

Gen (retd.) Sarath Fonseka's infamous treacherous statement that Defence Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa had ordered the LTTE surrendees should be shot dead appeared in the Sunday Leader when I was holidaying in Sri Lanka. I got this news before I could read the Sunday Leader, because a friend of mine in Australia who had seen the website of the newspaper before Sri Lankans even woke up had called me. The friend was obviously agitated and said that the pro LTTE diaspora members had already started to spread the word that the Defence Secretary and military leaders could be brought before an international tribunal and charge them with war crimes as "now we have a solid witness".

The following few days were very hard for the Sinhala activists and the members of SPUR as they were highly demoralised by the treacherous statement of Gen Fonseka. They were angry and frustrated while the LTTE activists were upbeat on Gen Fonseka's act of betrayal.

By then I had heard Gen Fonseka's several statements over various television channels and websites and I was convinced that Fonseka was telling lies to get political mileage. In fact, as a person who had followed the elections for 78 years, starting in 1931 as a tiny tot, I must confess that the Presidential Election of 2010 takes the cake for untruths, lies and fabricat-

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ed stories and most of them were on websites.

To give an example I quote from Lankadeepa, which had published two denials on the same day after publishing two false stories quoting Mr Mangala Samaraweera. The first one was that the Rajapaksa family had bought the Obeysekara Walawwa and the second was that Mr Basil Rajapaksa had taken over the Swarnavahini television channel. A member of the Obeysekara family had sent a letter to Lankadeepa stating that the Obeysekara family was not poverty ridden to warrant a sale of their ancestral place. Mr Jeevaka Edirisinghe, Managing Director of Swarnavahini said that he had no intension of selling the television station.

Furthermore, Gen Fonseka publicly stated that immediately after assuming office as President on January 27, he would imprison his opponents. He asked them to keep mats and pillows ready to go to prison.

Now a campaign to gain sympathy over the detention of Mr Fonseka has been launched by the UNP-JVP unholy alliance and unfortunately a section of the Buddhist monks have also supporting this political campaign.

As many persons of eminence including legal luminaries have pointed out that nobody is above the law.

UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe should understand this not only as a mature politician but also as a lawyer, though he has not practiced law except for a taken appearance at the bar. Furthermore, the UNP is the last party that can argue on behalf of a detention and political victimization.

In 1977, the then Agriculture Minister E L Senanayake alleged that Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike had added a zero to a legal document to submit a wrong claim. Subsequently a Commission of Inquiry was appointed to inquire into the alleged malprac-



tices of Mrs Bandaranaike. However in the mandate of the Commission there was no mention about the alleged addition of a zero because the government had learned by then that Mr E L Senanayake's accusation against Mrs Bandaranaike was false.

However, the Commission went ahead with other investigations and on its findings, Mrs Banadaranaik's civic rights were suspended for seven years, thus removing the main political contender against President J R Jayewardene. Jayewardene, who took over the leadership of Non-aligned Movement from Mrs Bandaranaike after her defeat in 1977, did not change his decision to suspend Mrs Bandaranaike's civic rights despite the call made by many NAM leaders and other heads of states.

In 1982, the UNP government has arrested several opponents including the present Prime Minister Rathnasiri Wickremanayake and Vijaya Kumaratunga, husband of Mrs Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga who became the President 12 years later. Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga had to seek President Jayewardene's permission to visit her detained husband who was kept in solitary confinement at Mahara prison.

The allegation that the misuse of state media was a reason for the victory of President Mahinda Rajapaksa is not a valid or relevant argument. In 1982 Presidential Election and the referendum that followed there were no private television stations and the private newspapers such as Upali group and Lankadeepa (Vijaya) Group, in addition to the state media, supported the UNP.

In 2010, though the state media was used by the government, it was counter productive as the Lake House newspapers, Rupavahini, ITN and SLBC had lost their credibility by

then. The only occasion President Rajapaksa managed to get a message across to the voters through Rupavahini was when he addressed the women of Sri Lanka at a function held at Swarnamali Balika Vidyalaya. He said that women should get more than equal rights as women are more precious to a society than men. He pointed out that even your country is called Mother Lanka.



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Apart from the above instance, I can say that the Rupavahini, ITN and Lake House media failed to make a noticeable impact on the voter.

President Rajapaksa has won the districts of Kandy, Matale, Kegalle and Badulla too this time, although he had lost those districts in the 2005 Presidential Election.

What is noticeable is that Sarath Fonseka succeeded in winning 25 electoral constituencies where the minorities - Tamils and Muslims - are in majority. However, he could win only 10 electorates where Sinhalese are the majority.

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In 1934 as a 12 year old student I enjoyed the day when the Ananda team won the Herman Loose cup for Cadetting. 75 years later end of May 2009 I was very happy to watch Anandians honouring most distinguished Anandian war heroes of 2009.

They were Gotabhaya Rajapaksha - Secretary for Defence, Sarath Fonseka - the Army Commander, Wasantha karannagoda - Navy Commander and Sarath Weerasekara - Commander of the Civil Defence Force.

They were contemporary Anandians of my sons.

However it's a great tragedy within few months one of them broke ranks and betrayed tall the others as well as the country.