

Use of Visual Media by LTTE Front Organisations to Influence Post-war Sri Lanka

A Ariyapperuma

Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka

aselariyapperuma@gmail.com

Abstract— In May 2009, following a thirty-year armed conflict, Sri Lanka's territorial integrity was restored. However, the LTTE International Network's information warfare against Sri Lanka has not yet ended, and the LTTE continues to engage in cyber-hostilities and cyber-information warfare. The true objective of such operations is to radicalize the minds of people, particularly young people who have not yet seen the ravages of war and are therefore susceptible to manipulation. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine the patterns of visualizing utilized by the International network of LTTE, which are the front organizations to influence communities and foster misconceptions. The study shall be conducted as Doctrinal research. Data shall be obtained through primary and secondary resources and shall be analyzed qualitatively. To be more specific, open-source material found on social media, printed and visual media shall be utilized in gathering the requisite data. The principal objectives of conducting this study are as follows. Firstly, the paper shall explore how disinformation that is disseminated through visual media affect international communities and radicalize youths. Secondly, this shall examine the potential consequences of radicalization through the media, which might degrade the community's tranquil existence now and in the future. Finally, the paper shall address the legal implications of using visual media as a medium of communication. Concerning international law, the author shall provide recommendations on several elements of strategic policymaking.

Keywords— *LTTE; Visual Media; Radicalization; Second Generation; Tamil Diaspora*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), led by Velupillai Prabhakaran, sabotaged the country's progress via a civil war, separatism, and terrorism. Even though Sri Lankan security forces defeated the

LTTE in 2009, separatist ideology remained. Pro-LTTE Tamils have moved and settled in a variety of countries, forming several diasporic Tamil groups to continue to manifest and carry out the campaign for a separate state. The Global Tamil Forum, the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam, and the British Tamil Forum are among the LTTE Front organizations advocating for an Eelam State. The groups disseminate radical ideologies as well as ex-combatants seeking political asylum from the resurgent LTTE conflict. The Tamil National Alliance and Sri Lankan Tamils are being used by LTTE worldwide networks to push for a separate Eelam state, which would challenge the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. The international community's propaganda is systematic and widespread, and it has succeeded in persuading international organizations like the UNHCR to forward a resolution on falsely alleged war crimes by Sri Lankan security forces, as well as questions about GSP+, by citing key provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which has been condemned to exert force and discredit Sri Lanka's government. To spread its message, the terrorist cell, which was well-equipped in terms of technology and expertise, used all available avenues. To incite hate for Sinhalese, gain international sympathy, and recruit preachers for its message, social media and other visual media channels have been employed. This has resulted in the radicalization of Tamil youth in the worldwide society as well as locally, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Visual propaganda's efficacy has always been a trend that has always been successful. In statements like "a picture is worth a thousand words," the power of pictures is assumed. Images are more emotionally vivid and responses to visuals are more quick and strong than text responses because humans absorb pictures faster than words (Winkler and Dauber, 2014). When the sound and visual tracks of a movie convey contradicting information in experimental settings, for example, viewers pay more attention to

the visual(Winkler and Dauber, 2014). This is due to their perception of photographs as reliable recordings that allow them to "experience" news events even if they are not physically present. Images also attract attention because viewers process the intricate visual detail of images in real time rather than using the more difficult, sequential technique required to understand verbal information(Winkler and Dauber, 2014). Furthermore, viewers are drawn to visual pictures because they elicit emotional responses, especially when they portray violence, disfigured bodies, or war losses(Winkler and Dauber, 2014).

Through principles such as those governing photographic evidence, the law recognizes the importance and need for visual pictures. The legislation recognizes that photographs require further protection and monitoring. Visual propaganda is a harmful weapon for generating hostility and unjustified emotional responses in weak people, according to psychological and neurological studies. Furthermore, international compassion for Tamils has now become a benefit for these front organizations.

As a country with many ethnicities, it has made steps toward reconciliation by creating a commission proposed to international organizations by post-war rapporteurs. To promote peaceful cohabitation, the government should encourage all ethnic groups to conceive of Sri Lanka as one nation.

