The STF Humanitarian Operation in eastern and northern province

Reminiscing the final phase
Mavil Aru/Sampur and Vaharai Operation

The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) launched the Humanitarian Operation to liberate the entire Eastern and Northern Provinces from the LTTE, when the terrorists blocked the Mavil Aru water gates in July 2006.

The STF which was mainly dominating the Ampara and Batticaloa Districts at that time received instructions to take over the areas dominated by the SLA and relieve them for the operational commitment at Mavil Aru.

The STF successfully took over the security in Kalladi area, BCO town and also secured the Main Supply Route (MSR) from BCO to Mailambaveli in Eravur.

In September 2006, the STF was asked to take over the Vavunativu and Bridge Camp SLA bases in BCO to relieve the SLA troops for their further commitments in Vaharai area. In November 2006, the SLA successfully liberated Mavil Aru, Sampur and Vaharai areas from the LTTE.

Kanjikudichchiaru Operation - Niyathai Jaya

Under the guidance of Secretary - MoD, Operation Niyathai Jaya (Victory Assured) launched by the STF in the jungles of Kanchikudichchi Aru in Ampara District on January 4, 2007 to destroy LTTE strongholds and wither their influence in this jungle terrain posing threats to national security interests in Akkaraipattu and Pottuvil Sectors.

SSP M. R. Latif spearheaded the entire operation with the assistance provided by SP W. P. Wimalasena, SP Madduma Bandara, ASP T. F. Hadji, ASP Vidura Dissanayake, ASP P. K. Kulatunga, ASP P. G. S. Rathepitiya, ASP M. G. S. K. Muruthetuwegama, ASP W. M. K. S. Pandivita and R/SSP M. Balasuriya. Around 24 LTTE bases were destroyed by the STF troops liberating the entire Ampara District from the LTTE.

Batticaloa and Thoppigala Operation

The Sri Lanka Army (SLA) with the direct assistance provided by the STF successfully launched a Humanitarian Operation in February 2007, to liberate the LTTE controlled areas in Batticaloa District.

It marked the final phase of a massive military campaign launched from Mavil Aru area in July 2006 to liberate the entire eastern province from the LTTE. The combined military campaign launched by the SLA and the STF continued till the fall of Thoppigala from the hands of LTTE in July 2007.

The due instructions were received by the STF in early February 2007 to assist the SLA in launching the proposed military campaign to eliminate the LTTE from Batticaloa and Thoppigala areas.
The initial operational plans were drawn on the basis of the intelligence provided by the Intelligence Units and the Communication Interception Units of the STF. During the following days the LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Petrol) teams belonging to the Army Commandos brought down and stationed at identified STF bases.

They have successfully conducted number of LRRP missions inside the enemy territory destabilizing the LTTE leadership.

The thousands of civilians who lived within the LTTE dominated areas continued to flee into Government controlled areas with the progression of the military campaign.

Automatically the STF was vested with the additional responsibility of assisting and over looking the newly arrived Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). From May 14, 2007, the STF commenced the resettlement of IDPs in Vellaveli Divisional Secretariat Division with the assistance provided by the Government.

Other than to the Mahaoya and Pulukunawa STF sectors, more SLA troops were received and accommodated at the STF bases in Batticaloa sector. They were also accompanied by Armoured Corps, Artillery and MBRL units which were strategically placed in identified STF bases to assist the operation.

Those SLA troops backed by heavy Artillery and MBRL fire advanced into the enemy territory from places such as Manmunai, Vavunativu and Chankalladi.

The STF continued to assist the SLA by accommodating and supporting them in number of ways which made the victory possibly. By the end of April 2007, the combined military campaign of the SLA and the STF successfully cleared the entire Batticaloa bowl area from the LTTE with a minimum damage to the Government forces.

Since April 5, 2007 the STF was vested with the additional responsibility of taking over and dominating the newly cleared areas from the SLA.

Three new STF Sectors were formed in the regions of Vellaveli, Kokkadicholai and Vavunativu. The STF Vellaveli sector was consisted of bases such as Kakachchawatta, Batto Junction, Thalawaya, Vellaveli, Paladiwatte and Porativu. The Kokkadicholai sector consisted of bases in Shanthimalai, Attuchena, Mavadimumari, Kokkadicholai and Magaladithivu.

The third STF sector was established in a Vavunativu region. It consisted of bases in Urasari, Kanchirankuda, Samanthiaru, Vavunativu, Pavakkudichena, Unnichchiya, Aithamallai, Mahilavedduvan and in Naripulthottam.

The tireless and dedicated efforts made by then Director (Operations) SSP R. W. M. C. Ranawana, ASP Waruna Jayasundera, ASP J. R. Sanadira, ASP Vidura Dissanayake, ASP G.S. Rathepitiya, ASP Sylvester Wijesinghe and ASP N.K.S.N. Gunaratne assisted the STF to regain the maximum domination and best public confidence in the newly liberated areas.
Finally on July 10, 2007, the SLA regained Thoppigala with the continuous assistance provided by the STF which also marked the conclusion of one of the most successful military campaigns in the history.

History of the STF

The Sri Lanka Police was established on March 1, 1983 as the STF. The Special Task Force (STF) is the elite paramilitary arm specialized in counter-terrorist operations and VIP security detail. Initially the services of a reputed former British Special Air Service/SAS Officers Organization was instrumental in training and laying the preliminary foundation to this organization.

It is this foundation that has brought the situation to date. It is an honour to mention that 431 STF commandos made the supreme sacrifice for the country since its inception in 1983.

On June 4, 2001, under the direction of K. M. L. Sarathchandra, the present Commandant STF, when he was the Director (Operations) at that time with the assistance provided by the then SP R. W. M. C. Ranawana and then ASP Rohan Silva launched the above operation against the LTTE in Kanjikudichchiaru area.

As per the intelligence prevailed at that time, around 500 LTTE cadres were based in the jungle hideout. The STF surrounded the LTTE’s main camp from four directions and took the enemy by surprise. In the confrontation, 15 LTTE cadres were killed and recovered large quantity of military items.

The STF success

The STF is a battle-hardened unit which has achieved several operational victories since its inception in 1983. Many are still not known to the general public. As per the available facts, during the Third Eelam war, the STF launched the under-noted operations in Kanjikudichchiaru area in Ampara District.

* Operation Weera Vikum - 1996
* Operation Veera Gigum - 1997
* Operation Akunu Pahara- 2001
* Operation Akunu Pahara - 2001