka's Muslim IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) focusing on the effectiveness and the limit of international response to human security of the Muslim IDPs through the evaluation of the World Bank Housing Project in the Puttalam district of Sri Lanka.

The protracted armed conflict which started in 1983 between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has killed 90,000 people and left over one million IDPs, most of these IDPs were Tamils and Muslims (the two minority groups). The victimization of Muslim IDPs was caused by the nature of this war, as ethnic cleansing was convicted by the LTTE against the Muslim population. As a result, Muslim families were largely expelled from the Northern Province and have been living under the IDP camps in the North Western Province (Puttalam district) of Sri Lanka. This study reviews the World Bank Housing Project (the Puttalam Housing Project), one of the biggest projects done in 2007 for the IDPs at the time, and evaluates the degree to which the World Bank as a major donor international organization was able to protect the Muslim IDPs and response to their human security challenges. This article will ultimately argue that a special attention is needed to protect the smaller minority (Muslim IDPs) in the conflict both domestically and internationally.

## **Keywords**

Human Security, Muslim IDPs, the World Bank Housing Project

## **1. Introduction**

The armed conflict which started in 1983 between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ended finally in May 2009 with the defeat of LTTE. During its protracted duration, the conflict claimed the lives of 90,000 people and resulted in over one million IDPs from three ethnic groups: Tamils (82%), Muslims (14%) and Sinhalese (4%). These numbers contrast with the population ratio of these ethnic groups: Tamil (18%), Muslims (8%) and Sinhalese (74%) in Sri Lanka, meaning that the conflict was particularly damaging to the lives of Tamil and Muslim ethnic minorities.

The aim of the present article is to shed some light on the problem of protecting a group of IDPs, namely the Muslim IDPs that resulted from this war and that has been so far overseen by most academic studies through the case of the Sri Lankan conflict. It is hoped that the analysis of this group can help us to understand the particular problematic of smaller minorities' human security challenges during and after armed conflicts, and the need for better strategies from the international community to respond to such specific human security challenges in the future.

While the Sri Lankan conflict has been particularly detrimental for the Tamil and Muslim ethnic minorities in Sri Lanka, one of these two groups, the Tamil minority has been explored in great extent by academics while the other, the Muslim minority has been largely ignored. A large number of researchers such as Shanmugaratnam (2000), Uyangoda (2005) and Thomas & Weiss (2006) have focused on the vulnerability of the Tamil minority in the conflict. In contrast to this, very little has been discussed about the plights of the Muslims of the North and Eastern Provinces, who became victims of the Sri Lanka's long lasting conflict but that have been largely ignored due to their non-central involvement in the war although they account for a significant portion of the affected population. Furthermore, the academic negligence of the condition of Muslim IDPs can be only compared to the omissions of the national government and international organizations to assist this smaller minority during and after conflict.

Cronologically, the armed conflict in Sri Lanka can be divided into four periods: Eelam War I (1983-1990), Eelam War II (1990-1995), Eelam War III (1995-2002) and Eelam War IV (2006-2009). As is shown in Table-1 (Appendix - P, 58), each Eelam war produced thousands of IDPs within the country, being the Eelam War IV the period in which the largest number of IDPs was produced, accounting for about 950,000 people.

In October 1990, when the Eelam War II started, the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) used ethnic-cleansing<sup>1</sup> as a strategy, and forcibly expelled about 15,000

Muslim families from the Northern Province in five districts: Jaffna 3,475, Mannar 8,200, Vavuniya 1,800, Mulaitheevu 1,000 and Kilinochi 525 (UNHCR Report. October 2, 2010). The entire Muslim population in the Northern Province was forcibly evicted from their homes at gun point and turned into IDPs by the LTTE within a few hours. It has been 22 years since the Muslims were evacuated from their homes and live in IDP camps in the Puttalam district of Sri Lanka. So far no proper durable solution has been provided for them either by the Sri Lankan government or any of the involved international organizations.

Muslim IDPs are particularly vulnerable in terms of long-term internal displacement when compared to Tamil and Sinhala IDPs. It is reported that more than 90% of Muslim IDPs have continued to live in IDP camps in the Puttalam district after over two decades from their eviction. In 2007 the World Bank provided 6,000 houses for the Muslim IDPs and relocated some of them in the Puttalam district while others are waiting to go either to their previous home-town or looking for any other alternatives (durable solutions) to permanently settle in Puttalam. In June 2009, right after the war ended in Sri Lanka, the President Mahinda Rajapaksa promised that the remaining Muslim IDPs (40,000) must be repatriated to their home-town on or before June 2010.