II. DISCUSSION

A. *Disinformation*

Disinformation is frequently defined in terms of intent, which is difficult to determine when it is created by an anonymous person. According to Jack (2017), disinformation is "information that is intentionally incorrect or misleading," whereas, for observers, the most difficult part of determining intent is differentiating a person expressing valid ideas from someone spreading incorrect information on purpose.

B. *Radicalization*

The term "radicalization" has been the attention of national security services. In academic circles all around the world, radicalization has become a controversial issue. There is little agreement on what radicalization is and how it should be understood and modelled as a result of the rising multidisciplinary academic interest in it (Schmid, 2013). The first is focused on identifying what defines radicalization

when it comes to radicalization's features. While it was often known as "what happens before the bomb goes off," more recent research has cast doubt on the claimed direct relationship between radicalization processes and violent terrorist behaviour, claiming that radicalization is more than just a forerunner to violent activities. The contrast between cognitive/attitudinal radicalization and behavioural radicalization has been regarded as the most important so far. This is a crucial distinction since an increasing number of scholars believe that radicalization is first and foremost a cognitive process(Wolfowicz, Litmanovitz, Weisburd, & Hasisi, 2019). They describe radicalization as "the social and psychological process of increasingly feeling devotion to extremist political or religious ideas." Although radicalization does not necessarily lead to violence, it is one of several risk factors that must exist|| (Horgan & Braddock, 2010, p. 279).

As a result of the visual media, more opportunities for radicalization have developed. According to studies, the Visual Media on the internet acts as a catalyst for radicalization, breaking down traditional barriers. Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, the New Challenges, by Gabriel Weimann, counts and analyzes the websites of terrorist organisations. In his research, Weimann notes the rise of extremist websites. According to him, virtually all terrorist groups had established an online presence by the end of 1999.

The internet's reach has broken down geographical barriers, bringing individuals from all over the world together in the virtual world. These sorts of internet resources, according to Ines von Behr, a senior analyst at RAND Europe, have increased the likelihood of instilling extreme ideas in individuals because of their attractive contents. As a result, Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt of the New York Police Department's Intelligence Division believe that radicalization on the internet isn't intrinsically different from what occurs in more private and less visible settings. In addition, the internet's Visual Media enhances the potential for self-radicalization.

C. *Visual Media and Cognitive Radicalization of the Youth*

It is essential to explore the link between extremist visuals and cognitive radicalization. Furthermore, in the context of growing global terrorism, evidence exists to display that visual media plays a critical role in various parts of the radicalization process. Exposure to violent media is a major risk factor,

according to Wolfowicz et al (2019). The most pressing issue following a terrorist incident is when, where, and how the individual become radicalized. As soon as it becomes obvious that the perpetrators left substantial digital imprints on social media, government authorities, national security services, and the news media alike tend to assert a direct involvement of media and cyberspace in the perpetrator's radicalization process (Frissen, 2021). Young people are driven to extreme views to help them make sense of the world, hence age is also a key factor in radicalization (Frissen, 2021). According to political media expert Doris Graber, pure verbal analyses not only ignore the information contained in visuals and nonverbal sounds but also fail to understand verbal content accurately since it is altered by its conjunction with visual signals. Understanding how to assess visual images can assist individuals to avoid making erroneous or misleading assessments of the content of extremist/terrorist internet media campaigns.

Visual images not only capture the attention of viewers but also serve to widen the target demographic for media campaign messaging. Younger or illiterate audience members who lack the requisite reading skills to grasp textual material might be captivated by images. Understanding visual messaging strategies is essential for comprehending the full extent of what terrorist and other extremist groups are communicating online, especially because many of them target audiences in countries with large youth populations and high illiteracy rates.

A newly developed scholarly concept in the process of Radicalization is 'Bedroom Radicals'. According to Ahmed and George (2016), if the youth did not have access to extremist materials on the internet, which are watched alone in protected settings like one's own bedroom, a seemingly normal individual would never have radicalized. A notable example of this situation is the case of the Tsarnaev brothers, who are accused of being responsible for the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. According to Williams (2015), the brothers were ardent readers of Al Qaeda's publication "Inspire," which claimed to promote Jihadist propaganda which is alleged to have radicalized them. The brothers built their explosives entirely from instructions found in an Inspire article titled "How to Make a Bomb in Your Mom's Kitchen."

