

Archaeological Buddhisisation & Toponym Overwriting

The 2020 Presidential Task Force on Archaeology, contested site dossiers, place-name overwriting, kovil and mosque damage, applicable law and honesty gaps.

The 2020 Presidential Task Force on Archaeology, contested site dossiers, place-name overwriting, kovil and mosque damage, applicable law and honesty gaps.

§1 Archaeological Buddhisisation & Religious Site Overwriting in the Tamil Homeland and Beyond

Classification: Citation-Only Civic Archive | Prepared for: Transformative League of Tamil Eelam (TLTE) Date: May 2026 | Status: Working Draft — Pending Peer Review Methodology: Tier-A source synthesis; web-scraped primary documents; all claims paired with most authoritative available citation.

§2 1. OVERVIEW AND ANALYTICAL FRAME

Since the end of Sri Lanka's armed conflict in May 2009, a pattern has emerged in which state archaeological institutions, Buddhist clergy, and — in numerous documented instances — security forces have combined to assert Buddhist heritage claims over sites that Tamil and Muslim communities have used for generations as Hindu or Islamic places of worship. This pattern operates through four interlocking mechanisms: (i) declaration or reclassification of land as "protected archaeological monuments"; (ii) construction of Buddhist viharas, stupas, and statues — sometimes in defiance of court injunctions; (iii) administrative Sinhalisation of Tamil place-names; and (iv) institutional exclusion of Tamil and Muslim communities from heritage governance bodies.

The 2022 PEARL report, *State-Sponsored Sinhalization of the North-East* (People for Equality and Relief in Lanka, Washington D.C., March 2022), is the most systematic Tier-A synthesis of this phenomenon. It documents multi-pronged Sinhalization through state-aided Sinhala settlements, land appropriation by state bodies, "Buddhisization," and repression of Tamil memorialization. It was funded by Open Society Foundations and draws on four case-study sub-reports on Pulmoaddai, Kokkilai, Seruwila-Verugal, and other areas.

The 2024 MinorMatters report, *A Brief Examination of Contested Religious Sites in Sri Lanka* (authored by Bhavani Fonseka, November 2023), provides a more cross-communal perspective, documenting contested sites affecting Tamil Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities, and is noteworthy for its relative methodological neutrality relative to advocacy-oriented sources.

§3 2. THE PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON ARCHAEOLOGY (2020 CONTROVERSY)

On 2 June 2020, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa gazetted the Presidential Task Force (PTF) for Archaeological Heritage Management in the Eastern Province. The PTF was composed of eleven members — all Sinhalese, including Buddhist clergy and the chairman of the Derana media network — with no Tamil or Muslim representation, despite the Eastern Province having a Tamil and Muslim majority.

Key documented facts (Tier-A sourced):

- Tamil Guardian reported the composition as "all Sinhala" with Buddhist monks included ("All Sinhala task force for Sri Lanka's 'archaeology' in East", Tamil Guardian, June 2020).
- The Ilankai Tamil Sangam / PK Balachandran analysis ("PTF on Archaeology in the Eastern Province has no Muslims or Tamils," Daily Express/NewsIn Asia, 5 June 2020) identified the PTF as designed to "colour a

narrative to advance an ethno-religious political agenda."

- TNA leader R. Sampanthan wrote a formal letter to President Rajapaksa protesting the PTF's ethnic composition and warning it would "institutionalise heritage genocide" (dbsjeyaraj.com, June 2020).

- TNA spokesperson M.A. Sumanthiran threatened litigation if the PTF acted contrary to the Antiquities Act (dbsjeyaraj.com, June 2020).

- Civil society actors in Batticaloa described the PTF as "a direct threat to Tamils and Muslims" (TamilNet, 8 June 2020).

Context: The PTF covered only the Eastern Province — not the other eight provinces — raising the inference that its purpose was to reframe Eastern heritage as primarily Buddhist rather than Tamil-Hindu or Muslim. The Antiquities Ordinance (Sri Lanka) theoretically places heritage management under the Director General of Archaeology; critics argued the PTF illegally superseded that civilian authority by inserting a politically appointed, ethnically exclusive body.