It has been three years since the promise was given, but repatriation has not yet been possible. According to UNHCR report in March 2012, there are 125,000 IDPs who live in IDP camps, among them 40,000 are Muslims who live in the Puttalam district while the rest of 85,000 are Tamils who live in Vavuniya district. The Tamil IDPs are in the process of repatriation with the assistance from the Sri Lankan government. Meanwhile, no repatriation or local integration is in sight for the Muslim IDPs.

The present research is mainly based on field work research which was conducted by the author during the period of 2008, 2010 and 2012 in the Puttalam district. Interviews were held with a number of stakeholders at various levels: Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, JICA staff, Project director, Village headmen, IDP Camp officers and Residents in IDP camps. During the fieldwork, 9/145 IDP camps were selected from four administrative divisions: Kalpitiya-3/47, Mundal-2/43, Vannathaviluwa-2/30, and Puttalam-2/25 and carried out interviews with more than 100 IDPs. The four administrative divisions were chosen because they contain about 97% of Muslim IDPs. The author had face to face interviews with the above-mentioned stakeholders and visited IDP camps to examine the vulnerability of IDPs and their protection issue.

The series of field work surveys suggests that a large number of Muslim IDPs live in the IDP camps and face various threats in their daily lives. Moreover, this research shows

evidence of the ongoing marginalization of the Muslim IDPS and the shortcomings of the Sri Lankan government and international organizations to respond to the smaller minority's human security threats as it will be shown in the following sections. Accordingly, this article will examine the general issues regarding the protection of IDPs, the provisions for the protection of smaller minorities, and the general situation of the Muslim IDPs regarding the reception of assistance, and explore the achievements and limitations of the case of the World Bank housing project that targeted Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka.

## **2. Protection of IDPs: General Trend**

Protection of IDPs has become an important issue among international organizations in the post Cold War period (after 1991). Prior to the Cold War period the international community used the concept of humanitarian-intervention<sup>2</sup> and protected large numbers of civilians both from armed conflicts and human rights violations. However, after the Cold War ended, the concept of human security emerged and many national and international organizations began to employ this concept to call for the necessity of international community in protecting those who are victimized in civil wars and armed conflicts (Annan K. 1998: 547).

The UNDP-Human Development Report (HDR) published in 1994 is a key reference on human security. The UNDP-HDR identifies two important pillars of human security: freedom from fear and freedom from want. Freedom from fear mainly refers to threats caused by violent incidents such as armed conflicts, ethnic strife and human-rights violations, while freedom from want relates to non-violent threats such as hunger, disease, and natural disasters (UNDP-HDR. 1994: 22-25). One of the most important characteristics of the above mentioned UNDP report is that, the necessity of protection for both refugees and IDPs. The concept of human security enshrined in the report highlighted that how IDPs and refugees should be recognized as victims of armed conflicts and be the target of protection both at the national and international level.

It has been generally conceived that the protection of IDPs mainly relies on the national government. However it has been found that not all national governments fulfill this responsibility in the same manner and provide protection for its IDPs. Some national regimes deliberately subject their peoples to displacement, starvation, mass killings and other serious human rights violations while other countries do not have the capacity to deal with the problem on their own. In situation where states are unwilling or unable to protect IDPs in their countries the responsibility for protecting them goes to the

international community (Annan K. 1998: 548).

International community provides two types of protection for IDPs: firstly, when human rights are violated and secondly, when people are affected by armed conflicts. As for the human rights violations, international community established a set of guiding principles in 1998. The guiding principle has five sections and thirty principles. Each section and principle explains the basic rights of IDPs and clarifies the role of national government and international community in protecting IDPs (Guiding Principles on IDPs. 1998).

Over the past decade, many international organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO, IOM, UN-OCHA, UN-HABITAT, World Food Program and the World Bank have initiated projects for protecting IDPs and have shown commitment to provide protection to the IDPs. Protection is a process where international organizations safeguard the basic rights of IDPs (both during and after the conflict).

## **2.1. Protection of Muslim IDPs: During & After the Conflict in Sri Lanka**

As is stated earlier, the domestic government has the primary responsibility for protecting the IDPs. The Guiding Principles of IDPs (1998) states that, “IDPs have the rights to request their basic needs and receive protection from the domestic government.” Furthermore, the Guiding Principle says that “they shall not be persecuted for making such request,” and that “every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home of habitual residence.” However, due to the armed conflict with the LTTE that the Sri Lankan government had to wage war against, it could not protect the IDPs in Sri Lanka. Muslims IDPs were, as a matter of fact, more victimized for two reasons: forced expulsion and the lack of governmental and international actions to respond to the challenges of security faced by the smaller minority.