Moreover, Cognitive radicalization, as identified by Bandura (2004) and Weiman (2008), is not a technique reserved only for mentally ill or insane

individuals, but also ordinary individuals (Jones, 2008). In that sense, it appears to be difficult to explain how a normal person may get radicalized and eventually engage in a somewhat shocking act if there is no allegation of insanity linked to the person (Frissen, 2021). However, Bandura (2004) examined the idea of moral disengagement, which has been proposed as a key psychological process with a connection to the problem at hand, to better understand the link in such settings. Conduct that injures, damage, or even kills other people is almost unanimously regarded as cruel and hence as a breach of these moral standards. When moral standards are violated, the self-regulatory mechanism steps in, either through self-sanctioning or self-justification processes (Frissen, 2021).

D. Radicalization and the Second Generation Tamil Diaspora

National Security concerns related to the Tamil Diaspora in line with the research on —radicalization from outside— (Romanos, 2014), established the various means by which terrorist groups, their supporters can diffuse terrorist ideology, facilitate radicalization to violence, and recruit in Western nations often disseminated from diaspora communities.

In recent years, there has been a great deal of discussion regarding whether immigrants and diaspora groups are more likely to sympathize with terrorist organizations and commit violence on their behalf (Thompson and Bucerius, 2017). One of the most recent analyses of extremist organizations' visual propaganda efforts is Neville Bolt's *The Violent Image: Insurgent Propaganda and the New Revolutionaries*. Bolt examines radicals' use of "propaganda of the deed" (POTD), a term he coined to describe acts of violence orchestrated to generate media events for the aim of societal reform or revolution. According to him, terrorist organizations use images of assaults as a "means of creating memory through the fracture of time and the manipulation of the grievance narrative."

These concerns have grown in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo, Paris, Belgium, and Orlando attacks, as well as an apparent increase in the number of 1.5, 2nd, and 3rd generation immigrants who become radicalized and self-proclaim as 'Freedom Fighters' (Thompson and Bucerius, 2017). As a result, Canadian diaspora groups may become radicalized in the pursuit of vengeance or justice for homeland-related disputes (Thompson and Bucerius, 2017). As

Silke (2008) points out, -It has long been recognized that for most terrorists a key motivation for joining a terrorist organization ultimately revolves around a desire for revenge. The discussion findings of Thompson and Bucerius's (2017) study, which included 50 participants from the Second Generation Tamil Diaspora, corroborate this aspect. Even the most problematic practices used by the LTTE during the conflict, such as forcefully enlisting children as soldiers and using civilians as shields during the hostilities, were justified by all survey participants using the notion that "all is fair in love and war," according to the findings.

The Tamil diaspora, as well as the political venues for second-generation involvement, are expanding across Europe. The majority of the Tamil Diaspora's second generation is composed of Tamil youth between the ages of 18 and 30. Second Generation Diaspora was either born in Europe or had arrived in the 1990s as children under ten. (McDowell, 1996). Young males of 16–25 have been identified as one of the most vulnerable age groups for violent radicalization (1999, Hudson). Many of the young Tamil Canadians who took part in the May 2009 demonstrations and subsequent community activities are

1.5 or 2nd generation immigrants who have never visited or have not been to Sri Lanka in years.

The fast growing second-generation movement dedicated to achieving Tamil Eelam is fuelled by two factors (1) Despite a perceived lack of interest from their "new homes" in Europe, this generation's dual perceptions of belonging, both to European Communities and to the Tamil "race," and (2) how a specific politics of affect altered second-generation identities, combined to make them want to embrace their Tamil "roots" and get involved in politics (Hess and Koff, 2014). As a result, these second-generation activists focused their efforts on engaging with their host community and taking international action (Hess and Koff, 2014) which resulted in the emergence of a new form of Tamil activism in Europe, one that is strongly rooted in and linked to the host nation.