§4 3. CONTESTED SITE DOSSIERS

§ 3.1 Kurunthumalai / Kurundhumalai (Mullaitivu District)

Background: The Kurunthumalai hilltop in the Thannimurippu area of Mullaitivu has been worshipped by Tamil Hindus as the site of the Aathi Aiyanaar deity — specifically a sacred trident (vel) of the Shaivite guardian deity — for generations. The site is referenced in local oral and inscriptive tradition as a Tamil Hindu place of worship.

Post-2009 developments:

- From approximately 2021–2022, Buddhist structures began appearing on and around the hilltop, attributed to Buddhist clergy with alleged Security Force facilitation.

- The Mullaitivu District Court issued a stay order prohibiting further construction. The order was reportedly defied: army personnel and Buddhist monks are accused of erecting a "Kurundhi Stupa" on the hilltop in violation of the injunction (dbsjeyaraj.com, republishing The Hindu, Meera Srinivasan, 2023).

- The Director General of Archaeology, Professor Thusitha Mendis, personally visited the illegally constructed Buddhist temple — in apparent disregard of the court order — according to Tamil Guardian ("Sri Lankan Archaeology Director visits illegal Buddhist structure in defiance of court order", Tamil Guardian, 2023).

- The Department of Archaeology subsequently initiated an attempt to seize approximately 400 acres of land in the Thannimurippu area (Tamil Guardian, 2023).

- President Ranil Wickremesinghe appointed an expert committee; as of mid-2023 this had not resolved the controversy (Sunday Times, Sandun Jayawardana & S. Rubatheesan, 18 June 2023).

- TNA MP Sumanthiran pledged to restore full Hindu worship rights at Kurunthumalai (Tamil Guardian, 2023).

- The Hindu (Meera Srinivasan, 2023) described the site as emblematic of a broader pattern of "archaeological excavations as the latest manifestation of a lingering ethnic conflict."

Primary sources: Tamil Guardian (multiple 2022–2023); The Hindu (Meera Srinivasan, 2023); Sunday Times Sri Lanka (18 June 2023); dbsjeyaraj.com; Nakkeran (June 2022).

§ 3.2 Vedukkunari Hill / Vedukunanimalai (Vavuniya District)

Background: The Vedukkunari Hill in Nedunkerni, Vavuniya District, hosts a site revered by the Tamil community as the Vedukkunari Aathi Lingeswarar Temple — claimed to be more than 3,000 years old.

Post-2009 developments:

- The Department of Archaeology has classified the site as the Buddhist archaeological site "Vaddamana

Pabbathaya Vihara," a claim disputed by the Hindu community.

- Buddhist monks, escorted by military and police, conducted a march toward the temple on Shivaratri — a sacred day for Saiva Tamils — carrying Buddhist flags (Tamil Guardian, 2024).
- Sri Lanka's Counter-Terrorism Investigation Division (CTID) summoned the former president and secretary of the temple's administration for questioning, raising concerns of state intimidation of religious leaders (Tamil Guardian, 2024).
- The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and Groundviews published a detailed analysis: "Vedukkunari Hill; A Cross Section of Failing Cultural Rights" (Groundviews, 20 February 2024), describing the site as "embroiled in a complex dispute with the Department of Archaeology."
- CPA's case-study report (cpalanka.org, accessed 2024) documents the legal and factual contest in detail and is the most methodologically rigorous source on this specific site.

Primary sources: Groundviews (20 Feb 2024, Bhavani Fonseka framework); CPA (cpalanka.org, 2024); Tamil Guardian (multiple 2024).

§ 3.3 Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Kovil (Semmalai, Mullaitivu District)

Background: The Neeraviyadi Pillaiyar Temple is a Hindu kovil in the Semmalai area of Mullaitivu, located at the boundary of the Manalaru area.

Post-2009 developments:

- A Buddhist monk occupied the temple land and constructed a large Buddha statue on the temple premises.
- The Sri Lanka Army's 593 Brigade is documented as having erected a Buddha statue at the site on 5 November 2018, explicitly defying a stay order from a Sri Lankan court (TamilNet, 5 November 2018; TamilNet, 12 December 2018).
- The Buddha statue was "hurriedly declared open" by Buddhist monks with police assistance and archaeology department support, with police reportedly offering protection to monks while harassing Tamil politicians and journalists (Tamil Guardian, 2022).
- Residents filed complaints at Mullaitivu police station; police are accused of complicity (Tamil Guardian, "Mullaitivu residents accuse police of complicity in Buddhisation").
- A detailed inventory published by the Tamil diaspora civil society ("Occupying Missions: Conducted in North and East Provinces by the Department of Archaeology," tamildiasporanews.com, 2023) lists Neeraviyadi as among multiple sites where Buddhist viharas have been constructed on Hindu temple land through illegal acquisition.

