

# Census Dept. rejects TNA claims; calls it a political gimmick

By HAFEEL FARISZ

The Department of Census and Statistics yesterday said the census carried out into the human and material losses incurred due to the conflict, was done according to international standards and norms with every aspect of loss being looked into.

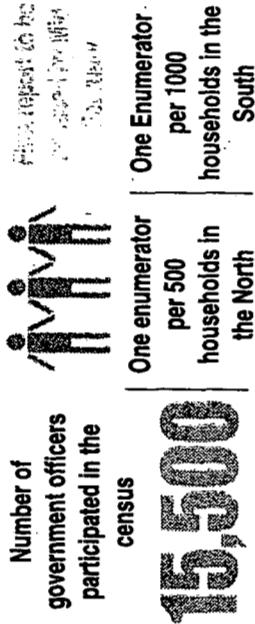
Rejecting the Tamil National Alliance's statement regarding the procedural lacuna, the department's Director General D.C.A.

Gunawardena told the Daily Mirror that the claim was "a political gimmick".

"The census was carried out completely following international standards and practices of data collection."

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## Census Dept...

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We have devised a questionnaire after consultation with a steering committee which comprises experts in their relevant fields and all stakeholders. The assertion by the TNA is wrong and is based on their politics" he said.

Explaining the questionnaire, the Director General said it comprised the causes of loss and every other factor relating to the loss.

"If it's a loss of life we even inquired into who were the people they thought to be responsible and whether they were people in civilian clothing or in uniform."

We also checked the documents or any other material evidence the relatives or family possessed in order to ascertain the authenticity of their claims," he said.

He further said that the census which was carried out islandwide was conducted in a manner that is most suitable to ensure that all data was gathered without duplication.

"This was not conducted in an ad hoc manner, we provided the technical expertise to the officials who are conducting the census. We are trying our level best to eradicate any duplication or gathering of false data" he told the Daily Mirror.

"This is the best that we could do, we are following

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all internationally laid down procedures in conducting this" he said.

The census which was conducted for over a month saw the participation of 15,500 government officials with every 500 households in the North being handled by one enumerator. In the South one enumerator was in charge of 1000 households.

The first report of the census is expected by mid February, the Daily Mirror learns.

Earlier, TNA Parliamentarian Mavai Senadhirajah said the five-party amalgam had decided not to cooperate with the census on the grounds that the procedures adopted by the officials in gathering information were not agreeable to them.

He said the circumstances of incidences of disappearances and deaths were not being accommodated in the census process and this was not acceptable to the Alliance.