In the past few years, the use of Visual Media in propagating the Radicalised agendas of the second generation of Tamil Diaspora has been on the rise. It is commonly noticed that different types of LTTE visual media are proactively sought and consumed by the second generation Tamils in Europe such as different platforms of Social Media, News Papers, and

Television etc. across Europe. For example, Issue of 30 Minuten, a visual media (newspaper) dedicated to the promotion of the Tamil Diaspora Propaganda, marked the entry of the second generation in European Tamil diaspora politics (Hess and Korf, 2014). While supporting a separate state of Tamil Eelam, the generation thrived on the introduction of new methods of mobilization and avenues of communication to disseminate radicalised ideologies into the communities worldwide (Hess and Koff, 2014). This method of Visual Media Radicalization by LTTE second generation is often utilised as a means of gaining a sympathizing eye for carrying out violent political propaganda (Hess and Koff, 2014). The use of Visual Media as a technique of radicalization is motivated by several factors. To begin with, it aims to strengthen a sense of diaspora among other sectors of young and well-educated Tamils who are struggling to establish how to effectively represent the Tamil component of their identity. It invites future generations of Tamils to rearticulate their Tamil ancestors. Secondly, the goal is to depict the Sri Lankan army as a perpetrator of grave human rights breaches to the world community. Thirdly, to keep an eye on the prospect of forming a separate Tamil Eelam state. (Vimalarajah and Cheran 2010). Hence, Members of the second generation are more prepared for diaspora activities than those of the first due to their language skills, high education, and trust in the European environment. Because they were poorly educated and had a low socioeconomic position in various European nations, the first generation's involvement was largely restricted to providing financial and political aid to the LTTE.

E. Tamil Diaspora's Visual Media Strategies for Radicalization

Films, documentaries, and social media posts have all helped to raise awareness of sympathizers' and the global community's breaking point. Children, the elderly, and the impoverished are among the techniques employed. Persuasion is an important part of media and social media communication. It is most often done out through disseminating false information and postings that reveal their true intentions. It is indeed possible to persuade people by argument, entreaty, or example. It is obvious that disseminating false information leads to persuasion and, as a result, popularity. Psycho Visualization, or the ability to construct mental images to help focus one's attention on a goal, is easily achieved by articles and photos that provide little information but

have internal context, allowing the individual to deduce a lot.

The Tamil Diaspora is responsible for the creation of the Tamil Television Network, a television network broadcasting in Europe, Sri Lanka, and South India. Even though the TTN has been outlawed by the French government, alternative stations such as GTV and Madhuram have been established. The LTTE used the Deepam television network as a means of generating funds. Their primary goal was to disseminate their harsh propaganda. Furthermore, the usage of voice cuts and retweeting instil in the viewer's mind, which is aided by repetition. Repetition, or watching the films over and again, reinforces actions and improves memory. A prerequisite in controlling behaviour is the capacity to remember directly prior needs. One of the first things that are noticeable among the LTTE videos is the undeniable quality in which they are shot, edited, and produced. Each video begins with a display of the LTTE Media Center's dynamic logo animation, suggesting a certain level of professionalism and legitimacy. The editors of the videos have a keen understanding of what makes for effective, engaging, and emotionally manipulative media, borrowing many stylistic cues from documentaries and music videos. These channels were installed for well-thought reasons by the pro-LTTE diaspora and Nediyan (Perera, 2016). Nediyan has established a slew of overseas Tamil television networks to continue the aggressive propaganda in Europe and internationally (Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka, 2015). This group supports the idea of a separate state for Tamils rather than the concept of identifying as Sri Lankans (Perera, 2016).

The whole issue of 30 Minuten, German Magazine was devoted to the radicalization of the Tamil Diaspora's incoming younger generation. This newspaper, like any other, had reporting, interviews, and commentary. It also transmitted a particular type of Tamil political discourse created by LTTE propaganda to the more experienced reader. The video films broadcasted are most likely intended to appeal to a younger audience by expressing pride. To boost viewers' pride in terrorist groups, graphic films of terrorist organizations executing terrible acts of violence are broadcast. In LTTE films, displays of violence were frequently utilized to emphasize the operations of the Sri Lankan security forces during the conflict. Photos and pictures of wounded, injured, and dying children are mixed with shots of "enemy" leaders in Blood for Blood. Military and political

officials are blamed for the violence, with the suggestion that their actions are to blame. "Our children were killed, and our sisters were mercilessly raped and butchered," the narrator adds as horrible images of young corpses fly across the screen. The LTTE utilized threats to intimidate its opponents. By repeatedly threatening and insulting their militarily superior enemies, LTTE cadre members are shown to be consistently brave and unafraid. Many of the films featured threats with various degrees of precision and intent.