Primary sources: TamilNet (Nov–Dec 2018); Tamil Guardian (multiple); Tamil Diaspora News occupying missions report (2023).

§ 3.4 Kuragala / Daftar Jailani (Ratnapura District)

Background: Kuragala (also spelled Kuragela) in the Ratnapura District hosts Daftar Jailani, a rock-cave Sufi shrine. The shrine is associated with Qutub Muhiyuddin Abdul Qadir Jailani (Ghouse-e Azam), one of the most revered Sufi scholars in Islamic tradition, and has been a Muslim pilgrimage site for approximately eight centuries.

Dispute:

- srilankabrief.org (3 March 2022) reported the demolition of the centuries-old Islamic shrine and the erection of a Buddhist stupa in its place.
- The academic study by Professor Dennis B. McGilvray (University of Colorado), "Islamic and Buddhist Impacts on the Shrine at Daftar Jailani, Sri Lanka," published in *Islam, Sufism and Everyday Politics of Belonging in South Asia* (Routledge, 2016), provides the most rigorous scholarly documentation of the contested history of the

site — noting that Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism post-2009 intensified pressure on the Sufi shrine.

- Hardline Sinhala Buddhist organizations and the Bodu Bala Sena (Buddhist Power Force) were involved; the then Defence Secretary visited the site with monks, creating implicit state endorsement (dbsjeyaraj.com, multiple).

Note on honesty gap: Kuragala is in the Ratnapura District (historically not part of the Tamil-majority Northeast), making it a Muslim rights case rather than a Tamil homeland case per se. It is nonetheless directly relevant to the broader pattern of Buddhist heritage overwriting of minority religious sites across the island.

Primary sources: McGilvray (2016, peer-reviewed); srilankabrief.org (2022); dbsjeyaraj.com (multiple).

§ 3.5 Kanniya Hot Springs (Trincomalee District)

Background: The Kanniya Hot Wells (also: Kanniya) in the Uppuveli/Uppu-ve'li division of Trincomalee are a sacred Hindu Shaivite site, associated with the sage Vishwamitra and revered by Tamil devotees for ritual bathing and ancestral rites (Aadi Amavasai).

Post-2009 developments:

- Buddhist monks illegally constructed a Buddhist shrine near the Saiva hot-wells compound in 2013 (TamilNet, 28 May 2019).
- In July 2019, the Trincomalee District Secretary (Government Agent, a Sinhalese official) liaised with the Presidential Secretariat to facilitate the DoA to resume "deconstruction" — apparently targeting the Saiva Pillaiyar kovil at the site (TamilNet, 12 July 2019).
- Buddhist monks led rival pirith (Buddhist chanting) directly over Tamil devotees observing Aadi Amavasai ancestral fasts (Tamil Guardian, multiple 2019).
- The Sri Lanka Army's 221 Brigade established a military post at the disputed site (TamilNet, 3 August 2019).
- Tamil Guardian documented: "Sinhala-Buddhist monk disrupts Aadi Amavasai ancestral rites at Kanniya Hot Springs" (Tamil Guardian, 2019).

Primary sources: TamilNet (May–August 2019); Tamil Guardian (2019).

§ 3.6 Thiruketheeswaram and Surroundings (Mannar District)

Background: Thiruketheeswaram is one of the five historically significant Ishwarams (sacred Shaivite temples) of the Tamil tradition — dating in various scholarly accounts to the early centuries CE. It is located near Manthai in Mannar District.

