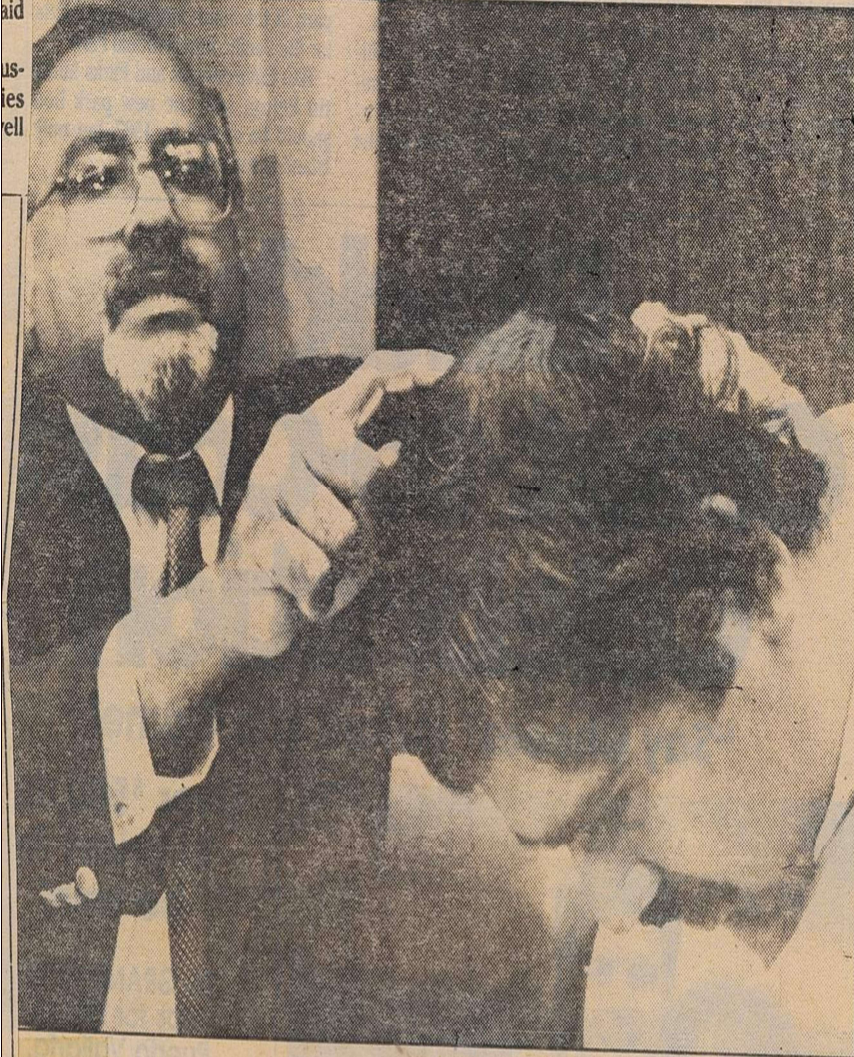


Refugee displays scars. (1986, September 23). *The Province*.

# Refugee displays scars



Ratnapala, shows scars on Umapathisivan Pararajasegaran's head at a press conference. CP photo

## News Services

OTTAWA — A Tamil refugee who claims the Sri Lankan high commissioner to Canada tortured him in 1979 showed off his scars yesterday to a packed press conference.

But the high commissioner, retired army brigadier Tissa Weeraratunga, strongly denied the charges made by Umapathisivan (Baby) Pararajasegaran.

The Sri Lankan high commission released an unsigned statement accusing Pararajasegaran of being a terrorist and thief who is part of "a separatist network" trying to destabilize the Sri Lankan government.

Pararajasegaran countered by saying, "I am not aware of any instance in Sri Lanka in which I was wanted," through an interpreter. "Up to now in my life, I have never been involved in any crimes."

Pointing to his scars and recalling his torture in detention in the city of Jaffna in 1979, the Paris resi-

dent repeated his accusations that Weeraratunga personally directed the beatings and that Weeraratunga threatened him with death if he didn't co-operate with interrogators.

Weeraratunga was the army commander in Jaffna in 1979. He was ordered to put down a wave of unrest and bombings that had erupted in the Tamil areas of northern Sri Lanka.

"I never took part in any torturing at all," said the diplomat. "All this is a part of the campaign of the separatist movement that is on in Sri Lanka. It is an attempt to smear me and through me, Sri Lanka."

The Tamils of Canada association challenged Weeraratunga to face charges of human rights abuses in a Canadian court. They said he should drop his diplomatic immunity and let the courts decide on his guilt or innocence.