When the Muslims were evacuated from the Northern Province in 1990 by the LTTE, the Sri Lankan government could not protect them from the forced displacement. Despite the presence of the Sri Lankan government forces and international organizations, the forced expulsion was not prevented by any party. This happened partially because the government considered the forced expulsion as the natural consequence of its military activities against the LTTE (Hasbulla. 2004: 6-7)

To make the initial situation of the expulsion even worse, there was a lack of initiatives of the government in applying the international humanitarian law and the international human rights law both for the protection of civilians. When the Sri Lankan government concentrated its military campaign against the LTTE, it did not have much

room to prevent the Muslim IDPs (the smaller minority in Sri Lanka when they were expelled in the Northern Province). In addition, the international community did not pay much attention to the Muslim IDPs as it often coordinated their assistance with the Sri Lankan government that promoted the protection of the Tamil IDPs as the Tamil IDPs were regarded as the direct victims in the armed conflict (Ibid. 2004: 8). This shows that the Muslim IDPs were generally marginalized in terms of protection both from the Sri Lankan government and international community during their ethnic cleansing in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Although the Sri Lankan government could not protect the Muslim IDPs during the armed conflict, it was able to provide some humanitarian assistance with the help of international organizations to the Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government provided, for example, food assistance with the help of World Food Program (WFP). Moreover the Sri Lankan government also provided some housing assistance to the Muslim IDPs under the World Bank Housing Project in the Puttalam district.

Regarding the food assistance there are many criticisms about the quality of food, distribution of food, and the amount of food. It is reported that the quality of food is always lower when compared to other food items. In terms of food distribution, continuous delays in the process of distribution were reported, and the amount of food (Rs.1300 which is equal to US\$ 10) for a family was not enough for a month (Interview with a group of Muslim IDPs at the Kalpitiya IDP camp in the Puttalam district. March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

Regarding the housing assistance, the Sri Lankan government signed an agreement with the World Bank in 2007 and agreed to provide 6,000 houses to the Muslim IDPs with the financial assistance from the World Bank. In fact, it took nearly 17 years to the Sri Lankan government to come for such alternative solutions (durable solutions) for the Muslim IDPs. It showed that the Sri Lankan government paid less focus on the Muslim IDPs during the armed conflict in Sri Lanka. Although, the Sri Lankan government provided a housing project with the financial assistance from the World Bank, there are many criticisms about the housing construction and implementations. This will be explained in detail at section-4.

With regard to the smaller minority (Muslim IDPs) after the conflict (from 2009 – onwards), the Sri Lankan government did not take any comprehensive effort to protect the Muslim IDPs. It is noted that the Sri Lankan government is only focusing on the Tamil IDPs and repatriates them to their home town. In fact, the Sri Lankan government receives lot of pressure from the international community to the repatriation of Tamil

IDPs. But in the case of Muslim IDPs, none of the foreign countries put pressure to the Sri Lankan government.

Looking at the repatriation of IDPs from the Muslim IDPs' point of view, the Sri Lankan government did not employ the principle of equity among the ethnic IDPs in Sri Lanka. For example, In the case of Sinhala IDPs, they were relocated in 2006 with the assistance from the Sri Lankan government and international organizations in the North-central Province of Sri Lanka. In the case of Tamil IDPs, the Sri Lankan government focused their repatriation especially in the post-conflict era and supporting them consistently.

It is noted that 80% of Tamil IDPs are repatriated in their homes in Northern Province. In the case of Muslim IDPs there is no repatriation or any housing assistance from the Sri Lankan government in the post conflict era except the World Bank Housing Project that was started in 2007 in the Puttalam district. Thus, the Sri Lankan government has been using various approach and different treatments to the IDPs based on their ethnicity in Sri Lanka: the more priority was given to the majority Sinhalese, the next to the Tamils, and the last to the Muslims.

### **3. Limitation of Domestic & International Assistance towards Muslim IDPs**

The Muslim IDPs are generally more vulnerable in terms of receiving assistance from the domestic and international organizations when compared to the Tamil IDPs in Sri Lanka. Some of the issues which explain why the Muslims were marginalized from receiving the financial assistance are the following: the long term stay in IDP camps, lack of financial assistance from international organizations and marginalization during the process of foreign assistance and marginalization in the development projects.