Post-2009 developments:

- A Buddhist monk occupied 5 acres of land belonging to the Thiruketheeswaram temple administration in the Manthai area. ITAK MP Charles Nirmalanathan visited the site after landowners raised concerns (Tamil Guardian).
- An illegal Buddhist vihara was constructed on land near the temple complex. The Thiruketheeswaram Kovil administration formally wrote to the President urging him not to attend the opening ceremony, characterizing the vihara as illegally constructed on appropriated land (Tamil Guardian, "Thiruketheeswaram Kovil board urge Sri Lankan President to forgo vihara opening").
- TamilNet (19 April 2012) reported that the SL military occupied the Maanthai archaeological site adjacent to Thiruketheeswaram, and that Indian grant money was being used in processes characterized as "Sinhalicisation and Buddhicisation."
- The US State Department's 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Sri Lanka notes ongoing religious freedom concerns, including attacks on minority places of worship.

Primary sources: Tamil Guardian (multiple); TamilNet (April 2012); US State Department IRFR 2023.

§5 4. TOPONYM SINHALISATION AND PLACE-NAME OVERWRITING

The PEARL 2022 report (State-Sponsored Sinhalization of the North-East) documents Sinhalisation as extending to administrative nomenclature:

- Manal-aaru (Tamil: "sandy river"), a historically Tamil place-name in Mullaitivu, was renamed Weli Oya (Sinhala equivalent) and formalized with a new divisional secretariat filled with Sinhala administrators (TamilNet, 21 October 2012).
- Kachchal Samalankulam (Vavuniya) was renamed Sapumalgaskada, with a signboard reading "Sapumalgaskada Archaeological Site" — erasing the Tamil identity of the place while asserting Buddhist archaeological status (Tamil Guardian, "Sri Lanka accelerates Sinhalisation across Vavuniya").
- 358 acres from Panikkanvayal to Thennamaravadi were confiscated by the Archaeology Department, including agricultural land belonging to Tamil villagers (Tamil Guardian, 24 September [year not specified in source]).
- PEARL (2022) frames the toponym overwriting as part of a "multi-pronged Sinhalization" strategy alongside demographic colonisation, military occupation, and Buddhization.

The precedent of post-1956 Sinhala Only Act (Official Language Act No. 33 of 1956) systematically downgraded Tamil as a language of administration. Place-name changes accelerated after the 13th Amendment and again post-2009, when the absence of LTTE administration left Tamil civic institutions with diminished capacity to contest administrative impositions.

Primary sources: PEARL, State-Sponsored Sinhalization of the North-East (March 2022); TamilNet (October 2012); Tamil Guardian (multiple).

§6 5. DEMOLITION AND DAMAGE TO KOVILS AND MOSQUES: CONFLICT-ERA AND POST-WAR

§ 5.1 Conflict-Era Destruction

The OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka (OISL), published 16 September 2015 as document A/HRC/30/CRP.2, is the authoritative Tier-A UN source. While its primary focus is on killings, disappearances, sexual violence, and detention, the OISL report documents that:

- Government Security Forces conducted ground offensives through populated Tamil areas in the Vanni, destroying civilian infrastructure including religious sites.
- LTTE forces also committed violations, including preventing civilian departure from conflict zones — creating conditions in which temples, mosques, and churches were destroyed in crossfire or shelling.
- The OISL found "reasonable grounds to believe" that both parties violated international humanitarian law (IHL), including precautionary obligations regarding civilian and cultural property.

The University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna) — UTHR(J), while a Tier-B source for this archive, documented in multiple reports (accessible via uthr.org, Broken Palmyra and subsequent reports) specific incidents of damage to kovils during the IPKF period (1987–1990) and government military operations in the 1990s. The specific list of destroyed kovils from UTHR's field documentation has not been fully digitized into accessible Tier-A format.

The International Truth and Justice Project (ITJP) (itjpsl.com) has published reports primarily on mass graves (June 2023), disappearances, and torture. The ITJP has not as of this research published a dedicated report on religious site destruction, though its witness testimonies reference the destruction of civilian and religious structures.

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) published "Attacks on Places of Religious Worship in Post-War Sri

Lanka" (8 March 2013), the most systematic Tier-A documentation of post-conflict religious site attacks: "Since the end of the war there have been high-profile incidents such as the attack on the Mosque in Dambulla... The trends highlighted by CPA continue to worsen." CPA's 2014 statement condemning the Aluthgama anti-Muslim violence extends this documentation.

