

Maritime interests in the Tamil Seas, Tamil genocide, U.K. government and business interests

with **Phil Miller from Corporate Watch and Miriam Rose from Foil Vedanta**

Activism and Academia Forum and the Centre of World Environmental History, Sussex University

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After the genocidal war ended in Sri Lanka in 2009, the Tamil people did not just lose control of their land. The seas were also captured by the Sri Lankan navy. The government gave foreign energy firms lucrative concessions to prospect for oil and gas lying deep offshore in the Mannar and Cauvery basins. Fishermen, from Tamil Nadu and Tamil Eelam, face constant harassment. Australia recently provided Sri Lanka with patrol boats to turn back Tamil refugees.

Much of this ongoing conflict and exploitation takes place on the high seas, out of sight. Indeed, the defeat of the Tamil's Sea Tigers has allowed Sri Lankan naval officers to pose as 'counter-piracy' experts, now running their own maritime security companies. The Somalia piracy across the Indian Ocean is being fought in part from the island of Sri Lanka.

When Liam Fox was still Britain's Defence Secretary, he said:

"As an island nation, maritime security remains of fundamental importance for the United Kingdom, just as it does for Sri Lanka..."

...Sri Lanka is located in a pivotal position in the Indian Ocean with major international shipping routes between the Far East and the Gulf within 25 miles of your coast...

...So there is significant potential, for Sri Lanka to play a greater role, in issues such as counter piracy."

We will also discuss:

- Tuticorin Port and the shutdown of Vedanta's subsidiary Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd's copper smelter in Tuticorin in 2013
- Koodankulam Nuclear power plant – only a 100km from Tuticorin, on the Gulf of Mannar, and peoples' movements against it during 2013.