#### **3.1. Characteristics of Major Problems with IDPs**

##### **The Prolonged Stay in IDP Camps**

According to the UNHCR report in March 2012, the IDPs can be divided into two categories: Old IDPs and New IDPs. Old IDP means those who displaced before the last phase of armed conflict (prior to 2006). The New IDP means those who displaced during the last phase of armed conflict (from 2006 to 2009). Currently, there 120,000 IDPs live in IDP camps, among them 40,000 are old IDPs (Muslims) and 80,000 are New IDPs (Tamils). At the moment, the Sri Lankan government is only focusing on the New IDPs (Tamils) and providing housings and infrastructure to them. From the Sri Lankan government point of view, the Muslim IDPs are quite old and adapted to this IDP camp

life. But in the case of Tamil IDPs they newly displaced from their homes and facing various threats in their IDP camps.

### **Lack of Assistance from International Organizations and domestic NGOs**

In the case of Muslim IDPs they often receive little assistance from International organizations and domestic NGOs when compared to the Tamil IDPs. In fact, all these organizations are mainly based in the North and Eastern Provinces (conflict zone). From their point of view the Tamils and the Sinhalese are the two major parties that directly got involved in the conflict in which Tamils got mostly affected. In fact, this is true that Tamils affected a lot in the conflict. Meantime it is also important to think about the smaller minority (Muslims) who were highly affected in the conflict long time ago (1990) and still live in IDP camps for more than two decades in the Sri Lankan history.

### **Marginalization During the Process of Foreign Assistance**

When the conflict end in May 2009, many international organizations and donor countries provided large amount of money to the Tamil IDPs and urged the Sri Lankan government to protect them and repatriate soon to their previous homes. But none of the international organizations or any donor countries provide financial assistance to the Muslim IDPs and focused about their repatriation. In this aspect the donor countries and international organizations played a double standard role between the Tamil and Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka.

Following statistics show that how much the foreign countries provided assistance to the Tamil IDPs in the post conflict era in Sri Lanka: United Kingdom provided UK£ 3 million to the Tamil IDPs (2009), United States of America provided US\$ 36 million (2010), Canada provided CAD 22.5 million (2010), Japan provided JPY117 million (2010), Australia provided AUD 5.25 million (2010), India has been providing 50,000 houses for IDPs (from 2010 onwards). As a result 80% of Tamil IDPs already repatriated to their homes while the remaining IDPs (80,000) are in the process of repatriation now.

### **Marginalization in the Development Projects**

The Sri Lankan government introduced two mega development projects in the post conflict period namely: Vadakkin Vasantham (Northern spring) and Killakin Uthayam (Eastern awakening). In fact, both Vadakkin Vasantham and Killakin Uthayam were mainly focused on the development activities in the North and Eastern Provinces. But in the case of Muslim IDPs, they live in the North-western Province and did not receive any



benefits from these two development projects. The above factors show that how the Muslim IDPs are vulnerable in terms of receiving the financial assistance both from the domestic and international organizations when compared to the Tamil IDPs in Sri Lanka. The following section will explain the specific case of the Relocation of Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district of Sri Lanka.

### **3.2. Relocation Problem of Muslim IDPs**

Relocation is one of the durable solutions to the Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district. Since 2007, the relocation process is being done with the financial assistance from the World Bank. A number of issues have been identified with regard to the relocation of Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka. Firstly, the long term stay of the IDP camps in the Puttalam district is becoming a grave issue as the UNHCR has estimated that about 75% of IDPs continue to live in IDP camps in the past 17 years (UNHCR report. 2007: 17). Secondly, it is the nature and the presence of Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district. There are 17 administrative divisions in the Puttalam district among them 97% of IDPs live in four administrative divisions: Kalpitiya 55%, Puttalam 33%, Mundal 8% and Vannathavillu 4% (Ibid. 2007: 18). According to this figure it was very easy to mobilize the Muslim IDPs and relocate them in the Puttalam district.

Moreover, the Muslim IDPs who live in the above four administrative divisions also have some similarities in terms of their internal displacement and their previous home towns. When IDPs came to Puttalam in 1990, they managed to find places to live together with their friends and relatives. During the fieldwork survey in Sri Lanka, it was noted that many IDPs in Kalpitiya division live with their friends and relatives, which resembles their previous lifestyle in their hometowns. Even though some of the members of their cluster communities were scattered during the process of internal-displacement eventually they managed to live with their friends and relatives (Interview with Village Head Man March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008).