§ 5.2 Post-War Demolitions

The Jurist (Samir Pasha & Naga Kandiah, February 2021) documented: "Since 2009, there has been a concerted effort to hold perpetrators accountable for the mass killings against Tamil civilians... [alongside] the ongoing destruction of Tamil culture in Sri Lanka" — but the piece relies on advocacy framing that should be treated as commentary rather than primary evidence.

The New Indian Express (Pon Vasanth, 18 December 2024) and New Indian Express (17 December 2024) provide recent mainstream media documentation of "state-backed changes to demographics and cultural identities" and "ethnic tensions as Tamil Hindus allege Sinhala-Buddhisisation of religious sites."

§7 6. APPLICABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

§ 6.1 International Human Rights Law

ICCPR Article 18 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion): Guarantees the right to manifest religion "in worship, observance, practice and teaching." State interference with Tamil Hindus' access to kovils, or facilitation of Buddhist overwriting, engages potential violations of Article 18(3) limitations requirement (necessity, proportionality, non-discrimination).

ICCPR Article 27 (minority rights): "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, such persons shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion..." The Human Rights Committee's General Comment 23 (1994) confirms this includes protection of cultural and religious sites from state destruction.

ICESCR Article 15 (right to take part in cultural life): Obligates states to enable minority communities to practice and transmit their cultural heritage. Archaeological reclassification that erases Tamil-Hindu cultural heritage and denies access implicates Article 15.

§ 6.2 International Humanitarian Law and Cultural Property Protection

1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (to which Sri Lanka acceded): Article 4 prohibits directing hostile acts against cultural property; Article 9 prohibits any use of cultural property contrary to the provisions of the Convention during occupation.

1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention: Establishes enhanced protection for the most significant cultural property; criminalises making cultural property an object of attack (Article 15). Sri Lanka has not ratified the Second Protocol — a notable lacuna.

UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention: Requires States Parties to protect and transmit natural and cultural heritage. The Kanniya and Thiruketheeswaram sites both have regional cultural significance arguably meeting the Convention's thresholds; neither is on the World Heritage List, limiting direct Convention applicability but not the persuasive norm.

UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage: Protects living cultural practices, including rituals at contested sacred sites — directly applicable to Aadi Amavasai rites at Kanniya and temple festivals at Neeraviyadi.

Rome Statute Article 8(2)(b)(ix) [international armed conflict] and Article 8(2)(e)(iv) [non-international armed conflict]: Both criminalise intentional attacks on buildings dedicated to religion, historic monuments, and works of art — provided they are not military objectives. The ICC's conviction in Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi

(Trial Chamber VIII, 27 September 2016) confirmed that destruction of religious and historic monuments constitutes a war crime in non-international armed conflict. Al Mahdi pleaded guilty; sentenced to nine years. Reparations order: €2.7 million (17 August 2017). The case establishes that targeting cultural/religious sites — even without mass casualties — is independently prosecutable under the Rome Statute. Sri Lanka is not an ICC State Party, limiting direct ICC jurisdiction, but the normative precedent is directly applicable to advocacy frameworks.

§ 6.3 Comparative Jurisprudential Precedents

ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Pavle Strugar* (IT-01-42): General Strugar was convicted and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment (later upheld and expanded on appeal) for his command responsibility over the JNA shelling of Dubrovnik's Old Town on 6 December 1991 — a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ICTY found that the attack on Dubrovnik's cultural property constituted a violation of the laws and customs of war. The Appeals Chamber expanded the scope of his responsibility. Key principle: Command responsibility for cultural property destruction is a recognized basis for individual criminal accountability.

ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Jadranko Prli et al.* (IT-04-74): The Trial Chamber addressed the destruction of the Stari Most (Old Bridge) in Mostar as part of systematic cultural cleansing by HVO forces. The Chamber found that destruction of civilian and cultural property was part of a widespread or systematic attack against the Muslim population — bringing cultural destruction into the legal frame of crimes against humanity (persecution).

ICC, *Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi* (ICC-01/12-01/15): First ICC conviction exclusively for cultural destruction. Al Mahdi directed the destruction of nine historic mausoleums and a mosque in Timbuktu in 2012, protected under UNESCO's World Heritage List. The Trial Chamber classified the conflict as non-international; convicted under Rome Statute Article 8(2)(e)(iv); noted that attacks on cultural heritage cause "particular injury to the communities" and have moral significance beyond material damage.

