

# peacemail

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POSTAGE PAID  
OFF PEAK  
AUSTRALIA

**act for peace**  
reduce poverty | protect refugees  
prevent conflicts | empower communities



There are about 73,000 Sri Lankan refugees in 112 camps in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, just across the Palk Strait from Sri Lanka. The Organisation of Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR) was founded in 1984 to assist Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka. Through a wide range of social and occupational programs, OfERR keeps hope alive and spirits high for these refugees.

OfERR's medical and health care program aims to make every Sri Lankan refugee in India physically and mentally able to lead a socially and economically productive life. The government health service provides primary health care to refugees in the camps throughout Tamil Nadu. OfERR supplements this care and organises a range of awareness campaigns to improve community health. Special attention is paid to mothers and children and to the prevention of communicable diseases.

OfERR prepares the refugees for return to Sri Lanka. The aim is for refugees to be repatriated in good health, with dignity and with skills to help reestablish their lives amidst the many challenges they will face.

**\$40** can provide a month's allowance for a health worker.

**\$175** can provide course materials for a training program for health workers.

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

**actalliance**



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**THANK YOU Partners** for your commitment to Act for Peace through your prayers and regular gifts. Both are vital to making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict or extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Sarah on **1800 025 101** or email [hgraham@ncca.org.au](mailto:hgraham@ncca.org.au). As always, feedback and suggestions are welcome. It means so much to project partners to hear from you and they greatly value your comments that we pass on to them.

If you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner or would just like to help this project, please call or email us today to join others across Australia in supporting this life-saving work.

## Vital Healthcare Provided for Sri Lankan Refugees

*Dear Act for Peace Partner,*

My name is Dr Nadarajah Subramaniam, and I'm the Assistant Health Coordinator of the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OfERR)'s healthcare program. I was a final year medical student at the University of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka when I came to Tamil Nadu in South India in 1990 as a refugee, escaping from the horror of the civil war at home. I had not completed my medical degree, but OfERR gave me the opportunity to be involved in their health program in 1991.

I could not finish my degree in Tamil Nadu. I had to wait until 2004 when there was a break in the conflict and I was able to return to Jaffna and complete the final year of medicine. I came back to Tamil Nadu in 2005.

When I first joined OfERR, I was involved in medical programs, such as conducting a nutritional assessment of refugees in the camp where we provided supplements such as Vitamin A and iodised salt. When I started, I took on a position as a Health Worker Instructor. At that time, there were only two other Sri Lankan doctors involved. Because I had lived in a refugee camp when I first fled to India, I wanted to help other refugees. Knowing the situation and suffering that all of these people were going through, I needed to help.

Though I was new to Tamil Nadu, OfERR was an organisation formed by our own people from Sri Lanka. There is a feeling of security to be with your own people.

The health program has improved my teaching skills and patient care. If I had worked in a regular hospital, I would never have learned so much about communicating with patients, particularly those that have experienced the trauma of war. I have learnt about the refugees' health problems and I strive to relieve them as much as possible. I am proud that through the nutrition and vitamin supplement programs, I have been able to improve the refugees' eyesight and general health.

Since I started, we have trained 400 health workers. Now, I want to do community based rehabilitation work with people living with disabilities. Eventually, I hope to return with my wife and three young children to Sri Lanka. I know I will be needed as there are many urgent disability cases, given the long war and especially the high injury rate amongst civilians who were caught between the combatants in the final months of the conflict.

Thank you for your faithful support of OfERR, which enables our work to continue.

*Nadarajah*



### Partner's Prayer Points:

**Give thanks for the devotion and faith of those who work with refugees, the poor and displaced people.**

**Pray for Tamil refugees in South India and for those internally displaced in Sri Lanka that they may safely return home.**