According to an IDP camp officer at the Al-Manar camp in kalpitiya division, there is a youth service organization which is very much active in mobilizing the displaced people from different areas and supporting to find their relatives in certain IDP camps (Interview with IDP camp officer. March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008). Although, there are many issues that seem very positive for the relocation of Muslim IDPs, still there is no proper relocation plan from the Sri Lankan government to relocate all Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district. Following section will evaluate the World Bank Housing Project for the Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district of Sri Lanka.

#### **4. Evaluating the World Bank Housing Project in the Puttalam District**

In 2007, the World Bank provided US\$ 32 million for the Sri Lankan government to implement a housing project for the Muslim IDPs in the Puttalam district. The goal of this housing project was to relocate about 50% of Muslim IDPs and increase their capacity building in four years starting from 2007 to 2011. According to this project each eligible household received a grant of Rs. 250,000 (US\$ 2500) to construct a permanent house or Rs. 100,000 (US\$ 1000) to complete a partly-built house (World Bank Annual Report. 2007: 13-16).

According to the World Bank country director in Sri Lanka, the responsibility for providing financial assistance mainly lied on the World Bank while the implementation of the Housing Project lied on the Sri Lankan government (Interview with Naoko Ishii. July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008). It was reported that the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Service was the main actor for implementing the overall project. Puttalam Housing Project focused on the following four components: housing assistance, infrastructure, technical support, and project management. Following sections will evaluate each components based on the field work research which conducted by the author in the Puttalam district of Sri Lanka.

##### **4.1. Housing Assistance**

The World Bank allocated US\$16.1 million to build 7,885 houses in the Puttalam district. According to the World Bank report in 2007, it was estimated to build 5,653 new houses and 2,232 half-completed or semi permanent houses in 99 IDPs camps in four administrative divisions: Kalpitiya (32), Vannathavillu (24), Puttalam (22) and Mundal (21). The houses phased in over four years: 1,463 houses targeted for construction in 2007; 2,201 houses in 2008; 2,031 houses in 2009; and 2,190 houses in 2010 (World Bank report. 2007: 13-15).

Although the housing component provided cash grant for the housing constructions, there were some issues which remained unsolved in this project such as selection of beneficiaries and cash grant. Regarding the selection of beneficiaries, the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Service used the UNHCR revalidation survey which carried out in 2006 for the UNHCR's purpose. In fact, this was not comprehensive enough to address the vulnerabilities of IDPs and their provisions on housings. Moreover, the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services also prioritized some houses for the political supporters at the grass root level which eventually led many Muslim IDPs who really needs housings out of this project. In fact, this was observed by the author

during the fieldwork survey in Sri Lanka.

Regarding the cash grant, many IDPs pointed out that the cash grant which the World Bank provided was very little to build a house. It was noted at the Hidayath Nagar (Mundal administrative division) many IDPs pointed out that although they got cash grant from the World Bank it was too little for them to complete their housing construction. Further they added that due to the process of housing construction many poor IDPs had to sell their jewelries and valuables to complete the houses. “In a way we were happy that we got houses but in other way we became more indebted” (Interview with some IDPs at Hidayath Nagar. March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008).

Moreover, there was an income gap between the rich and poor among the Muslim IDPs. There were some Muslim IDPs who were relatively rich when compared to other ordinary IDPs. It was noted at Mohideen Nagar in the Puttalam administrative division, rich have built big houses using the cash grant together with their own savings while the poor struggled to finish their housing construction using their limited budget. The cash grant for housing construction has largely helped rich people to build good houses while it brought extra burdens and debts for the poor IDPs. According to author’s point of view, the purpose of housing assistance for the Muslim IDPs was good, but when it comes to the selection of beneficiaries and cash grant there were many shortcomings in this project.

#### **4.2. Infrastructure**

The World Bank allocated US\$ 15.9 million to provide infrastructure for the Muslim IDPs which included water, sanitation, environmental protection, settlement plans, and road developments. The purpose for providing infrastructure was just to enhance the welfare services and encourage the Muslim IDPs to engage in the relocation program. According to the World Bank report in 2007, 13,000 IDP families and 4,000 local residents were targeted for provisions of infrastructure. It was reported that about 5,000 tube wells, 100 water tanks, 8,500 toilets and 100 KM internal roads were targeted to be constructed for the above beneficiaries under the World Bank Housing Project (World Bank report. 2007: 18-22). Although a number of works were targeted and carried out on the infrastructure sphere, still the demand for the infrastructure was very high when compared to the construction. In fact, there was an ongoing dispute between the Muslim IDPs and local residents about sharing the infrastructure in the Puttalam district.

