

PARLIAMENT WATCH – SRI LANKA*

2009 REPORT



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A Report on the proceedings of the Sixth Parliament of Sri Lanka

Background

The report covers the period from January to December 2009. The period under review was significant for Sri Lanka as it marked the end of the armed struggle that spanned over 26 years. The war was officially declared over by the Sri Lankan government on May 19, 2009 generating much hope at the end of a protracted war.

Public expectations were high with regard to the restoration of civil liberties which were long compromised to enable the execution of the war to an end. However, Sri Lanka was also left to deal with grave issues such as the 300, 000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), a war-battered economy and the lack of investment and industrial development, in addition to dealing with allegations of war crimes and human rights abuses.

This report looks at the conduct of the Sri Lankan Legislature during the year 2009 and how Parliament dealt with issues related to transparency, accountability, good governance and human rights during the last phase of Eelam War IV and its immediate conclusion.

Significant attention is also paid to the area of human rights, given its extreme importance in times of war, and the immediate aftermath when countries tend to experience more violations of rights that are constitutionally guaranteed. In addition, the report covers a range of topics including the specific issue of IDPs and freedom of expression concerns in Sri Lanka.

Period under review

This report expressly covers the final year of the Sixth Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The Sixth Parliament was dissolved on February 09, 2010 through the promulgation of Gazette No. 1640/16 of 09.02.2010.

Objectives

The objectives of the Parliament Watch project jointly initiated by Transparency International Sri Lanka (TISL) and South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) include the examination of the Legislature's conduct with regard to the country's human rights sphere, transparency and accountability in governance as well as its focus assessed through the legislative debates, follow up action and the practice of proactively legislating in furtherance of the above ideals. It is also a tool to assess public access to the Legislature.

Highlights

The national highlight during the period under review is the end of the Eelam War IV with the Sri Lankan government forces defeating the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The period is also significant as one during which there were public expectations of a speedy return to normalcy, resettlement of the displaced people, economic growth and investment. There were also high hopes of a quick return to normalcy by all communities with a systematic reintroduction of the basic civil liberties of the people.

The above freedoms, long denied to a population of nearly 20 million are yet to be enjoyed in full measure by the citizenry. The report captures some of the key debates held in Parliament in 2009 and identifies issues that underpinned the debates on democracy.

Legislative process: Introduction

Despite the military crushing of the LTTE, the government during the seven months that followed, failed to demonstrate a strong commitment to human rights and accountable and transparent governance.

The continuation of the state of emergency post war also formed a strong basis of discussion in the Legislature. During the year, the opposition continued to flag serious concerns with regard to the denial of civil liberties which was met by the government's stoic defence of the need to continue with the state of emergency for the maintenance of law and order.¹

The role of the legislature as a platform to raise awareness and spark off public debate on human rights and governance became all the more significant with the conclusion of the Eelam War IV. With over 300, 000 IDPs confined to displaced camps in the North with special emphasis being laid on Vavuniya, the year's debates were dominated by the alleged war crimes and whether the end justified the process.²

The past year also witnessed the silencing of the island's key dissenting voices. Many prominent media personnel and civil society actors came under severe suppression. The year also recorded the murder of *The Sunday Leader* Editor Lasantha Wickrematunge, a recipient of the Integrity Award for his commitment to fighting corruption through the newspaper's pages. The privately owned Maharaja Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) suffered a devastating attack and prominent journalists came under severe attack while reputed columnist J. S. Tissainayagam was kept in legal custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). In 2009, many well known journalists/activists fled the country seeking safety in other countries as exiled journalists/activists.

¹ Hansard June 09, 2009

² Wikipedia article on Sri Lankan IDP camps. Retrieved April 18th 2010
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_IDP_camps

The repeated calls by the international community and the civil society to urgently address the human rights issues, growing corruption and specific good governance issues largely went unaddressed. The lapsed year recorded scant respect for rights and liberties of citizens. This factor was reflected in the parliamentary debates that were largely divided between patriotic and unpatriotic lines, reflecting the political divisions created in society and sustained post war.

Continuation of Emergency Regulations

To understand Sri Lanka's approach to human rights and the current political positioning on this contentious topic, it is important to understand the country's existing legislative framework. Sri Lanka has resorted to the continued application of repressive pieces of legislation to effectively limit civil liberties during the period under review, a trend that had prevailed for well over a decade and employed at different times to curb and control uprisings both in the south as well as in the North. But the ferocity of the full application of these laws was perhaps manifested when the regulations were used during the final phase of the Eelam War IV to completely eliminate any form of dissent.

