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Preliminary Analysis of MV Sun Sea Migrants' Interview Notes (Evergreen)

Intelligence and Targeting
Analysis Division

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Overview

The following is a preliminary analysis of the information obtained through interviews of the migrants who arrived in Victoria, British Columbia on the 13th of August, 2010, aboard the MV Sun Sea. All interview notes were acquired via the Pacific Regions shared drive. Due to the volume of notes (4,591 pages) and tight timelines,

This document intends only to provide an overview picture drawn through the analysis of what has been divulged from the individuals to date. As interviews were ongoing during analysis, this document is current to September 23, 2010.

At this juncture,

The large Sri Lankan (SL) diaspora has provided financial aid to some of the migrants. Currencies carried by some of the individuals correlate with transit points said to have been visited prior to boarding the ship, namely Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. At this time, the majority have declared that they wish only to live peacefully in Canada with the hope of eventually sponsoring other family members.

Trends

Suspected LTTE members on ship

- Frequent mention of the individuals listed below by other passengers; referred to as being prominent figures on board. It appears that they played primary roles in the smuggling venture and could have ties with the LTTE.
- Indications that they held heightened status onboard and a certain level of authority. These men fulfilled specific roles on the ship and had priority accommodation. Others were also mentioned; however, those listed below were the most frequently mentioned.
- Indication of LTTE propaganda being played on board – music and videos.

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- Others identified as having specific roles on board (mentioned to a lesser extent):

- engine room under the authority of - all said to have held positions within the

Agents

- Numerous agents were mentioned (approximately 45 - could be more or less as not identified clearly enough to include or negate all those with similar names or varying aliases). All are believed to have contributed in the recruitment process to populate the ship for the voyage.
- Agents were posted at key locations to fulfill one or more portions of the trajectory that led to the eventual embarkation of the migrants onto the ship in Thailand:

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The following agents were those most commonly mentioned:

NB: Spelling differences, nicknames and aliases contribute to the difficulties in properly identifying certain subjects.

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Routes

- Travel patterns begin from the
- Those who transited through
- Most subjects did not apply for refugee status in Southeast Asia.
- Many were put up i for prolonged periods (generally 1 to 5 months, some more or less).
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- Many claim to have not known what the destination would be – some were told it could be Australia, New Zealand or Canada.

Monetary Transactions

- Individuals have generally stated that, when living within LTTE-controlled areas, they were able to avoid joining the group by paying various requested sums of money.
- Many claim to have applied for visas through the office in Colombo, paying 2500 SL Rupees (LKR) or 7500 LKR (represents approximately 23 and 68 Canadian dollars, respectively) for the processing of documents. Indication that the heightened price allows for access multiple countries versus the lesser amount which is for access to one country only.
- - claim to have paid 500 LKR (approximately five Canadian dollars) for signature and authentication.
- Those who flew directly to Thailand generally state that they paid agents for flights and visas in amounts ranging from 50-70 thousand LKR (represents approximately 460-640 Canadian dollars).
- Majority were charged 20-30 thousand dollars for the voyage on the Sun Sea. Most claim to have provided agents with deposits amounting to approximately one quarter to half of the full price requested for the voyage; mainly provided by family members in Sri Lanka through the sale of land and jewellery. Jewellery was mainly sold or loaned to banks. Most maintain that they are unaware of how the balance is to be paid once in Canada. Some were assured that wealth would be achieved once here.

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- Most payments seem to have been largely cash-based; however, there is mention of _____ for the voyage.
- Some claim that payments were made _____ - some from family members living in the UK and France. Some accomplished this through _____
- Some hold credit cards - claim that SL credit cards can only be used if funds are available on the cards (must contact bank to apply funds) and cannot run up balance.
-

Primary foreign currencies utilized

- Majority claim to have paid agents in LKR, US or CAN dollars.
- Exchanges of LKR made in Thailand for US currency.
- Most claimed that they were not carrying any money. Those that did hold funds _____ Some had Canadian and US currency. Overall, the majority held insignificant amounts (under the equivalent of 30 CAN dollars).

Banking facilities

- _____
The following were also mentioned; however, the majority of subjects claimed that they did not have bank accounts or could not remember names of institutions:

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Foreign Passports/ Visas

- Most claim that their passports and other identifying documents were taken from them by agents prior to boarding the ship.
- Most have stated that authentic Sri Lankan passports were used;
- Majority obtained visas for

Conclusion

The majority of the SL migrants have told very similar stories. Whether or not these are true or fabricated has yet to be determined.