
Brigadier Shavendra: But for the civilians, we can finish off the Tiger in hours

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By Nilantha Ilangamuwa reporting from Puthukudiyiruppu

(Puthukudiyiruppu, Sri Lanka Guardian) Brigadier Shavendra Silva is the rising new hero among the heroes of the current Eelam War, not that the word Eelam War or cause has any meaning except for those who want to find something from it. This is a war against terrorism perpetrated by what is considered the most brutal and ruthless campaign against a state by a band of terrorists headed by Velupillai Prabhakaran who has no political ideology at all but a dream to create a mafia state in South Asia.

An alumnus of St Thomas's College (Matale), Brigadier Shavendra Silva is front-lining the liberation of the people of Wannu against the Tiger terrorists. He is the Brigade Commander of the 58 Division of the Sri Lanka Armed Forces. Discussing the current state on the Wannu Front, Brigadier Silva in a mood of confident and great expectations, told the Sri Lanka Guardian that the forces are well forward towards the last holding ground of the LTTE in the north of Puthukudiyiruppu and are obviously facing a stiff resistance from the last of the "fire or flee" Tigers. Some of them, he said, are desperately seeking a breach in the army ranks to flee. The time was well past midnight but Brigadier Silva hardly goes to sleep keeping a sure and steady watch monitoring troop movements, placements and possible attacks from the Tigers not only from their encircled circumstances, but amidst a mass of people they are holding as hostages. They are fighting the battle by provoking the Sri Lankan Forces to attack the civilians, retaliating their fire from amidst them. This is sheer cowardice and that much for a force that claims to be a liberation organization.

Eelam dream is a finished spectre and the armed forces under a spirited and dedicated leadership have ensured it. "Here is a man called Velupillai Prabhakaran," said Brigadier Shavendra Silva, "an arrogant leader of the Tamil Tigers who dreams that he would be Moses and will lead the Tamils to an Eelam State. He chose terrorism as the means and soon made a myth of this dream using terror as his tactics. Prophet Moses led his people in altogether different circumstances and violence of any kind was anathema to him." "The Tamils and the Tigers are two different and separate entities, one peaceful and appreciate their Sri Lankan-ness and a large majority of them live in peaceful relationship with other Sri Lankan communities. The other is an armed terror group that has no interests in the welfare of the people. Even people in Jaffna and in the East have shown in no uncertain terms that they value peaceful co-existence in the country." "What Prabhakaran achieved was, added Brigadier Silva, to subjugate them through sheer terror and even ensured that all their moderate leaders, intellectuals and professionals were killed systematically to render them to a nightmare resistance of terror. "The Tamils have lived through terror for over thirty years."

According to Brigadier Silva, the 58 division forces are now in Irappalei, the last township of the Puthukudiyiruppu where the LTTE under Pottu Amman is in forced confrontation with the advancing security forces. Brigadier Silva said that General George Smith Patton Jr. a colourful but most complicated military man of all times, once reacted: "No bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastards die for his country." When this writer met Brigadier Silva at his Commanding Office, he welcomed him warmly despite his heavy schedules and being one who has to be constantly on the watch. "First of all we must protect our country and in the process must be conscious of our responsibility to ensure a new life of hope for our civilians who are part of the Tigers' terror cults," he said. In Sri Lanka, there are many people and some politicians too who seem unable to understand that democratic values require the protection of the armed forces against such uprisings of terrorist movements. Brigadier Silva observed with a sense of pride that Sri Lanka's security forces have answered the call of the country and has ensured Tiger terrorism would be rooted out completely in the immediate future. He emphasized: "The armed forces of a country are the servants of a democratic state". Commenting on some aspects of the current war, Brigadier Silva said: "The Tigers never changed their tactics as could be expected from a sole Prabhakaran obsessive arrogance. But we changed our tactics but at this very moment, I cannot comment on what they are but certainly will once this war is over."

"The LTTE cannot see through our tactics and our own brilliant force knows how to conduct their operations while protecting the civilian population", he added. "The Tigers know if the civilians are allowed to go, they will be finished in a few hours." How we have handled the LTTE has historical significance and will be an object lesson to countries and regions plagued with terrorism. Commenting on the pro-LTTE Tamil Diaspora, Brig. Shavendra Silva said: "The whole case of Tamil Tiger terrorism has blinded the Diaspora because of the emotional bind with the community that is suffering the worst in this war and they are so far, far away from the nightmare realities to which they are subjected by their very own so-called liberators". "Just as he wiped out their moderate leaders, intellectuals and all those who opposed him, Prabhakaran never liked the Tamils but only used the ethnic issue as a means to achieve his mafia state." "As he is doing right now to hundreds of innocent civilians holding them as human shields, he has been blind to the sufferings of his own people and furthermore used the Tamil Diaspora to milk them of millions of dollars to finance his terror activities." "What are the achievements of Tamil Tigers during the last three decades?" "Prabhakaran and his fellow terrorists used Tamil people as tools to achieve their personal interests. Even the people of Wannu, who were under Tiger rule brought about by curious circumstances, never enjoyed any freedom. They suffered immensely, their agriculture was devastated and even their children were snatched away to

be forced into their frontline forces,” said Brig. Shavendra Silva.“I can tell you”, Brigadier Silva emphasized, “large number of forces personnel have become so concerned and sympathetic to the Wannu people who have suffered so much, that given the opportunity they will opt to serve them as volunteers to help them make quick recovery.”So saying, and with a victorious smile, he took off with the assurance, “Sir, I have miles to go before I sleep. The woods of Wannu may be dark and deep but we surely will deliver it safe to the people of Sri Lanka.” Courtesy: srlankaguardian.org