

Tamil set to face his alleged torturer. (1986, September 22). *The Ottawa Citizen*.

# Tamil set to face his alleged torturer



—Citizen photo

Pararajasegaran at airport

By Stephen Bindman  
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**MIRABEL** — The shy refugee they call Baby, with his broad toothy smile, arrived here Sunday — living proof of a tortured people.

Umpathisivan Pararajasegaran, a 33-year-old Tamil refugee now living in Paris, France, will deliver his message and point his accusing finger for the next two weeks in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal.

"I want to inform the Canadian public that a torturer is the Sri Lankan ambassador to Canada," he told *The Citizen* through an interpreter shortly after his arrival here.

The object of Pararajasegaran's scorn is Gen. Tissa Weeratunga, now the senior Sri Lankan diplomat in Canada but in 1979 the army commander in the northern district of Jaffna while a state of emergency was in force to counter violence and unrest  
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## Tamil

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among the Tamil minority.

In a sworn affidavit given to the human rights organization Amnesty International, Pararajasegaran says Weeratunga was present and supervised sessions in which he was brutally and mercilessly tortured.

He described being hung upside down for hours on end, being beaten with sand-filled pipes and every other imaginable weapon and being tied in a bag and dragged behind a military vehicle.

"Whenever I was tortured, he was there," the softspoken Baby whispers of Weeratunga. "He threatened me everyday that he would kill me."

Now a player in a complicated diplomatic chess game, Pararajasegaran appeared to be a little taken aback by his newfound celebrity status as he arrived here from a flight from Paris to the lights of a television crew filming a documentary about him.

He received a subdued reception from about a dozen Tamil

refugees from Montreal and Ottawa.

As curious bystanders in the deserted airport gawked and his compatriots gathered for a look of their own, Pararajasegaran points to his eyes.

The pain still endures.

Baby says he still can't turn over when he sleeps because of the beating and can't drive at night because Weeratunga's men poked their fingers in his eyes.

But now seven years later, he's anxious to confront the man he says is his torturer.

"Here he can't do anything to me," Baby says with a hint of self-confidence.

"I want to tell him he's a traitor, a torturer and a man against our cause and freedom. I'll finally be in a position to ask him why he did this, why he tortured me."

Although a confrontation with Weeratunga is not on his hastily-arranged schedule as local Tamils step up their campaign to drive the diplomat home, Pararajasegaran will hold a press conference and meet officials of the Anglican Church and opposition human rights critics Sheila Copps (Liberal) and Howard McCurdy (NDP).