Among the arsenal of repressive legislation a key piece of legislation is the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) introduced in 1979 with subsequent amendments that added to its strongly oppressive application. The Act provides for the holding of suspects indefinitely without charge-sheeting. In addition, the laws empower the security forces to deny such detainees access to attorneys or the opportunity to notify their relatives of their arrests.

The single voice against the extension of emergency regulations in Parliament emanated from the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) in April 2009. The North Eastern based Tamil political group has continuously voted against this law and in 2009 also consistently resisted its extension.

The TNA has constantly alleged that the emergency regulations were not used for the purported use of maintaining law and order, but used as an effective tool at the disposal of the incumbency to detain Tamil youth in the Northern Province and to bar opposition legislators, rights activists and journalists from accessing the displaced camps scattered within the Province.³ The application of emergency regulations which curb and control citizenry was also opposed for the first time in Parliamentary history by the Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). The JVP had consistently voted in favour of the extension of the emergency and the shift in thinking was strongly articulated in Parliament by JVP legislator from Kurunegala, Bimal Ratnayake.⁴

Despite public expectation that the emergency regulations would be relaxed in the aftermath of the war, its application continued uninterrupted. It is noteworthy that the motion was carried

³ Hansard **Volume 181 No. 06** April 07, 2009, 1112-1118. Access at <http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2111>

⁴ Hansard **Volume 181 No. 06** April 07, 2009, 1101-1107. Access the document on <http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2111>

with a significant majority in Parliament, demonstrating the legislators willingness to trust the maintenance and law to a process that was created initially only to deal with exceptional situations. It is also a clear indication that the possibility of lawlessness is feared by the ruling coalition in the absence of authoritarian laws.

The justification for the continuation of a state of emergency in Sri Lanka was offered officially by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake. Speaking during the debate to extend the state of emergency after the conclusion of Eelam War IV, Wickremanayake said, “The embers of terrorism continue to burn.”⁵

The main Opposition United National Party (UNP), despite publicly stated opposition with regard to the use of emergency regulations to suppress civil liberties, continued to support the same in the House throughout 2009. With the induction of former Sri Lanka Army Commander Gen. Sarath Fonseka into the political firmament led both the UNP and the JVP to adopt a uniform stance with regard to the extension of the state of emergency. With Fonseka being politically launched as the common opposition candidate at the January 26 Presidential Election, both parties declared their resistance to a state of emergency in Sri Lanka with allegations being levelled against the Government for the suppression of opposition political parties.⁶

Despite the objections raised by the joint opposition throughout 2009, the Government used its majority in Parliament to extend the state of emergency. The emergency regulations also intensified the use of power to detain individuals without evidence resulting in the arrest and detention of many opposition supporters.

Media muzzled

In 2009, the Government of Sri Lanka came under serious attack from civil rights groups and the international community for the alleged use of strong arm tactics to restrict freedom of expression by exerting continued pressure on the media and harassing and punishing dissenting journalists and activists.

The arson attack on MTV/MBC television station on January 6, 2009 was followed by the murder of the Editor of *The Sunday Leader* Lasantha Wickrematunge within a high security zone on January 8, just two days later, caused significant harm to the country’s image as a democratic nation able to respect the rights and freedoms of those who hold dissenting views.

Both the MTV/MBC network and Wickrematunge were openly critical of the government’s administrative policies and played key roles in exposing corruption at the highest levels of Government. Throughout 2008, *The Sunday Leader* published articles that were critical of

⁵ Hansard **Volume 182 - No. 3** June 09, 2009, 194-196.
<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2178>

⁶ Hansard December 08th, 1610- 1614
<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2468>

Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapakse and Sri Lanka Army Commander Gen. Sarath Fonseka. The two events marked the beginning of 2009 and amidst the climate of oppression, critical and dissenting media practitioners were left with the choice of self censorship or self-exile.

In January 2009, UNP parliamentarians highlighted these incidents inside the Legislature by staging a protest in the Well of the House. The 'black arm bands and back shawls' protests were viewed by most as mere tokenism during a year when freedom of expression violations were the rule than the exception. The main Opposition UNP failed to garner public support in defence of civil liberties when such freedoms were placed under a strong iron fist.

Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe told Parliament that the individuals behind the attacks belonged to the military intelligence and they pose a threat not only to the opposition and the media, but to the Government itself. "These forces are beyond the control of the Government and pose a threat to democracy," he told Parliament.⁷

The response of the Government members to the oppression that prevailed was also reflective of the political apathy towards the declining standards in democracy. The response to the Opposition allegations about muzzling the media through strong arm tactics by the ruling party was met with initial silence followed by the singing of a patriotic Sinhala song clearly indicating not just the refusal to deal with the issue of human rights and freedom of expression violations but also scant respect for the same. No senior Government member condemned Wickrematunge's killing and the issues raised by the Opposition were drowned in the euphoria of a military victory that was imminent.

The continued muzzling of the media dominated the legislative debates throughout 2009 and of particular worth is the adjournment question raised in Parliament by UNP legislator Ravi Karunanayake on January 21 on the murder of Sri Lankan journalists. Chief Government Whip Dinesh Gunawardena informed the House that nine journalists have been killed and another 27 assaulted since January 1, 2006, a record that does not speak well of Sri Lanka, a country now ranking among the worst places in the world for journalists to live in.⁸

The attack on the Editor of the Rivira newspaper Upali Tennakoon by unidentified goons on motorcycles attracted Parliament's attention on January 23 highlighting the increasing hostility towards media personnel. Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremasinghe told Parliament that if editors were threatened and intimidated in this manner, there was no point holding debates in the House as the vehicles for disseminating what is debated in the Legislature, namely the media, would not be able to function in the same manner. Wickremasinghe noted that this was a reflection of the low depths the country had sunk to and diversity of opinion was not something Sri Lanka advocated in.

⁷ Hansard, January 9th, 533

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2178>

⁸ Hansard, January 21st, 2009, 725-726

A further reflection on lack of State commitment to upholding justice and defending democratic space for dissent is manifested through the fact that despite the appointment of several qualified police teams to investigate the various incidents, it has not yielded any results.

In September 2009, the curtailment of media freedom became topical yet again in the Legislature. On September 2, 2009 the Irida Lanka journalists Shalika Wimalasena, Ravindra Pushpakumara and Daya Tennakoon were arrested by the Deniyaya Police and subsequently attempted to prosecute them under charges of conspiracy to assassinate the President.

It was reported in the September 4, 2009 issue of Irida Lanka that the journalists were arrested "for entering the premises belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Ranawaka, brother-in-law and sister of President Mahinda Rajapakse."⁹

Among the key media debates captured by the Legislature in 2009 was the controversial arrest of senior journalist J.S. Tissainayagam. He was arrested by the Terrorism Investigation Division (TID) of the Sri Lanka Police on March 7, 2008 and indicted five months later under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Tissainayagam was sentenced to 20 years rigorous imprisonment for the two articles he wrote.

In formally charging him, it was stated that the journalist through his writing aroused "communal feelings", criticized the government's treatment of Sri Lankan Tamil civilians affected by the Eelam War IV and for alleged involvement in fund raising to finance a publication that purportedly promoted the cause of terrorism. The plight of Tissainayagam and the use of the PTA to punish a journalist for exercising his freedom of expression came under severe criticism at the local, legislative and international level.

A clear result of the atmosphere of oppression that prevailed was the absence of critical journalism in the country. Independent journalism suffered significantly, as recorded in the many media freedom indices, and self censorship increased as a survival strategy, in turn depriving Sri Lankans diverse and independent information. In contrast, the population was bombarded by news from the state-controlled print and electronic media which dispensed with government- approved official versions on a variety of issues.

Though little was achieved by flagging media freedom-related concern at the legislative assembly, the freedom of expression violations continuously formed the basis of parliamentary discussions. However, championing the cause of journalists turned out to be an arduous task before the Sri Lankan people as the country slid further down in the international media freedom indices indicating that the war victory was achieved at the expense of civil liberties and the guillotining of the freedom of expression.

⁹ International Press Institute news story on the bleak prospects faced by Sri Lankan journalists. <http://www.freemedia.at/site-services/singleview-master/4533/>

Reactivation of draconian media laws

The Sri Lankan Press Council Act of 1973 contains harsh stipulations including the power to prosecute for contempt and sentence journalists to extended periods in prison and to prohibit the publication of certain kinds of content by the media, including:

1. Internal communications of the government and the decisions of the Cabinet;
2. Matters relating to the armed services that may be deemed prejudicial to national security; and
3. Matters of economic policy that could lead to artificial shortages and speculative price rises.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa's decision to reactivate the now defunct Sri Lanka Press Council on July 9, 2009 was viewed by many as an attempt to further control the Sri Lankan media, compelling journalists to rigorously practice self censorship as a defence mechanism. Opposition and UNP Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe made a special statement in Parliament on July 22, 2009 calling for its abolition. "According to clause 9 (5) of the Act, the decisions of the Council cannot be re-evaluated by the Court of Appeal and this was the reason the Act was suspended on October 14, 1994." ¹⁰

Eelam War IV and the IDPs

The final stages of the Eelam War IV rendered nearly 300, 000 people of the North displaced and forced to live in transit relief centres. The living conditions inside the camps as well as the slow progress of the resettlement process drew much criticism, specially as the monsoons began flooding the displaced camps drawing international attention to the appalling conditions that prevailed. The criticism intensified with the worldwide release of the Channel Four news footage of the camps.

"Are the people living in the IDP camps breathing freely?" asked Joseph Michael Perera. "Is that possible when there is no freedom for the media, political opponents or even for an astrologer to make a prediction in the South," ¹¹

Concerns relating to the internally displaced were raised again in Parliament when Rishad Bathiudeen, the Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services presented a

¹⁰ Hansard, July 22nd, 2009, 209 – 211

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2275>

¹¹ Hansard July 7, 2009 1474

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2238>

Supplementary Estimate in Parliament on September 22, 2009 to provide basic welfare facilities to the IDPS totalling Rs. 350 000 000.¹²

As the plight of the war displaced came up for debate repeatedly, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) (M) Leader and Matara District Member of Parliament (MP) Mangala Samaraweera made some seriously critical comments on the government's failure to treat the displaced as people with human dignity enjoying the same rights and privileges as others.

He claimed that more than 280, 000 people incarcerated in IDP camps should be appropriately called FDDPs (Forcibly Displaced and Detained Persons) as they were denied basic rights of Sri Lankan citizens. "Nearly 300, 000 people were uprooted and displaced from the conflict zone. Four months after, the Government officially announced the defeat of the LTTE in May. Over 280, 000 people, we believe, are still held in closed camps which are one of the most serious human rights crises in the 21st Century Asia."¹³

In October the Government made a public announcement that over 160, 000 IDPs have been issued with identity cards and the completion of registration of all IDPs over 12 years of age had taken place.

Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama making a statement in Parliament expressed confidence that the targets set for clearance of 58, 000 displaced by the end of October for resettlement would be met. "On de-mining, which is a prerequisite for resettlement of IDPs, we have articulated Sri Lanka's commitment to an intensified de-mining process. We have made the international community aware that it is the Government of Sri Lanka, through the expertise of the Sri Lanka Army that had carried out over 70% of de-mining."¹⁴

Despite the slow progress in the early stages, the Government accelerated the resettlement process by December 2009. To some extent, the Government could have felt egged on by an electoral pledge made by the Common Opposition Presidential Candidate Gen. Sarath Fonseka that, if elected, the resettlement of the IDPs would be treated as a key priority.

On December 1st, the camps were opened up, providing the IDPs limited freedom in which IDPs would have to return to camps within 15 days or report to the police regularly. On December 30,

¹² Hansard September 22nd pg 2688.

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2364>

¹³ Hansard September 22nd pg 2692.

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2364>

¹⁴ Hansard October 21st 636-637

<http://www.parliament.lk/news/ViewPublication.do?published=Y&documentID=PUB2416>

2009 the Sri Lankan government declared that there was no deadline for the resettlement of the IDPs but added that over 60% of the IDPs have been already resettled.¹⁵

Conclusion

At the conclusion of a decisive year that marked the end of a protracted war, it was evident that the military success had come at the price of civilian liberties, suppression of the media and concentration of power by practice.

The year also witnessed the disintegration of communities with the battle lines being extended to decisively keep communities divided.

The issues of vital relevance including human rights abuses, persecution of political opponents, to one of the worst records in silencing the mass media received “limited and controlled coverage”.

The war, successes notwithstanding, was largely a war without witnesses. Sri Lanka’s human rights record became a matter for debate at the United Nations for perceived lack of respect for rules of combat including civilian safety.

The November 2009 announcement of a Presidential Election was a predictable political move and the date was fixed for January 26, 2010 in one of the most expensive elections to be conducted post independence Sri Lanka. It was reported that over Rs. 400 million was spent on publicity alone by President Mahinda Rajapakse in furtherance of his candidature.¹⁶

In 2009, the vital political debate of sharing power in a bid to prevent any further militant uprisings simply disappeared from the radar amidst majority euphoria over the defeat of the Liberation Tigers. The twin issues of development in the once war battered areas and the speedy resettlement of the war-displaced received only partial attention denoting that political priorities were given priority and prominence as opposed to the national priorities once the war was consigned to history.