The radicalization of visual media was also apparent on social media sites. Whenever there was a demonstration in Jaffna, social media was inundated with images of people wearing masks and black headbands, as well as praise for the demonstrators' bravery, unity, and solidarity. Similarly, there was an inflow of songs praising the protestors on the music streaming platform Spotify. Throughout the digital commotion, posts using the hashtags #tamileelam and #eelam were shared to raise awareness about the demonstration and, more broadly, about the Tamils' right to self-determination. However, Instagram abruptly prohibited these hashtags, and individuals representing the diaspora were confronted with a message from Instagram that stated, "Your post violates our community rules." Second Generation also went to Twitter to urge sites to lift the hashtag restriction, with one user asking, "Is #TamilEelam tag not permitted on social media?" (Kannan, 2021). Projecting immediacy on Twitter by sharing many tweets and a sense of being present is required for "focus of attention. It is important to portray immediacy on Twitter by publishing a big number of tweets and a sensation of being there to achieve "focus of attention" which is what the Tamil Diaspora has been continuously doing.

Furthermore, an Instagram campaign with the tagline "I am a Tamil and the genocide is a part of my identity" was recently launched. In response to that, the Tamil Diaspora started the viral "I am Tamil" campaign, which received hundreds of messages from across the world and increased awareness of the genocide, as well as supporting Bill 104, which would allow for a Tamil Genocide Education Week. -Tired of seeing the -paradise island|| when you click on the #SriLanka hashtag?|| said Pirathanya A in the original post description. Diaspora Tamils shared a selfie with the statement "I am Tamil, and genocide is a part of my identity," along with remarks addressing various elements of Tamil identity and

genocide. Hundreds of posts were created as a consequence of this campaign, as well as shares and re-shares on other platforms. Sri Lanka's envoy to Germany, Unambuwe, spoke on behalf of the Foreign Ministry, saying, "These things must be constantly monitored and opposed." You need a cyber-counter-terrorism task force to keep an eye on these efforts in Europe.

The use of media by these front groups indicates that they are aware of basic psychological concepts. These psychological concepts, which have been changed and applied to pictures, graphics, and music via technology, have an impact on perception, which in turn has an impact on behaviour. Each theory is complex, needs in-depth examination, and is a continuing research subject.

F. Duty of foreign legislatures in adhering to the international laws in countering radicalization.

The Human Rights Committee explains the concerns as follows: -There is a pattern in international law which emphasizes the mutuality between freedom of expression and protection against hate speech. Recent documents such as the Human Rights Committee General Comment and the Rabat Plan of Action have repeatedly done this. The latter gives an overview: Under international human rights standards, which are to guide legislation at the national level, expression labelled as –hate speech|| can be restricted under articles 18 and 19 of the ICCPR on different grounds, including respect for the rights of others, public order, or even sometimes national security. States are also obliged to -prohibit|| expression that amounts to -incitement|| to discrimination, hostility or violence (under article 20.2 of the ICCPR and, under some different conditions, also under article 4 of the ICERD||. Moreover, The Johannesburg Principles On National Security, Freedom Of Expression And Access To Information Principles are based on international and regional law and standards relating to the protection of human rights, evolving state practise, and the general principles of law recognized by the community of nations. These Principles acknowledge the enduring applicability of the Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Paris Minimum Standards of Human Rights Norms In a State of Emergency. As a preliminary comment, it should be noted that no explicit and consensual definition of -radicalizing content|| (or -radicalization||) can be

found in existing international legal instruments despite the significant number of such instruments dealing with terrorism and other related concepts and despite various resolutions and extensive literature on the subject. Notwithstanding this lack of definition, the term is employed not only in treaties but also in domestic laws for instance in Labor Law and Penal Law. The Terrorism Act of 2006 of the United Kingdom, Section 2 makes it a criminal offence to encourage terrorism (as defined in the Terrorism Act of 2000) by directly or indirectly inciting or encouraging others to commit acts of terrorism. This includes an offence of "glorification" of terror - people who "praise or celebrate" terrorism in a way that may encourage others to commit a terrorist act. The government's definition of