#### **4.3. Technical Assistance**

Puttalam Housing Project included the technical assistance as a key component for

strengthening the housing project. It supported the regulations of land title, communication campaign, social impact assessment, environmental audit, technical support, housing assessment and skills trainings. The regulations of land title aimed to review the possession of land and attempted to provide legal documentations for IDPs. It was reported that from 2004 to 2008 around 75% of IDPs who possessed their own land obtained legal document throughout the regulation of land title (Interview with Puttalam Housing Project director. March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008). Communication campaign referred to the mobilization of people towards the housing project. The social impact assessment monitored the community participation in the project. The environmental audit examined the project from the environmental perspectives. The technical audit monitored the construction of housings. The housing assessment monitored the process of housing construction. Moreover, the technical assistance also included the vocational trainings and provided carpentry trainings for Muslim IDP youths in the Puttalam district.

Although the Ministry of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Service said that it provided Technical assistance and vocational trainings for the Puttalam Housing Project, still there was a shortage of skilled labors on housing construction. It was noted at Azhar Nagar in Kalpitiya administrative division, many women and children engaged in the housing construction.

#### **4.4. Project Management**

Regarding the project management, the World Bank established an administrative body which included project director, financial manager, engineer, environmental specialist, and technical officers. Although the administrative body functioned in the Puttalam district, its role was very limited in terms of implementing the housing project. It was noted that there was a lack of coordination between the project officers and beneficiaries from top to bottom. The higher ranking officers or decision makers in the housing project did not know much about the ground reality, they mainly relied on the local staff to receive the information about the IDPs and the process of housing construction.

Meantime the beneficiaries who received the cash grant for the housing constructions also did not know much about the cash grant system and also did not have any means of contacts with the higher ranking officers. The only way that both IDPs and the higher ranking officers could communicate was through the local staff. The local staffs sometimes did not provide enough sources to the project director and did not bring the issues of IDPs to the policy makers. During my interview with the project director in the

Puttalam district (2008), he told me that he visited only two times to the IDP camps in his two years of work in Puttalam. Although he stayed in Puttalam, he did not visit to the field where the housing construction was going on.

## **5. Conclusion**

The general conclusion of this research is that the smaller minority (Muslim IDPs) in Sri Lanka has been facing various threats through and after the conflict and need protection from the Sri Lankan government and international community to respond to their human security challenges. One of the key findings of this research is that the Muslim IDPs have been marginalized in terms of protection, development assistance, and repatriation from the Sri Lankan government in the past two decades. It is noted that the Sri Lankan government favored more on the Sinhala and Tamil IDPs when compared to the Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, this research also brought to light that the role of domestic and international assistance has been limited towards the Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka. It is noted that during the post conflict period in Sri Lanka, many donor countries provided large amount of money for the Tamil IDPs and asked the Sri Lankan government to repatriate them to their previous homes. However, in the case of Muslim IDPs they did not receive such assistance either from the Sri Lankan government or from donor countries in the post conflict period. The only housing assistance that Muslim IDPs received was from the World Bank in 2007.

When analyzing the World Bank Housing Project from the Muslim IDPs' point of view, it is clear that it has several shortcomings in terms of selection of beneficiaries and cash grant. In fact, this housing project increased the poverty line among the Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka. The above-mentioned situations which Muslim IDPs experienced indicate that the government policy of protecting Muslim IDPs has been limited when compared to the Tamil and Sinhala IDPs. Thus, much more external intervention may be needed to protect the Muslim IDPs who have been left out as a minority group in society as well as better longer term solutions from both policy makers of the Sri Lankan government and international aid practitioners.

## **Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Ethnic cleansing is a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from

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certain geographic areas.

<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian-intervention refers to armed interference in one state by another state(s) with the objective of ending or reducing the suffering of the population within the first state.

## Appendix

Table-1: Internal Displacements from 1983 to 2009

<b>Eelam Wars</b>	<b>Number of Deaths</b>	<b>Number of IDPs</b>
Eelam War I 1983- 1990	12,000	600,000
Eelam War II 1990- 1995	40,000	840,000
Eelam War III 1995- 2002	62,000	525,000
Eelam War IV 2006- 2009	90,000	950, 000

(Source: Prepared by the author based on the UNHCR report in March 2010).

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