

● 'Jaffna like a huge concentration camp' LTTE taking others for a ride

By Ananth Palakidnar

PLOTE

The deputy leader of the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) Karavai A. Kanthaswamy says that efforts must be made to find out what had happened to hundreds of innocent Tamils and Muslims held captive under appalling conditions in the North by the LTTE.

He told the *Sunday Observer* that the entire Jaffna peninsula is like a huge concentration camp where the civilians have become virtual prisoners of the LTTE.

Accelerating political measures would only help to isolate the LTTE, but also liberate the people from the LTTE controlled areas," he added.

Commenting on the LTTE's refusal to release prisoners, Mr. Kanthaswamy said

that the LTTE was concentrating mainly on establishing the supremacy of its leader V. Prabhakaran. It will use every opportunity to create stunts and take others for a ride.

Mr. Kanthaswamy regretted that no organisation had come forward to secure the release of the Tamil prisoners in LTTE custody and said that the so-called human rights organisations must openly condemn LTTE's atrocities against persons in their custody.

The PLOTE deputy leader also welcomed the recent call by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe for direct talks with LTTE

leader V. Prabhakaran. "The new Prime Minister seems to be sincerely willing to talk to the LTTE leader but I doubt how far the LTTE leader would respond to this call sincerely," Mr. Kanthaswamy said.

According to a report released by the University of Teachers For Human Rights (UTHR), Jaffna early this year prisoners in some thousands are kept in the LTTE detention camps.

The report says that the total number of prisoners is around 4,000. The number in the Thunukai complex was estimated at

3,000 and another 1000 elsewhere. Thunukai is now believed to be closed and the inmates have been transferred to several camps. Prison camps, either exclusive or part of LTTE camps, are known to exist or to have existed in Kachchai, Koilankandy, Urelu, Kopay, Kondavil, Chundikuli, Ariyalai, and more than ten around Chavakachcheri.

"In certain prison camps LTTE has kept the detainees even in underground bunkers without light or any other facilities," states the report.