-radicalization|| as applied in the Prevent Strategy reads:

-radicalization is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.||

Under Section 130 of the German Criminal Code, criminal liability occurs where the offender, in a manner capable of disturbing the public peace incites hatred against a national, racial, religious group or a group defined by their ethnic origins, against segments of the population or individuals because they belong to one of the aforementioned groups or segments of the population or calls for violent or arbitrary measures against them. This includes publishing radicalization content on the internet (–Volsverhetzung||). If the person publishing the content uses propaganda material of unconstitutional organizations this may, in addition, constitute an offence under Section 86 or Section 86a (Using symbols of unconstitutional organizations) of the Criminal Code. Other provisions of the Criminal Code relevant for the prosecution of hate speech are Section 185 and Section 111 (Public incitement to crime) under which anyone who publicly, in a meeting or through the dissemination of written materials (including audio-visual media) incites the commission of an unlawful act, shall be held liable as an abettor to that act; Section 130a (Attempting to cause the commission of offences using publication) under which anyone who disseminates, publicly displays, posts, presents, or otherwise makes accessible written material (including audio-visual media) capable of serving as an instruction for certain severe unlawful acts and intended by its content to encourage or cause others to commit one

of those acts, shall be liable. The same applies to anyone who disseminates or makes publicly available such material to encourage or cause others to commit such an act; Section 140 (Rewarding and approving of offences) under which anyone who 1. rewards or 2. publicly, in a meeting or through the dissemination of written materials (including audio-visual media), and in a manner that is capable of disturbing the public peace, approves of one of the certain severe unlawful acts after it has been committed or attempted, shall be liable; Section 241 para 1 (Threatening the commission of a felony) under which anyone who threatens a person with the commission of a felony against him or a person close to him shall be liable.

Sri Lanka's press authorities follow the Code of Professional Practice (Code of Ethics) of The Editors along with Johannesburg principles. In terms of countering terrorism Prevention of terrorism act is effective to bring perpetrators to justice by enforcing domestically and extraterritorially.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The foreign ministry and the ministry of justice must collaborate with intelligence agencies and think tanks to combat propaganda that relies heavily on graphical and visual effects to radicalize people and spread disinformation throughout the world, attempting to pass off false news as real news. If the manipulation of the world public and international organizations, as well as the radicalization of Tamil people, is successful, it will result in much more negative consequences. As a result, proactive propaganda detection, corporations with extraterritorial jurisdictions in countering fake news and other interpretative contextual visuals, exerting force on regulating universal jurisdiction in bringing purported to justice, and preventing information warfare that will destroy countries' economies must all be instigated, as the Eelam movement is currently advocating globally.

IV. CONCLUSION

Given the differences in definitions, cultural traditions and regulatory approaches to "radicalizing content" clashes over jurisdiction are bound to increase as a consequence of the growing impact of the use of Visual Media radicalization. The paper directs to Many reasons to explain why the Tamil Diaspora turn to the use of Visual Media for Radicalization propaganda. Terrorist groups and the Diaspora in Europe alike find the Visual Medium to be a relatively convenient and effective means of

delivery for their communications. The paper concludes the direct existence of the nexus between terrorist visuals and cognitive radicalization. this cognitive Radicalization propaganda of the European Tamil Diaspora has mainly targeted the incoming Second generation of Tamil youth between the age groups of 18-30. Furthermore, it has been established that in the global context, evidence exists to display that visual media plays a critical role in various parts of the radicalization process. The government must resist the Tamil diaspora's cyber and propaganda operations. Information and cyber-security are a must-have for all countries in today's networking environment. The government must undertake a campaign to capture the hearts and minds of Tamils since Sri Lanka is politically divided along ethnic lines. Even though most individuals recognize the importance of addressing racial, ethnic, and religious differences, the government must continue to engage with extremist organizations of all ethnicities to avert violence and restore peace to the country.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



The author is a Research Intern at the Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka. He is a Graduate of the Faculty of Law, General Sir John Kotelawela Defence University Sri Lanka.