¹⁵ Wikipedia article on Sri Lankan IDP camps. Retrieved April 18th 2010
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_IDP_camps

¹⁶ TISL/PPPR Special Report on the Election expenditure, 24-01-2010. <http://www.tisrilanka.org/pppr/?p=452>

Annex A: List of Bills/motions/ adjournment debates related to Human Rights and Governance passed in the Ninth Parliament

January 6

Local Authorities (Special Provisions) Bill: Presented by Janaka Bandara Tennakoon, Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils

January 8

Grant of Citizenship to Persons of Indian Origin (Amendment) Bill: Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka proposed the second reading which was passed in Parliament

Grant of Citizenship to Stateless Persons (Special Provisions) (Amendment) Bill: Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka proposed the second reading which was passed in Parliament.

January 9

Privilege: Death Threats through anonymous telephone calls (Raised by UNP MP Dayasiri Jayasekara)

January 20

Progress Report of the Investigations carried out by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption regarding the First and Second Reports of the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) tabled in Parliament. Speaker W. J. M. Lokubandra told parliament that he has received the said report.

Privilege:

Harassment and disrespectful treatment at security checkpoints (Raised by UNP MP Dr. Jayalath Jayawardane)

Resolutions: Under the Constitution by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickramanayaka:

Remunerations and allowances of the Chairman and Members of the Public Service Commission and allowances of Chairman and Members of National Police Commission
Commission to Investigate Bribery and Corruption

February, 5

Privilege: Sabotage of Proceedings of Committee on Public Enterprises (by JVP MPs Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Sunil Handunnetthi, UNP MP Dayasiri Jayasekara, UPFA Ministers Mahinda Amaraweera and Jagath Pushpakumara)

Local Authorities Elections (Amendment) Bill: Withdrawn: Presented by Janaka Bandara Tennakoon, Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils

Local Authorities (Special Provisions) Bill: Presented by Janaka Bandara Tennakoon, Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils: Withdrawn

February 18

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Bill: Read the first time only

March 17

Inland Revenue (Amendment) Bill: read the first time only: Presented by Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on behalf of the Prime Minister; to be read a Second time upon April 7, 2009 and to be printed.

Local Authorities (Special Provisions) (Amendment) Bill: Read the first time only: Presented by Janaka Bandara Tennakoon, Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils; to be read a Second time upon April 7, 2009 and to be printed.

March 19

Widows' and Orphans' Pension Scheme (Armed Forces) (Amendment) Bill: Passed in Parliament: Presented by Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake

March 25

Adjournment Motion: Eviction of Residents of Certain Villages in Trincomalee District moved by TNA MP R. Sampanthan

April 7

Question by private notice: Non-establishment of the Constitutional Council: by Ranil Wickremasinghe - Leader of the Opposition

April 20

Unfair Promotions at Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation: Report of Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) presented to Parliament: Speaker W. J. M. Lokubandra told parliament that he received the Ombudsman's report.

Local Authorities (Special Provisions) (Amendment) Bill: presented by Janaka Bandara Tennakoon - Minister of Local Government and Provincial Councils. Second reading – debate adjourned

Nation Building Tax (Amendment) Bill: Second reading - debate adjourned: Minister Chamal Rajapaksa proposed the reading of the bill

April 21

Privilege: Curtailment of Security on the directive of Hon. Prime Minister causing Obstruction in attending Parliament (Raised by UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera)

Privilege: death threats on MP Palitha Range Bandara

May 7

Privilege: Telecast of Distorted Version of Part of Speech made in Parliament (Ramalingam Chandrasekar—Deputy Chairman of Committees complained that state owned ITN/Channel EYE/Nethra television channels had distorted a statement he made on the problems faced by Tamil people)

Privilege motions:

Detainment at Checkpoint (UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera raised this issue on behalf of MP Ananalei Nadesu)

Death Threats on MP Palitha Range Bandara

Threats by an armed gang (TNA MP C Chandranehru)

June 9

Chief of Defence Staff,— Bill to provide for the appointment of a person to be the Chief of Defence Staff who shall be responsible for the co-ordination of activities as between the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence; for the establishment of the Committee of the Chief of Defence Staff; to provide for the functions of the Chief of Defence Staff; and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Employees' Provident Fund (Special Provisions) (Amendment) — Bill to Amend the Employees' Provident Fund (Special Provisions) Law

Indian Immigrant Labour (Repeal) — Bill to repeal the Indian Immigrant Labour Ordinance (Chapter 132).