Babri Masjid (India, 1992–2024): While not an international legal case, the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu nationalist mobs — with alleged state complicity — and the subsequent Supreme Court of India judgment (2019, *M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das*) awarding the site to the Hindu claimant while acknowledging the demolition was illegal, serves as a stark cautionary precedent. The Babri case demonstrates how majoritarian archaeological and mythological narratives can be successfully weaponized to permanently displace minority religious communities from historic sites, even when the legal process finds the demolition unlawful. The parallel to Sri Lanka — where court orders are defied in the construction of Buddhist structures on contested sites — is direct and documented.

§8 7. HONESTY GAPS AND EPISTEMIC CAUTIONS

The TLTE archive must be transparent about the following limitations and contested zones:

7.1 Palimpsestic Archaeological Record The Northeast of Sri Lanka has a genuinely layered archaeological record. Ancient Buddhist sites do exist in what is now Tamil-majority territory — as Theravada Buddhism was present across the island before the growth of Tamil-Hindu polities in the North. The DoA's legitimate archaeological mission is to document this record. The critical question is not whether Buddhist archaeology exists, but whether post-2009 claims are proportionate, transparent in methodology, free from political direction, and respectful of existing living religious communities. The absence of Tamil and Muslim archaeologists from the PTF (2020) structurally undermines the credibility of the exercise. TLTE should not assert that all Buddhist archaeological claims in the Northeast are fabricated — a claim that would be factually unsupportable and easily discredited.

7.2 PEARL and Adayaalam as Advocacy Organizations PEARL (Washington D.C.) is explicitly "a Tamil advocacy group." The Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (Jaffna) also works within a Tamil rights framework. Both produce documented, field-based research that has been widely cited, but both carry positional interest in their framing. For site-specific claims, TLTE should defer to or co-cite the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA,

Colombo), Groundviews, MinorMatters (Bhavani Fonseka, 2023–2024), and the Sunday Times primary reporting — as these provide more cross-communal or neutral-framed documentation that will be harder for state actors to dismiss as Tamil nationalist advocacy.

7.3 OISL (2015) Coverage Limits The OHCHR OISL report (A/HRC/30/CRP.2, 2015) covers the conflict period and its immediate aftermath. It does not specifically address the post-2020 wave of archaeological Buddhisation. TLTE should not cite OISL as direct authority for post-2020 site overwriting; it is properly cited for the conflict-era destruction of religious and cultural property and for the broader accountability framework.

7.4 Conflict-Era vs. Post-War Attribution Some Tamil kovils and Muslim mosques were destroyed during the armed conflict. Attribution is not always straightforward: some were in LTTE-controlled areas and were destroyed by government shelling; some were in government-controlled areas and were destroyed by SLA/IPKF operations; some were in LTTE areas and may have been repurposed or damaged by LTTE for tactical reasons. The UTHR(J) documentation, while detailed, is not fully digitized in accessible Tier-A format. TLTE should not assert uniform GoSL responsibility for all conflict-era religious site destruction without site-specific sourcing.

7.5 Kuragala — Not Tamil Homeland The Kuragala/Daftar Jailani site is in the Ratnapura District of the Sabaragamuwa Province — historically not part of the Tamil or Muslim Northeast. It documents anti-Muslim Buddhisation, which is relevant to a broader pattern but should not be presented as a Tamil homeland case.

7.6 Some Sites Have Genuinely Mixed Histories Thiruketheeswaram, for example, sits near Manthai (ancient Mahatittha), a significant port city in which both Tamil Shaivite and Theravada Buddhist archaeology co-exists. The honest framing is: (a) the Hindu temple has uninterrupted community use and documented history; (b) the post-2009 construction of adjacent Buddhist structures on temple-administered land raises specific legal and rights questions, but (c) the broader archaeological zone does have Buddhist historical significance that should not be wholesale dismissed.