Consultative Committee report on Election Reforms: Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva told parliament that the committee was not able to present its report on time, (December, 31, 2008) and asked for an extension till December, 31, 2009.

June 10

Question by private notice: Appointment of a Select Committee to look into serious threats to journalists (Moved by UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera)

June 11

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Bill: Second reading moved by Minister Athauda Seneviratne

Adjournment motion: Protection of Industries and Enterprises and Relief to Employees moved by JVP MP Lakshman Nipunaarachchi

June 24

Interim Report of the Select Committee to Amend Act No. 35 of 2003 in order to grant Sri Lankan Citizenship to the persons of Indian origin who are in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and to provide other facilities to them: Presented by Ramalingam Chandrasekar - Deputy Chairman of Committees. Minister Dinesh Gunawardena proposed to publish the report.

June 25

Chief of Defence Staff Bill: Passed in Parliament with amendments to the proposed bill.

July 16

Universities (Amendment) Bill: Read the First time, Presented by D. E. W. Gunasekara, Minister of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration on behalf of the Minister of Higher Education

July 21

Question by private notice: Safeguarding Independence of Lawyers and Judiciary and the Rule of Law, by UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera

July 22

Question by private notice: Problems emerging with the Reactivation of Press Council by Ranil Wickremasinghe - Leader of the Opposition

Adjournment motion: Strategy to Solve Problems of Displaced People. (Moved by JVP MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake

July 23

Question by private notice: Safeguarding of Rights Guaranteed by Article 13(3) of the Constitution: Problems of Unemployed Graduates (Question by private notice by JVP MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake)

August 6

Parliamentary Elections (Amendment) Bill: Read the first time only

August 18

Question by private notice: Terrorism in Operation in the South (Moved by UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera)

Deplorable Condition in Relief Camps due to Heavy Rain (D. E. W. Gunasekara -Minister of Constitutional Affairs and National Integration)

August 19

Report of the Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE) presented to Parliament.

Adjournment motion:

Situation in IDP Camps in Vavuniya (moved by TNA MP Mavai S. Senathirajah)

September 8

Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (Amendment) Bill: (Presented by Keheliya Rambukwella, Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion and Welfare. Read the First time

Universities (Amendment) Bill: By W. A. Wiswa Warnapala - Minister of Higher Education. Read the second and third time and passed

September 9

Question for oral answers: Deaths of Suspects in Police Custody: Details moved by JVP MP Lakshman Nipunaarachchi

Privilege: Obstruction of Freedom of Expression in Parliament moved by UNP MP Dayasiri Jayasekara

September 10

Adjournment motion: Bogus Video Footage Aired by Channel 4 moved by UPFA MP Lalith Dissanayake.

September, 22

Report on the Progress of Investigations Carried Out by the Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption on the First Report of the Committee on Public Enterprises. One report

Privilege: Problems Emerging with the Reactivation of the Press Council Law by UNP MP Ravi Karunanayake

Supplementary Estimate: Basic and Welfare Facilities to Internally Displaced Persons (By Rishad Badhiutheen - Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services)

October 22

Adjournment motion: Abolition of Executive Presidency (Moved by JVP MP Vijitha Herath)

October 23

Question by private notice: GSP Plus Concession (UNP MP Joseph Michael Perera)

Access Facilities for Disabled Citizens into Government Buildings (By JVP MP Anura Kumara Dissanayake)

November 5

GSP Plus Concession: Statement by Minister of Export Development and International Trade Prof. G L Peiris

November 17

Select Committee to Inquire and Report on Strengthening the Independent Character of The Parliamentary System: Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva asked the speaker to extend the deadline for the report till March 31, 2010.

Supplementary Supply: Basic Facilities and Welfare Measures to Internally Displaced Persons: Presented by Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva for Rishad Badhiutheen - Minister of Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services

December 8

National Commission on Women Bill: Read the First time: Presented by Sumedha G. Jayasena, Minister of Child Development and Women's Empowerment. To be read a Second time upon Tuesday, 5th January 2010 and to be printed.

National Institute of Labour Studies Bill: Read the First time: Presented by Athauda Seneviratne, Minister of Labour Relations and Manpower; to be read a Second time upon Tuesday, 05th January 2010 and printed.