§9 8. CONSOLIDATED SOURCE LIST (TIER-A)

Source · Type · Key Content

PEARL, State-Sponsored Sinhalization of the North-East (March 2022) · Tier-A advocacy/research · Systematic documentation of Buddhisation, land grabs, toponym change

MinorMatters / Bhavani Fonseka, A Brief Examination of Contested Religious Sites in Sri Lanka (Nov 2023) · Tier-A cross-communal research · Site-by-site neutral analysis of contested religious properties

CPA, Attacks on Places of Religious Worship in Post-War Sri Lanka (March 2013) · Tier-A independent CSO · Post-war attacks on temples, mosques, churches

OHCHR OISL, Report of the OHCHR Investigation on Sri Lanka, A/HRC/30/CRP.2 (Sept 2015) · Tier-A UN · Conflict-era violations; accountability framework

US State Department, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Sri Lanka · Tier-A government · Contemporary religious freedom concerns

McGilvray, D.B., "Islamic and Buddhist Impacts on the Shrine at Daftar Jailani" in *Islam, Sufism and Everyday Politics of Belonging in South Asia* (Routledge, 2016) · Tier-A peer-reviewed · Kuragala/Jailani site academic study

Oakland Institute, *The Long Shadow of War* (2015) · Tier-A independent · Minority rights, land, post-war Tamil conditions

Minority Rights Group International, *No War, No Peace* (2011) · Tier-A · Denial of minority rights post-conflict

Tamil Guardian (multiple 2018–2024) · Tier-A primary reporting · Site-specific contemporaneous reporting

The Hindu (Meera Srinivasan, 2023) · Tier-A international media · Kuruntharmalai in-depth field reporting

Sunday Times Sri Lanka (18 June 2023) · Tier-A primary reporting · Kurundi Viharaya / Kurunthumalai both-sides account

Groundviews (20 Feb 2024) · Tier-A independent · Vedukkunari cultural rights analysis

CPA (cpalanka.org), Vedukkunari Hill case study (2024) · Tier-A · Vedukkunari legal and factual documentation

TamilNet (multiple) · Secondary/contextual · Contemporaneous reporting (use with corroboration)

dbsjeyaraj.com (multiple) · Secondary/contextual · Aggregation of major outlet reporting

ICC, Prosecutor v. Al Mahdi, ICC-01/12-01/15 (2016) · Tier-A international law · Cultural destruction as war crime; reparations precedent

ICTY, Prosecutor v. Strugar, IT-01-42 (2005/2008) · Tier-A international law · Command responsibility for cultural property destruction

ICTY, Prosecutor v. Prli et al., IT-04-74 (2013) · Tier-A international law · Cultural cleansing as persecution (crimes against humanity)

§10 9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TLTE ARCHIVE USE

1. Lead with neutral-framed sources (CPA, MinorMatters, Groundviews, Sunday Times) when presenting individual site claims to international audiences; use PEARL/Adayaalam for supplementary documentation and advocacy context.
2. Cite court orders as anchor evidence: the fact that Sri Lankan courts have issued stay orders that have been defied by state actors (army, DoA) is the most damaging evidence available — it cannot be dismissed as Tamil advocacy, because it originates in Sri Lanka's own judiciary.
3. Distinguish conflict-era from post-war overwriting: the post-2009 systematic pattern is more legally tractable for current international advocacy than the contested attribution of wartime destruction.
4. Frame the PTF (2020) composition as a structural / institutional rights violation — the all-Sinhala heritage body governing a Tamil-Muslim majority region is independently problematic regardless of the outcome of any individual site dispute.
5. Do not invoke Rome Statute prosecutorial language in the archive text itself (per system rules). Present the legal framework as applicable international norms; allow readers and counsel to draw prosecutorial implications.
6. Retain the Babri Masjid parallel as cautionary framing rather than equivalence — the differences (scale, trajectory, legal system) are as instructive as the parallels.

End of Memo — Research Strand 2: Archaeological Buddhisation and Religious Site Overwriting Saved:

/mnt/documents/research-archaeological-buddhisatation.md Word count (body): ~4,800 words | Sources cited: 25+ Tier-A

What this is not

- A research deposit from the vault, published for reading. Human review of every claim continues; figures are the cited sources' own, never TLTE's.
- Does not name serving personnel, survivors, or families; does not publish verdicts or forecasts.
- Not a statement on behalf of all Tamils, and not a call for any unlawful act.